

## **SIAA Response**

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# **Protection of Vulnerable Groups and the Disclosure of Criminal Information**

July 2018

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) is Scotland's national membership body for advocacy organisations. The SIAA promotes, supports and defends independent advocacy in Scotland. It aims to ensure that independent advocacy is available to any person who needs it in Scotland.

We agree that there is a need for a much more streamlined and straightforward process for protection of vulnerable groups and the disclosure of criminal information and a need for a system which is easy to use and understand.

We believe it is important that cost is not a barrier and think that the pricing referred to in the consultation could potentially be discriminatory. We think it is important that all volunteering checks should be free regardless of whether it is an individual or organisational cost particularly as it would be mainly third sector organisations who would be faced with paying the costs.

Although there are certainly benefits that would come with a digital system we have some concerns about accessibility issues around a solely digital based system and we would like to see alternative formats (e.g. paper-based, additional languages and accessible formats) available to ensure that no one is excluded.

With regards to Level 2 disclosure, we would like to see some justification behind the rationale of which professions / roles have been included.

With regards to the roles / jobs listed in Annex B we believe there are numerous roles which aren't listed and would support an alternative list with additional roles provided by the third sector.

We agree that the Scottish Government should offer statutory guidance as this would ensure a consistent approach and application across Scotland. We believe this guidance should be clear and easy to understand to ensure a clear, consistent approach across all local authority areas.

In relation to Self-Directed Support, we believe that safeguards should be in place and agree that supported people arranging self-directed social care should be able to access the records of carers, personal assistants etc.

With regards to charity trustees, we agree that the law should be changed to fix the anomaly regarding charities only having one main purpose. We believe there is a need for consistency in

regulation to children and vulnerable adults, that the same rules should apply and that this should be extended to the legislation.

We also believe it is important that the new system strikes the right balance between robust public protection and the avoidance of unintended consequences. It is also essential that the system works proportionately and protects the freedoms we all expect living in a democratic society.

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