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Important Information Regarding Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

As I am sure you are aware there are changes taking place to the current Safeguarding Legislation. I have tried to outline below the basics of the new changes. They affect all churches who undertake any work with children, young people or vulnerable adults (whether you work with 2 or 200).

- **What is the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and Vetting and Barring Scheme (V&B Scheme)?**

The Independent Safeguarding Authority is a Government sponsored body with independent status. The ISA will assess the information held on people who want to work or volunteer with children, young people or vulnerable adults. The job of deciding who should be barred from working with vulnerable groups will be taken by the ISA.

The Vetting and Barring Scheme is a new, improved, checking and monitoring scheme aiming to prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering with children and/or vulnerable adults. Anyone who works with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults will be required **by law** to register under the Government's new Vetting and Barring Scheme.

It will be illegal to recruit anyone for certain roles without checking their vetting and barring status. It will also be illegal for someone who is barred from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults to apply for a position (whether paid or voluntary).

- **What roles are covered by the scheme?**

Any activity of a specified nature that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently, intensively and in some cases overnight. Any activity allowing contact with children or vulnerable adults that is in a specified place frequently or intensively. Any activity which involves day to day management or supervision of people carrying out such roles. The exact definitions of 'frequently' and 'intensively' are available on request from myself or Alan Elson, Safeguarding Administrator, Baptist House (we are awaiting for the final definitions from the latest Home Office review).

- **What does this mean for churches?**

The V&B Scheme will include all church activities with children, such as Sunday Schools; after school clubs and organizations; carer and toddler groups; and crèches. It will include ministers and pastors. It may include lay preachers. It includes church visiting schemes specifically for a vulnerable group, such as those 'shut in' or elderly.

This new system will create a register of those people allowed to work with these groups and also bar individuals who pose a risk. It will be the biggest and most rigorous scheme of its kind in the world, under the new system more jobs and activities will be covered than ever before.

- **What is the cost of registration?**

The cost for an individual to be registered will be £64. It will be free for those undertaking voluntary work only.

- **How does someone become registered?**

To become registered on the V&B Scheme the applicant will need to complete a combined form for both the Criminal Record Bureau application and registration with the Independent Safeguarding Authority. New CRB / ISA registration forms will be issued to BUGB from April 2010, they will be similar to existing criminal records application forms and will be available in the same way from the Baptist Union.

The ISA Registration is fully portable for any work with children or vulnerable adults.

The ISA Register will be continually updated, if someone who is registered becomes barred (ie because they have committed an offence against a child or vulnerable adult for example) employers and voluntary groups will be informed.

- **Will people still need to obtain criminal record disclosures?**

You only need to register with the ISA once, however, multiple CRB Disclosures will continue to be needed if people work within a number of organisations. The only change to CRB is that anyone working with these groups will need enhanced checks (not standard).

There are some less sensitive roles where registration with the V&B Scheme may be sufficient. The Baptist Union is consulting with ecumenical partners to develop a consistent approach.

- **Refreshment of CRB Disclosures**

At the moment, the rule that BU Council established, that the life of a CRB Disclosure is five years, still stands. If you have people who need to refresh their Disclosures before the end of 2010, please do this before the end of May 2010. Inevitably, there will be some difficulties around the launch date of the ISA scheme – by getting Disclosures before the end of May you should avoid any problems that may arise. People with relatively new Disclosures will come into the system later in the programme. Do not try to get everyone registered at the start of the scheme – it isn't necessary and will create difficulties. There is a timetable to follow (see below) please adhere to it.

- **What new duties does the scheme require of churches?**

From Oct 2009, employers (that includes churches who appoint volunteers) have greater responsibility under this new scheme. If a worker or volunteer is dismissed or disciplined as a result of harmful or inappropriate behaviour, the ISA must by law be informed. Even if the person moves away, or leaves the organisation while an investigation is taking place, that information must be passed to the ISA. See the ISA website for all the information about this and the referral form (www.isa-gov.org).

You are recommended to talk to your Regional Minister when these situations arise and link up with the relevant person in the Social Services Department. Even if someone else is reporting the case, you must do so too because you will have a different perspective on the situation. Examples of relevant conduct are: endangering or likely to endanger a child, child pornography, inappropriate use of violent pornography, behaviour that is of a sexual nature involving a child and is inappropriate.

- **Training**

It is vital that all churches understand the implications of the vetting and barring scheme for themselves and all those who work with u18s and vulnerable adults. BUGB is working with ecumenical partners to prepare training for trainers and Regional Ministers on the implementation of ISA. These sessions will be delivered during February and March 2010 with the aim that local training can be done from April to June. Local training will be ecumenical so may not necessarily be offered in your area by a Baptist – however, please do still attend these local sessions. All churches will have to be compliant with the new regulations and we will all have to fulfil the same requirements. Given the tight deadlines, working ecumenically is believed to be the most efficient way forward for us all.

- **Safe To Grow**

Clearly *Safe To Grow* will need to be changed to reflect the new systems. Work is already under way and we are hopeful that the new book will be available at the Baptist Assembly.

- **Key Dates**

- October 2009 - duty to refer to ISA those who have given cause for concern about their behaviour and the risk of serious harm to children or vulnerable adults
- February / March 2010 – training for trainers run by Christian Forum on Safeguarding
- April – June 2010 – local church briefings
- May 2010 – target date for submitting CRB Disclosure applications that need refreshing before the year end
- May / June 2010 – new forms should be available to BUGB
- 26 July 2010 – new workers may apply for ISA registration before they start work
- 1 November 2010 – new workers must apply for ISA registration before starting work
- November 2010 – employers will be able to make online checks of workers to determine registration status (volunteer and paid)
- 1 April 2011 – those people currently working in ‘regulated’ positions can apply for registration and an enhanced Disclosure (further details to follow)
- From 2011 – 2014 – all current holders of Disclosures to enter the new system, starting with the oldest Disclosures first.

- **Further information can be found in;**

Transform (BUGB publication sent to church secretaries). These are available on line at:
http://www.baptist.org.uk/resources/leadership_admin.html

ISA website www.isa-gov.org.uk or phone 0300-123 -1111

PLEASE COMPLETE THE ATTACHED FORM

To enable the NWBA to ensure churches receive the necessary information regarding these changes in safeguarding legislation, we need a contact person in each church who we can send updated information to as and when it becomes available. This person should be verified by the trustees of the church, and the person needs to be willing to fulfil the following responsibilities:

To receive relevant updates and information from NWBA and BUGB and ensure that these are disseminated to the church leaders and all leaders of groups who care for vulnerable adults and children.

To inform NWBA if for any reason they believe that relevant safeguarding procedures are not being followed.

To inform NWBA of any changes to their contact details.

To inform NWBA should they cease to fulfil this responsibility and wherever possible provide contact details for a successor.

Thank you,
Yours sincerely

Rev Sandra Crawford
Regional Minister

Regional Minister
Revd P A Jump BA

Regional Minister (Youth)
Revd S L Crawford BA

Regional Minister (Church Life)
Revd E A Funnell BA