



Independent Safeguarding Authority

July 2008

Stakeholders Newsletter

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Direct Communications Campaigns

We are currently preparing to launch the first of a series of ongoing communication campaigns planned to increase stakeholder knowledge of the Scheme. The first campaign will enable us to communicate directly with thousands of our higher level stakeholders (such as Criminal Records Bureau umbrella bodies, registered bodies and professional bodies). It will provide key information and tools for these organisations to communicate with their own stakeholders and member organisations about the Scheme. So look out for more letters and e-mails coming your way.

What the Papers Say

Government vetting policy in general and the new Scheme in particular have been in the media spotlight recently with some alarmist and inaccurate claims that checks were putting off volunteers, foreign exchange trips were under threat from new child protection rules and, according to a report by one think tank, 'poisoning the relationship between adults and children.'

Amid the scaremongering headlines, some expert voices of calm and reason got through. ChildLine founder and volunteer counsellor Esther Rantzen said on Radio 4's Today programme: "I want checks, I was delighted to be checked. There is nothing wrong with it. It doesn't affect my approach to children, my feeling of empathy for children."

Quoted in The Times, Girlguiding Chief Executive Denise King refuted claims that checks were a barrier to volunteering. Barnardo's Chief Executive Martin Narey wrote in the New Statesman: "We should applaud the establishment of the new Independent Safeguarding Authority whose work, I believe, will restore parental confidence in the people in such positions."

The CRB also came under fire with a front page Daily Telegraph story on 5 July headlined 'Hundreds wrongly branded criminals by CRB'. While factually accurate, the story lacked balance by failing to put the number of inaccurate disclosures into context. Accuracy stands at 99.98 per cent across 3.41 million disclosures issued last year, therefore 680 inaccurate disclosures makes up a tiny proportion of the CRB's work.

Consultation Meetings

As part of our ongoing drive to ensure the Scheme is robust in its safeguarding role without causing unnecessary bureaucracy for stakeholders, we are continuing to run our key consultative groups. These groups give high-profile organisations a regular opportunity to raise concerns, voice updates and play their part in shaping the Scheme. Our consultation groups consist of representatives from over 150 organisations ranging from trade unions and professional bodies to organisations representing smaller scale interest groups or sectors.

Scheme Guidance

During our recent stakeholder consultation meetings the issue of guidance, and particularly the planned timetable for the issue of detailed Scheme guidance, was a high profile issue. In response to these concerns, policy colleagues in the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) are currently drafting a proposed timetable for the Scheme guidance. Once this has been agreed (which we anticipate will happen in the next month) details will be made available via our website and these newsletters.

Recruitment

Following the impressive response to external advertisements for ISA Caseworker/ Decision Makers towards the end of last year, the ISA have now made over 110 conditional job offers. The standard of applicants has been impressive with applicants coming from a wide range of diverse sectors and bringing with them valuable knowledge and experience. Subject to the satisfactory completion of pre-appointment checks, the ISA will phase the appointment of these staff over the period August 2008 to February 2009. The ISA has also started to recruit Operational Casework roles at other senior and junior levels to manage and support the main group of Caseworker/Decision Makers.

The CEO has appointed three out of the four of the executive team; the Director of Operations, Head of Performance and Stakeholder Management and the Head of People and Development. The recruitment for the role of Head of Finance and Corporate Resources is currently taking place. Other recruitment to Corporate Services (people and development, finance, facilities management, business support etc) roles is also underway.

And finally don't forget.....

To keep checking our website at www.isa-gov.org for all the latest news, details of free information sessions, downloads, legal guidance and all the other tools that you'll need to help ensure that we are all ready for the introduction of the Scheme in October 2009.