

# VETTING & BARRING SCHEME

## A guide to the VBS for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

**The Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) is designed to ensure that anyone who presents a known risk to vulnerable groups (specifically children and vulnerable adults) is prevented from working with them.**

### **Why has this scheme been introduced?**

Following the Soham murders in 2002, the Richard Inquiry was commissioned. The Inquiry's recommendations led to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, which recognised the need for a single agency to vet all individuals wanting to work with young people or vulnerable adults. This is the purpose of the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) and of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) which has been set up to administer the scheme.

### **Does the scheme affect the whole of the UK?**

No. The VBS only affects those volunteering in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A similar scheme is being set up in Scotland under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, information about which will be provided as soon as it is available.

### **Who in Scouting needs to be registered on the scheme?**

In Scouting, those who:

- wish to become a Member or Associate Member; or
- may have unsupervised access to young people; or
- will have involvement with the handling or management of funds; or

- will be assisting with overnight activities (including Nights Away); or
  - will be helping out once a month or more or on 4 or more days in a 30 day period
- will need to be registered on the VBS as part of the Personal Enquiry process.

### **When do people need to be registered on the VBS?**

To comply with the law, those covered by the above criteria will need to be registered on the VBS before their fourth day of helping out (over a 30-day period) or before undertaking any overnight activity, **which ever comes first**.

There will be a phased approach to getting volunteers registered on the VBS, as outlined below:

**New volunteers** will need to be registered on the VBS from 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010 onwards.

**Existing volunteers** will need to be registered on the VBS when their Criminal Records check is next renewed.

**By July 2015** all volunteers must be registered on the VBS.

Existing volunteers who have never completed a Criminal Records check will need to have a valid Disclosure and be registered on the VBS by July 2011.

### **How will people register?**

People will be registered on the VBS by The Scout Association as part of the Personal Enquiry. In England and Wales, this will be done by the applicant completing one of the below forms, available free of charge from the Scout Information Centre.

- [Adult Application \(AA\) Form](#)
- [Occasional Helper \(OH\) Form](#)
- [Repeat CRB Check \(RCRB\) Form](#)

The AA and OH Forms will now cover the requirements for a new applicant's CRB check, VBS registration and application for a role in Scouting. When ordering any of the above, you will need to order the 'England & Wales' versions of the form.

In Northern Ireland, applicants will complete an updated Access Northern Ireland (ANI) Form, which will be used in conjunction with the current AA and OH forms.

### How long will registration take?

The ISA has committed to providing responses about registration to applicants within 7 working days of the application being submitted.

### How will we know when someone becomes registered?

The current appointment process has been designed with VBS in mind. If you are a line manager or an administrator, you will be able to find out when someone is registered by checking on their record at [scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk) (through the 'Appointment' link on the Roles tab). If you are an applicant, you will receive notification of your registration direct from the ISA.

### Key features of the VBS

#### Registration is only required once.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority's (ISA's) records will be constantly updated as fresh information is gathered, so registration is only required once.

Registration is also portable across different agencies and organisations – once registered, people can provide other organisations with their 16 digit ISA registration number.

#### Registration is free for volunteers.

Registration on the VBS will be free for volunteers. If someone needs to be registered for their paid employment, a fee of £64 (£58 in Northern Ireland) is payable, as with CRB/ANI checks.

#### The need for CRB/ANI checking remains.

The ISA will take decisions to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. The CRB/ANI will continue to support organisations like us by providing us with access to an individual's full criminal record and other information. This allows us to assess an individual's suitability for a particular role, as is currently the case.

CRB/ANI checks will still need to be renewed every five years.

#### It will be a criminal offence for:

- A barred individual to try to get involved in Scouting
- Us to knowingly use someone in Scouting who is barred
- Us to use someone who is not registered on the scheme when they should be.

At the moment it is unclear exactly who in a Scouting situation will be judged as committing the offence. The Government guidance states that "*the body corporate, the directors of such a body, or the managers or manager directly responsible for hiring the individual*" could be held liable, but it is unclear how this will be applied in practice. In reality this is likely to remain unclear until such time as a case goes to court, and we would not wish to become a test case!

The best course of action for everyone is to:

- Ensure that adequate and robust processes are in place
- Ensure that people are aware of the processes (and the consequences of not following them)
- Ensure that the processes are carried out.

### Further Information

Further information about the **Vetting and Barring Scheme** can be found in the **Vetting and Barring Scheme factsheet and FAQs**, available to download from [www.scouts.org.uk/vbs](https://www.scouts.org.uk/vbs).

You can also contact The Scout Information Centre for more information on 0845 300 1818 or at [info.centre@scout.org.uk](mailto:info.centre@scout.org.uk).