

## CLAS CIRCULAR 2021/19 (10 September 2021)

### Disclaimer

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It would be very helpful if members could let us know of anything that appears to indicate developments of policy or practice on the part of Government or other matters of general concern that should be pursued.

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## EMPLOYMENT

### European ID Cards: changes at the UK Border from 1 October

For information

Members should perhaps be aware that on 1 October 2021 the rules governing entry to the UK with an EU, EEA or Swiss national identity card will change. Up to and including Thursday 30 September 2021, all EU, EEA and Swiss citizens can use their national identity card to enter the UK, but that concession is about to end. There is a helpful explanation of the new rules [here](#).

[Source: *Lexology*, 6 September]

### Remote right-to-work checks

For information

The UK Government has [announced](#) that the temporary concession on remote right-to-work checks will now continue until at least 5 April 2022.

All employers have a duty to check the right to work of their employees to prevent illegal working and to establish a statutory excuse against a civil penalty. In many cases, this has involved meeting the employee and checking their documents in person; however, the following temporary changes were made on 30 March 2020 and remain in place until **5 April 2022** (inclusive):

- checks can currently be carried out over video calls;
- job applicants and existing workers can send scanned documents or a photo of documents for checks using email or a mobile app, rather than sending originals; and
- employers should use the [Home Office Employer Checking Service](#) if a prospective or existing employee cannot provide any of the accepted documents.

Checks continue to be necessary and employers must continue to check the prescribed documents set out in [right to work checks: an employer's guide](#) or use the [Home Office right to work online service](#). *It remains an offence knowingly to employ someone who does not have the right to work in the UK.*

[Source: Home Office, 30 August]

**UK points-based immigration system: sponsorship roadmap**

For information

The Home Office has [published](#) a "sponsorship roadmap" in relation to the UK points-based immigration system, which explains the future changes the Government will make to the sponsorship system.

[Source: Home Office, 26 August]

## FAITH & SOCIETY

### COVID-19 guidance and documentation

For information

The Church of England issued further revised guidance on 1 September: [Opening and managing church buildings in step 4 of the Roadmap out of Lockdown, v.2](#). It has removed the older and out-of-date documents that had been retained for reference during the first weeks of Step 4.

The Church in Wales updated [Covid 19 Guidance Marriages and Funerals Alert Level 0](#) and [Covid 19 Churches Risk Assessment Guidance Alert Level 0](#) on 3 September.

The guidance from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales published in July, [Covid-19 Route Map: Step 4 Guidance](#), is still current.

[Sources: Church of England, 1 September: CBCEW, 15 July]

## FUNDING

### Faith New Deal Pilot Fund

For information **and possibly for action**

The UK Government has [announced](#) a £1 million Faith New Deal Pilot Fund, under which faith groups will be able to apply for grants for projects providing innovative solutions to issues such as food poverty, poor mental health, combating loneliness and isolation, providing debt advice and helping those who were unemployed during the pandemic get back to work.

The Faith New Deal pilot fund is a response to recommendations made in Danny Kruger's report for government, '[Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant](#)' and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society's report, '[Keeping the Faith – Partnerships between faith groups and local authorities during and beyond the pandemic](#)'. Both set out the ability of faith groups to provide innovative solutions to complex problems and make valuable contributions to all parts of society.

The fund will be open to faith-based organisations to deliver projects to provide community wide services open to all the local population. Additionally, the funded projects will aim to have a positive impact in fostering good relations between people of faith and those of other faiths or none within local communities. For more information see the [Faith New Deal Pilot Fund prospectus](#).

[Source: MHCLG, 9 September]

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Landlords rates discount deadline approaching

For information **and possibly for action**

The Northern Irish Department of Finance has reminded landlords that their rate bill must be paid in full by **Thursday 30 September 2021**, in order to secure a 10% discount on this year's rates. Landlords are advised to allow a minimum of five working days for any payment to reach LPS.

If you are responsible for paying the rates on one or more properties that you rent out, you may be entitled to a 10% allowance on your current year's rates. For rented properties with a capital value greater than £150,000 where the tenant currently pays the rates, the landlord can enter into a formal agreement with Land and Property Services (LPS) to ensure they are eligible for this allowance in the future. For more information on terms and conditions and how to do this, click [here](#).

Landlords can pay online at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/rates) or by contacting the LPS helpline on 0300 200 7801.

[Source: NI Department of Finance, 8 September]

## ODDS & ENDS

### Changes to charity banking with HSBC

For information

David White, the Deputy Director of Finance at Church House, has been in touch about difficulties experienced by C of E parochial church councils in the diocese of Hereford with the HSBC Safeguard process around Know Your Customer / identity checking. Some have had multiple requests for information and in a couple of cases HSBC froze the PCC's bank account pending receipt of updated ID information. He got in touch with their Head of Charities, and as a result the bank has produced a guide for Religious Organisations for HSBC's Safeguard process which can be found right at the bottom of [this link](#).

Several PCCs have also received letters telling them that HSBC is going to introduce charging – albeit at a reduced fee – for its Charitable Bank Accounts. There is more information [here](#).

[Source: HSBC]

### Where next for data protection?

For information

The Government has [announced](#) that it proposes to reform the UK's data protection regime to make it more "innovation-friendly" and is to launch a consultation on possible changes to 'unlock more trade and innovation by reducing unnecessary barriers and burdens on international data transfers, thereby opening up global markets to UK businesses'. Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said that he was 'determined to seize the opportunity by developing a world-leading data policy that will deliver a Brexit dividend for individuals and businesses across the UK' and that it meant 'reforming our own data laws so that they're based on common sense, not box-ticking'.

We won't know the likely impact of this until we see the detailed proposals, but we are very conscious that CLAS members hold a lot of personal data on their worshippers. In the wider context, the issue may be complicated by the fact that, in June, the European Commission introduced a four-year sunset clause into its data adequacy agreement with the UK and stated that it could withdraw from the agreement at any time if the UK failed adequately to protect the data of EU citizens.

[Source: DCMS, 26 August]



**Driving outside the UK on or after 28 September 2021**

**For information**

*The following has nothing much to do with “religion” or “faith communities”, but it has been so little publicised that we thought it might be helpful to mention it.*

[Instructions from DVLA](#) on what is required on UK licence-plates when taking a vehicle abroad:

‘You do not need a GB or UK sticker to drive in Ireland, no matter when you are driving.

You will need to display a UK sticker clearly on the rear of your vehicle if your number plate has any of the following:

- a GB identifier with the Union flag (also known as the Union Jack);
- a Euro symbol;
- a national flag of England, Scotland or Wales;
- numbers and letters only - no flag or identifier

If your number plate includes the UK identifier with the Union flag (also known as the Union Jack), you do not need a UK sticker.

If you’re in Spain, Cyprus or Malta, you must display a UK sticker no matter what is on your number plate.

If you have a GB sticker, cover or remove it.’

[Source: DVLA, no date]

## SAFEGUARDING

### IICSA report finds child sexual abuse in most major UK religions

For information

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has published a [new report](#) which states that “child sexual abuse has been found in most major UK religions... with some found to have no child protection policies in place at all.” The following is from the IICSA’s press release.

“The *Child protection in religious organisations and settings* report examined evidence received from 38 religious organisations with a presence in England and Wales, with the figures provided to the Inquiry about known prevalence of child sexual abuse unlikely to reflect the full picture...

“The report finds that organisational and cultural barriers to reporting child sexual abuse within religious organisations and settings are numerous, varied and difficult to overcome. These include victim-blaming, an absence of discussion around sex and sexuality, and discouraging external reporting, thus prioritising the organisation’s reputation above the needs of victims of sexual abuse...

“Comprehensive child protection policies and procedures are essential to ensuring that children are protected against sexual abuse. Whilst the Inquiry found that some organisations do have effective policies implemented, in some settings not even basic child protection procedures are in place, despite serving large congregations.

“The report makes two recommendations:

“(i) that all religious organisations should have a child protection policy and supporting procedures; and

“(ii) that the government should legislate to amend the definition of full-time education to bring any setting that is the pupil’s primary place of education within the scope of a registered school, and provide Ofsted with sufficient powers to examine the quality of child protection when undertaking inspection of suspected unregistered schools.”

[Source: IICSA, 2 September]

## SCOTLAND

### Scottish Government: Programme for Government 2021-2022

For information

Nicola Sturgeon has announced her Government's [Programme for 2021-22](#). Among the proposed measure are:

- work to establish a National Care Service, which Ms Sturgeon said should be up and running within five years;
- a Gender Recognition Reform Bill would be tabled to make it easier for trans people to change their legally recognised gender;
- a consultation on changes to the justice system, including revisiting the "not proven" verdict in criminal trials and looking once more at separating the dual roles of the Scottish Law Officers;
- extra funding for frontline healthcare and mental health services;
- a new system of "wraparound" childcare before and after school and during the holidays;
- a fox control bill to strengthen the law on the use of dogs in hunts;
- stronger regulation of the sale of fireworks;
- work to develop a minimum income guarantee; and
- a Good Food Nation Bill to promote the food and drink sectors.

The Scottish Government has already published draft legislation for a new independence referendum.

[Source: Scottish Government, 7 September]

## TAXATION

### Chancellor's statement on health and social care

For information

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has [announced](#) a series of forthcoming changes to taxation to fund health and social care. In brief:

- From April 2022, National Insurance will rise by 1.25 per cent.
- The current 12 per cent NICs rate on earnings between £9,564 and £50,268 will rise to 13.25 per cent.
- The current 2 per cent NICs rate on earnings over £50,268 will rise to 3.25 per cent.
- Workers above state-pension age will also contribute to the new levy.
- Employers will be required to contribute an additional 1.25 per cent (employer National Insurance is currently 13.8 per cent)
- Anyone earning just under £10,000 will continue to be exempt.
- From 2023, the National Insurance increase will appear on people's payslips as a "Health & Social Care levy".

He also announced that there will be an Autumn Budget on **27 October**.

[Source: HM Treasury, 7 September]