

Do we really need the ISA?



HAVS talk, 24th November 2009

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BBC News 11 September 2009



The government's new Vetting and Barring Scheme will begin operating from October 2009.

Critics have branded the new rules as "insulting" and say they could deter volunteers.

Conservative Party view



Shadow home secretary Chris Grayling has warned that a Conservative government would scale back the system, saying a sense of perspective is "desperately needed".



The Times September 15th



**Soham police officer
attacks Government's
new vetting scheme**



Criticism



The man who led the investigation into the Soham murders has attacked the Government's new vetting scheme, which will force 11 million adults to have formal criminal record checks.

(DCS Chris Stevenson)

Criticism



Retired Detective Chief Superintendent Chris Stevenson said that “no amount of legislation, record keeping or checking” could prevent future murders of children by paedophiles. He accused ministers of creating a state of paranoia after the deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in 2002.

Criticism



Huntley's date of birth was entered incorrectly when the vetting check was made.



Other stories in the press



High-profile authors including Philip Pullman threatened to stop school reading tours if they had to register to “prove they weren’t a paedophile”



Sir Roger Singleton



"There was a massive amount of misreporting and comment that was based on the assumption that the scheme would interfere with the sensible day-to-day arrangements parents make for lift-sharing to take their kids to school, none of which was intended or is intended,"



ED Balls' Review



EDBALLS

- *MP for the Normanton constituency*
- *Labour's parliamentary candidate for Morley & Outwood*
- *Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families*

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...to be published in December, will seek to allay these fears and check whether the government has "drawn the line in the right place" between what should be regulated and what should be left alone.

Sire Michael Bichard



Sir Michael Bichard's report



“...I have discovered errors, omissions, failures and shortcomings which are deeply shocking and which meant that, for example, there was not one single occasion in all of the contacts with Huntley - including sexual offences allegations notified to Humberside Police - when the record systems worked properly. **That means that I cannot be confident that it was Huntley alone who 'slipped through the net'.**”

“Dull” Systems



“We should never forget how important apparently dry looking systems can be - and we should never undervalue the people who administer them.

The consequences of when these systems go wrong can be devastating.”

Sir Michael Bichard



Richard's recommendations



A registration scheme for those wishing to work with children or vulnerable adults, which employers could access.

The register would confirm that there is no known reason why someone should not work with children or vulnerable adults.

Richard's Recommendations



- The register would also have a built-in appeal process for applicants before any information about them reaches a prospective employer.

Richard's recommendations



Training for head teachers and school governors to ensure interview panels reflect the importance of safeguarding children and, ... no interview should take place without at least one member having received this training.

Richard's recommendations



- The precise responsibility of the registered bodies through whom vetting checks are made
- The need to access relevant non-police data (for example, HM Customs & Excise)
- The thoroughness of checks on the growing numbers of overseas workers

BBC September 2009



"Would the new vetting service bar someone like Ian Huntley?"

Its answer is: "One of the key features of the Huntley case was that, although his behaviour had caused concern to a number of agencies, and on a number of different occasions, no single organisation had access to a full picture or had put together those aspects of the picture that they had."

BBC continued



The ISA says that a key strength of the new scheme is that "it has access to non-conviction information from different sources when building a view of an individual's unsuitability to work with children or vulnerable adults".

Volunteering England



- **Statement on ISA Vetting and Barring Scheme**



Volunteering England



“the single system of registration with the ISA will, we believe, be more straightforward for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations than the current process”

15 September 2009



What is the ISA?



- **Parliament has established a statutory body to take decisions on who should be barred, called the Independent Safeguarding Authority**
- **This has formed the Vetting and Barring Scheme (the VBS) which operates the Vetting and Barring Board (the VBB)**

ISA – VBS - VBB



- **The Vetting and Barring Board has 10 members with expertise in safeguarding, chaired by Sir Roger Singleton, and more than 200 caseworkers/decision makers**
- **People can apply for vetting with the ISA via the website**

Who has to apply?



- Anyone who works or applies to work with children or vulnerable adults - either in a paid or voluntary capacity
- There is a one-off £64 fee for those seeking employment, which is waived for volunteers
- So the scheme covers teachers, private tutors and sports coaches but also people such as doctors and nurses, opticians and dentists and taxi drivers on education contracts

How long will registration take?



For anyone who does not have a caution or conviction, ISA registration will take seven days. However, the process will take longer if the ISA finds suspicious "patterns of behaviour" that need to be assessed. An individual can also opt to undergo an independent risk assessment by an external agency.

Does it replace CRB checks?



- No. What ISA registration shows is that there is no known reason why the applicant should not work with children or vulnerable adults.
- It does not check for malpractice or all criminal convictions if they are not relevant. Employers concerned about wider issues will still need to obtain an Enhanced CRB check.

I volunteer at my child's sports club

- do I have to apply?



- Yes, anyone working or volunteering on behalf of a third party organisation (for example a sports club or a charity) who has frequent or intensive access to children or vulnerable adults will have to be registered with the scheme. For volunteers, registration is free.
- If you volunteer with more than one club you only need to be registered once - the club can then check you have a registration - as long as you give your consent.

I occasionally help with reading at a school: do they mean me?



The checks will be necessary for anyone who has contact regularly, intensively or overnight - defined as once a month, three times or more in a period of 30 days, or between the hours of 2am and 6am.

(the above may be changed following Ed Balls' review)

Hilton Dawson - BASW's view



"We are in danger of forgetting why we needed the system in the first place,"

"This is all about how seriously the public, the media and the government are actually prepared to change child protection."



Hilton Dawson - BASW's view



“So with the Tories' plans to scale it back, are there any worries over the outcome of next year's general election?”

I would certainly expect any party or politician that seriously wants to run for high office to recognise the realities of child protection and to put those concerns far ahead of easy rhetoric,”