

I am announcing today that the commencement of voluntary registration with the new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which was due to begin on 26 July, will be brought to a halt as of today.

The Government has made clear its intention to bring the criminal records and Vetting and Barring regimes back to common sense levels. Until this remodelling has taken place, we have decided to maintain those aspects of the new Scheme which are already in place, but not to introduce further elements.

The safety of children and vulnerable adults is of paramount importance to the new government. We will therefore maintain the current arrangements under which the Independent Safeguarding Authority is able to bar from “regulated activities” those considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults, and appropriate cases must be referred to them. Criminal records checks will also remain available for those eligible to receive them, and will continue to be required for certain posts where regulations are already in place.

However it is vital that we take a measured approach in these matters. Vulnerable groups must be properly protected in a way that is proportionate and sensible. The remodelling of the VBS will ensure this happens.

The terms of reference for the remodelling of the VBS and of the criminal records regime are currently being considered and a further announcement will be made in due course.