

The current system of making checks on external and criminal information for prospective workers with children and VA is through the CRB. That scheme requires the applicant to apply through the umbrella body (ie the CAS) with a fee if paid work and the information is then transmitted through the CAS to the employer or organisation as well as to the individual. As you know, you need a fresh CRB check for every job and it is only as good as the day it is issued. When a check comes back to CAS with material on it then CAS sends to the denomination which conducts an enquiry as to whether this person should be used or not. In Methodism that enquiry amounts to an experienced person conducting a risk assessment on the ground, preparing a report and then the Senior Persons' Group makes a decision. There is a right for the individual to make their views known and the denomination would advise the church whether that person should be suspended in the meantime

The shortcomings of the system are that it is cumbersome; it does not collect all relevant information and there may be lack of consistency in decision making. It also does not update. Those shortcomings were made very clear in the Soham murders and the Bichard enquiry into that recommended a new system which addressed those shortcomings. The DCSF picked that up and came up with the *ISA

The ISA is intended to produce *consistent decision making, *provide pre employment vetting, *replace the plethora of lists (POVA and POCA), *introduce continuous checking and cover greater numbers (anticipated 11m in 5 years). It will also reduce bureaucracy because there will be a single application by the individual

ISA is a non departmental public body in Darlington employing up to 250 people and a board. It will work in partnership with the CRB and the CRB will support the ISA in making decisions by developing and delivering admin and application processes.

*The scheme comes on stream in October 2009 but will be introduced in managed phases

How is application made. If you want to work with children or vulnerable adults from October 2009 you will need to apply to be registered with the ISA. Application is made through the employer or prospective employer or by yourself if you are self employed. When application is made the CRB will collect the info and give it to the ISA to make the decision.

If you are already working with children or VA and have a CRB then it will be phased in for you. If you are already working with children or VA and don't have a CRB then you will need to apply to the ISA quickly. That doesn't apply to anyone in the Methodist Church. There is no fee for volunteers but otherwise process for volunteers and employees is identical.

*Employers need to check the status before commencement of employment and they do this online by entering the site and entering the employee's registration number. They will only receive that from the employee and will only receive information as to status. The employee may not be in post before receiving the outcome

*What work is covered The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which invented the ISA provides that the ISA will make all decisions about who should be barred from working with children and VA and will deal with regulated and controlled activities in paid and voluntary work

What are regulated and controlled activities. Regulated activity is work with children or vulnerable adults which is frequent (2 in 30 days) intensive or overnight contact. Also certain defined activities. Controlled activity is frequent or intensive support work in health setting, working for certain organisations with access to sensitive records support work in adult care settings (eg day centre cleaners) when work is 3 times in 30 days. Only an ISA registered person can undertake regulated activity

It is individual's responsibility to register and employer's to check

It will develop 2 lists for those barred from working with children (the children's barred list) and those barred from working with VA (the adults' barred list). May be on both lists

How do you get on a list. Some offences automatically result in being on the barred lists. Some result in automatic barring with a right to make representations. Also some employers are obliged to give information and some employers may do so. Indeed anybody may do so. That would lead to the individual being asked to make representations before a decision is reached. When a decision is reached the individual may appeal on fact or law but not discretion to the Care Standards tribunal

*If you apply for a job or work in regulated activity or with children in a domestic setting knowing you are barred you will be committing a criminal offence. If you are employed without the employer having received an outcome then the employer is committing an offence

When you have been employed if you are subsequently barred your record is updated and the employer who checked you is notified (? If left there or did not get the job)

The idea is that this will be more straightforward and less cumbersome as well as providing a central place for information to be collated and help to prevent an Ian Huntley situation

*However, as with current system need to bear in mind the majority of those dangerous to children and VA will not figure on any list and will not be barred. It is safe recruitment and working practices which protects both children and VA and those who work with them