

How does one register with the ISA and when does it become necessary?

The Criminal Records Bureau will shortly introduce a new application form to allow applications for ISA registration and CRB disclosures to be made on the same form. Applications will need to be made via dioceses, or another 'umbrella' Registered Body. There is no cost made by ISA/CRB for an application to be made for a volunteer. There is a fee of £64 for applications made for those in paid roles.

The ISA will start accepting registrations from new entrants only **from July 2010**. **From November 2010**, new entrants to work with children and vulnerable people must register before commencing work. **From April 2011**, workers or volunteers who are currently CRB checked will begin to register with the ISA, as well as renewing their CRB check at the same time. There will be a five year phased roll out for ISA registration of such individuals, more information on which will follow via your Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

How does the scheme work?

Employers or voluntary organisations will be able to express an interest in a person's ISA-registration which will enable them to be informed of any changes to that person's VBS status. Parishes will need to nominate the diocesan Registered Body to receive the information. Once the system is up-and-running, the Registered Body will be able to carry out free, online checks of a person's ISA-registration status, and pass the relevant information onto the parish.

ISA registration is designed to be fully portable and will not need to be repeated. However, those starting a new role working with children will need to complete a new CRB check in the same circumstances that they do at present, and their ISA registration will need to be confirmed.

Where can we go for more advice?

Your Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or Child Protection Adviser should be the first port of call for further advice on the basic information provided here, or for guidance on other scenarios, such as the PCC's responsibility for groups hiring church premises.

General information on the VBS is available from the ISA website: www.isa-gov.org.uk (phone 0300 123 1111). The Criminal Records Bureau website, www.crb.gov.uk, will be updated with more information on the scheme (phone 0870 90 90 811).

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Your church and the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS): A basic introduction

Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults is exciting, rewarding and challenging. It also demands that everyone working with these groups does so safely and keeps them safe from harm.

From November 2010, it will be a legal requirement for anybody wanting to work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults to register with the newly-created Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). It will also be a criminal offence for voluntary organisations, including parish churches, to allow someone to start work with such groups if they are not so registered, or 'barred' from working with such groups.

The changes have been introduced by the government to provide a more robust national system for helping to prevent unsuitable people gaining access to children and vulnerable adults.

It is important that you understand the new requirements and make necessary changes to your recruitment and organisation of volunteers and, where relevant, employees.

This leaflet gives an introduction to that process.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Who needs to register with the ISA?

The ISA is primarily concerned with ensuring that any individual engaged in 'Regulated Activity' is registered. It will coordinate with Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks so that one process will work for both. We need to set aside the current distinctions often used when making decisions about the need for checks, based on whether contact with children is conducted within the company of other adults or not. Instead, we need to adapt to the concept of 'Registered Activity'.

Regulated Activity is defined as any activity of a specified nature that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently, intensively or overnight.

- *specified nature*: teaching, training, care, supervision, advice, treatment and transportation.
- *frequently*: regularly once a week or more often
- *intensively*: 4 days or more in a 30 day period
- *overnight*: any time between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.

To make things simpler and clearer for parishes, the Church of England's policy is that **all those who regularly work with children or vulnerable adults should have both enhanced CRB checks and ISA registration.**

Holders of the following church-related roles are therefore among those who will almost certainly need to be CRB-checked and ISA-registered:

- All clergy (stipendiary and non-stipendiary, including all chaplains and retired clergy with a licence), Readers and Licensed Evangelists;
- Pastoral Assistants, where the role specifies relevant work;
- Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Lay Workers, including lay ministers, youth, children and family workers;
- Musical Directors, Organists, Choir leaders, where the activity includes children;
- All Tower Captains, Ringing Masters and Adults Ringers who train/teach children (u18);
- Youth Club (u18) leaders & helpers;
- Sunday School (u18) teachers & helpers;
- Leaders and Assistant Leaders of Church Parent & Toddlers Group;
- The PCC's Child Protection Officer;
- PCC-approved Home Visitors for schemes that are wholly or mainly for families with children or vulnerable adults;
- Leaders, Assistants and Drivers for PCC-approved luncheon clubs or other community activities that are wholly or mainly for vulnerable adults.

PCCs and dioceses should neither obtain ISA registration nor request CRB clearance for those for whom it is not required. To do so may be acting illegally and could lead to prosecution.

Mixed age groups

Those who have a 'rank and file' (membership) role in mixed-age groups will not be able to get CRB checks or ISA registration. However, there needs to be at least one person other than the leader who has a CRB check to keep an eye on the welfare of any young people involved during and around the group activity. It may be more convenient to have several such people so that at least one is present, or a rota could be worked.

Sixteen and seventeen year olds

The occasional presence of a sixteen or seventeen year old in a group which is otherwise composed of adults does not make the group a mixed-age group in the sense given above. However, a group which has children under sixteen (even if only one) is such an activity. If a child under sixteen is an occasional attender then the *frequency* and *intensity* criteria will apply in considering whether the group counts as a mixed age group.

Occasional helpers

Those who help regularly with Regulated Activity, even if only occasionally, should apply for CRB checks. They should also apply for ISA registration if their work meets the frequency and intensity criteria.

Transport

Those who transport children on behalf of the church will need to be CRB-checked and ISA-registered. Transport also includes escorting children from one place or church activity to another. Private arrangements among parents are exempt.

Parents attending church events

Parents attending Sunday School, Parents and Toddlers groups or similar, where contact with other peoples' children is likely to be incidental and where there are ISA-registered leaders supervising the activity, are not counted as being engaged in regulated activity and therefore will not be eligible for registration.

Pastoral visiting for families with children or vulnerable adults

Those who are engaged in pastoral visiting or appointed as pastoral visitors for the general congregation will not normally be required to register with the ISA. The definition of vulnerable adults for ISA purposes is restricted mainly to those in receipt of care, in nursing homes or receiving specific services targeted to them.

The statements above are not exhaustive, and there will be posts where a parish or diocese needs to consider carefully the role descriptions against the VBS eligibility criteria. If you are unsure about whether groups you work with fit the definition of 'vulnerable adults', or if you are in doubt about where a role fits, contact your Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.