

15 June 2010

Dear Colleague

We know you have an ongoing interest in developments regarding the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS), the work of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). We therefore thought it was important to write to you today so that you are among the first to be updated with some important news about the Scheme.

The Home Secretary, Theresa May, has today issued a statement to the House of Commons (copy attached) which confirms the already stated intention of the coalition Government to review the Vetting and Barring and criminal records regimes.

As you are aware, voluntary registration with the Scheme was due to start on 26 July. The first phase of the Scheme's rollout was being limited to new employees and job-movers working or volunteering with children or vulnerable adults.

Now, a decision has been taken that this should be halted to allow the Government to redraw the Scheme to common sense levels.

The Home Secretary, Theresa May, said:

*"The safety of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance to the new Government.*

*"However it is also vital that we take a measured approach in these matters. We've listened to the criticisms and will respond with a scheme that has been fundamentally remodelled.*

*"Vulnerable groups must be properly protected in a way that is proportionate and sensible. This redrawing of the vetting and barring scheme will ensure this happens."*

Further details of the process for remodelling the Scheme will be announced shortly and we will provide you with this information as soon as it is available.

Whilst this is underway existing safeguarding regulations remain in force and should be adhered to. We would remind you that the following changes came into effect from 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009:

- since January 2009, the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) has been making independent barring decisions. It will continue to maintain two constantly updated lists, one for those barred from working with children, the other for those barred from working with vulnerable adults;
- existing requirements concerning Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Access Northern Ireland checks will remain in place, and those entitled to such checks can continue to apply for them; and

- employers are still legally obliged to refer information to the ISA if they have moved or removed an individual because they have harmed or there is a risk of harm to a member of a vulnerable group.

We recognise that this change in plans may impact on the preparations you have already undertaken. However it is essential that Ministers have the opportunity to consider the Scheme's impact and the role it should play.

We can assure you that we remain fully committed to working closely with you. We will be informing over 66,000 employers, charities and voluntary groups of this change, and further information will be available and kept updated on [www.direct.gov.uk/vetting](http://www.direct.gov.uk/vetting), [www.nidirect.gov.uk/vetting](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/vetting) and [www.businesslink.gov.uk/vbs](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/vbs).

## **Safeguarding and Public Protection Unit**

Home Office