

Criminal Records Regime and the Vetting and Barring Scheme

Last year the Government commissioned a review to consider if there was a need to remodel the Vetting and Barring Scheme and the CRB process. We have fed our views and experiences into the Sport and Recreation Alliance and CPSU who have represented our views in the various consultations with the Government, ISA and CRB.

Yesterday (Friday 11th February 2011) the government unveiled plans to scale back the vetting and barring scheme (VBS) and criminal records regime to common sense levels. As part of the Protection of Freedoms Bill, the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg announced that there will be a number of changes to simplify the vetting process for people working with children and vulnerable adults.

The proposals include:

- merging the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority to form a streamlined new body providing a proportionate barring and criminal records checking service;
- a large reduction in the number of positions requiring checks. Only those working closely and regularly with children and vulnerable adults will need them;
- portability of criminal records checks between jobs to cut down on needless bureaucracy;
- an end to a requirement for those working or volunteering with vulnerable groups to register with the VBS and then be continuously monitored;
- stopping employers who knowingly request criminal records checks on individuals who are not entitled to them.

What will change and what will be kept?

- a barring function will be maintained;
- the registration and monitoring requirements will be abolished;
- the definition of 'regulated activity' will be redefined.
- The government will also keep the scope of CRB checks under review to ensure they are not putting people off volunteering.

What does rowing need to do?

1. Wait for further updates

The Protection of Freedoms Bill is expected to become law by early 2012. There will be a consultation period before the summer. We will continue to work with the Sport and Recreation Alliance and the CPSU to represent our views in further consultations and understand the full implications of the changes.

2. Continue working with CRB as usual

The Criminal Records Bureau is responsible for criminal records disclosures and we will continue working with the same procedures that are currently in place until the full implications of the changes are understood and the legislation is implemented.

3. Ensure everyone in rowing continues to meet their legal obligations under the current Vetting and Barring Scheme

- a) To refer information to the 'Independent Safeguarding Authority' if you dismiss an individual because they have caused harm or because they may have caused harm to a child or a vulnerable adult;
- b) To not knowingly employ a barred person in 'regulated activity'.

4. British Rowing's Child Protection Group will review our Safeguarding policy and relevant procedures in the light of this new legislation and forthcoming government guidance and will bring any proposed changes to Council in due course. We will also endeavour to establish what impact these changes will have on insurance requirements with regard to recruitment of coaches and volunteers working with vulnerable groups.

Adapted from Sports and Recreational Alliance Compliance alert notice, with thanks.

Annamarie Phelps
Child Protection Officer