

PRESS RELEASE



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GP AND DENTAL EMPLOYEE VETTING 'NOT OPTIONAL', SAYS MDDUS

The recent changes to the regulatory body which helps prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults throws up implications for doctors, dentists and practice managers as employers, warns the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland.

A new body called the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) came into force last month which now handles the process for checking employees who work with these groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This function was previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

The new rules require those involved in "regulated activity" to be checked. MDDUS advises that this includes general medical and dental practice as the ISA definition is "activity involving contact with children or vulnerable adults and is of a specified nature (such as medical treatment) on a frequent intensive or overnight basis."

Dr Gail Gilmartin, senior medico-legal adviser with the UK-wide MDDUS, says: "We advise all our members to comply with the revised regulations, and ensure that all employees are appropriately checked."

"Employers who do not ensure that their employees are ISA checked face tough penalties as it is now a criminal offence for individuals barred by the ISA to work or apply to work in a GP or dental practice where they would come into contact with children and vulnerable adults."

The rules of the new scheme say that it is the responsibility of the employer to check the status of potential employees, and in due course, existing employees.

It is also the responsibility of the employer to make referrals to the scheme, so that if someone works for you and does something that could bar them you have a legal obligation to tell the ISA.

The timeline is that from the launch of the new scheme last month, employers now have a duty to start referring information to the ISA about people that could pose a threat.

New employees and those changing jobs in regulated activity do not need to start applying for ISA-registration until July 2010 and ISA-registration does not become mandatory for these workers until November 2010. All other staff will be phased into the scheme from 2011.

In Scotland the existing rules – from the regulatory body Disclosure Scotland – currently remain unchanged with employees working with patients requiring enhanced disclosure status. However, a new system called the “Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme” is being introduced in 2010 and will be similar to the ISA scheme south of the border.

Ends

For further information contact Colin Calder on 0141 616 2677 or 07850 510881.

Note to editors

MDDUS is a medical defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medico- and dento-legal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK. For further information on MDDUS go to www.mddus.com.