

## CLAS CIRCULAR 2026/12 (30 June)

### Disclaimer

**CLAS is not qualified to advise on the legal and technical problems of members and does not undertake to do so. Though we take every care to provide a service of high quality, neither CLAS, the Secretary nor the Governors undertakes any liability for any error or omission in the information supplied.**

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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## CHARITIES AND CHARITY LAW

### Raising money for charity: public guidance

For information

The Charity Commission and the Fundraising Regulator, jointly, have just published Guidance for people who are thinking about fundraising for charity, in England and Wales, including fundraising for an emergency. The Guidance covers:

1. Fundraising effectively, legally and ethically
2. Raising money for an emergency situation
3. Fundraising for a personal cause
4. The Fundraising Regulator
5. The Charity Commission for England and Wales
6. Further help and information.

[Source: Charity Commission, 12 June]

### Fundraising updates for faith-based charities

For information

Stone King LLP has recently published Fundraising updates for faith-based charities, by Lee Coley. The article covers:

- the new UK-wide Code of Fundraising Practice;
- highlights of the Code for faith-based charities;
- common fundraising issues for faith-based charities – particularly, fundraising from congregations or faith communities, offerings, tithes and other collections, vulnerable people, and specific appeals for religious buildings;
- the Charity Commission's updated guidance on fundraising;
- the new charitable purpose soft opt-in for direct marketing;
- the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025;
- the new rules on "professional fundraisers" and "lower-paid collectors".

[Source: Stone King LLP, 24 June]

**Call for evidence: review of access to banking**

For information and **possibly for action**

The Access to Banking Services Review was commissioned by the Government in May 2026 to consider whether declining access to in-person banking services is causing consumer detriment and the scale of any such detriment, including to any specific groups of customers, such as younger or older customers, the vulnerable or digitally excluded customers.

CLAS intends to submit evidence to the Review, but members, especially those in rural areas, may be especially affected and may wish to submit evidence of their own.

The consultation will close on **20 July**, and submissions can be made [here](#).

[Source: HM Treasury, 8 June]

## FAITH AND SOCIETY

### New Faith Minister

For information

It has emerged that the new Faith Minister is [Lord Lemos](#), Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at MCHLG. He succeeds Nesil Caliskan MP and is the tenth person to hold the role in ten years. He [answered an Oral Question](#) in that capacity on 24 June.

[Source, Lords *Hansard* 24 June]

### Immigration sponsor licences

For information

[Immigration update: sponsor licence compliance for faith-based organisations](#): Aisha Choudry of Bates Wells suggests that there has been an increase in UK Visa and Immigration's scrutiny of sponsorship activity undertaken by faith-based organisations, and what to do in order to comply with the rules.

[Source: Bates Wells, 23 June]

### Draft Conversion Practices Bill

For information

The Government has published its draft Conversion Practices Bill. The proposed ban will set the criminal threshold for conversion practices as conduct that aims to change someone's sexual orientation or transgender identity through abusive acts that seriously harm the victim.

The draft Bill will create the following criminal offences:

- carrying out abusive conversion practices that cause serious harm, alarm or distress to the victim; and
- encouraging or assisting an abusive conversion practice performed outside England and Wales.

It also creates new civil Conversion Practice Protection Orders and breach offences to support victims and those currently at risk of abuse. They will be similar to protection orders for forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The Chairman of CLAS, Rt Revd Dr David Walker, has welcomed the draft Bill:

“I welcome the publication of this draft Bill as a positive step towards banning conversion practices. These have harmed LGBT people over many years, leaving many with lifelong trauma. This work is long overdue and comes after the General Synod of the Church of England voted, by a very large majority, in favour of the Government bringing forward a ban in 2017. I am pleased that this will bring an opportunity for consultation and scrutiny, so that substantial progress can at last be made.”

[Source: Office for Equality and Opportunity, 25 June]

### Faith security training

For information and **possibly for action**

The Home Office has launched a new training scheme for faith communities in England and Wales, delivered by CDS Support, which provides consultancy services in training, engineering and cyber security & information assurance. Its purpose is to explain how to reduce the risk of hate crime, anti-social behaviour, and serious threats.

The training scheme is aimed at faith leaders, trustees, facilities managers and community volunteers. It is completely free of charge.

Please use this [link](#) to sign up for both multi-faith and faith sessions in 2026.

[Source: Home Office, May 2026]

### Webinar: *A Practical Walk Through Martyn's Law*

For information and **possibly for action**

SAFE, established in 2019, is hosting a webinar with CST on the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2025 (aka “Martyn’s Law”) with an emphasis on Standard Duty Premises.

SAFE shares the CST’s security knowledge with groups outside the Jewish community that are vulnerable to violence, extremism or hate crime.

Please use this [link](#) to sign up.

[Source: CST, June 2026]

## PROPERTY AND PLANNING

### Hazards in rented properties: enforcement

For information and **possibly for action**

From 22 June, powers that have been brought into force under the Renters' Rights Act enable local authorities to issue fines of up to £7,000 on landlords who are found to have serious hazards in their rented properties.

The fine will apply to 21 types of hazards that are found to be "serious" – the most dangerous level – including freezing conditions, faulty electrics, fire hazards, structural issues and unsafe layouts.

[Source: MHCLG, 21 June]

### Webinar: Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025

For information and **possibly for action**

Historic England is organising a second webinar on the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (aka "Martyn's Law", but certainly not by us) on **21 July at 13:00**.

The webinar will be supported by the Home Office and will address questions submitted in advance via [Counter-terrorism security and the heritage sector – Fill in form](#). The joining link to the webinar will be found here once it goes live:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/education/training-skills/training/webinars/hem/> .

[Source: Historic England, 12 June]

### Open consultation: VAT treatment of land for the construction of new social housing

For information and **possibly for action**

This consultation seeks views on the introduction of a new VAT zero rate for land intended for the construction of social housing. It explores how current VAT rules affect land acquisition, development timing and cashflow, and invites views on the scope, design and administration of any new relief.

The Government welcomes contributions from any individual or organisation with an interest in this topic across the UK. This includes, but is not limited to, social housing providers, housing developers, landowners, constructors, tax agents and representative bodies.

This consultation will close on **18 August 2026**. Views can be submitted [here](#) and further information can be found [here](#).

[Source: HMRC, 23 June]

### Places of Worship Renewal Fund: update

For information and **possibly for action**

DCMS has told us, via the Places of Worship Forum, that it has received over 1,000 Expressions of Interest. It is currently assessing them and will be in touch with applicants by **Friday 10 July** to let them know if they are being invited to make a full application.

In anticipation of the high level of assistance applicants will require in preparing their full applications, DCMS has extended the time available to applicants to prepare their applications by a further week. If invited to apply, applications will now need to be submitted by **5 pm, Friday 7 August**.

From the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance [HRBA] an expanded **FAQ 11, dealing with loss of anticipated match funding, including from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme**. Amongst the clarifications **a restriction has now been dropped** (previously if your 'project' had received LPWGS funding you couldn't apply; now it more sensibly says that you can apply if it is 'different works'). A deadline is now given of **31 December 2026**, though please bear in mind that the money set aside for this purpose is limited.

On Thursday, there was a [short debate](#) on the Fund in the House of Lords. In reply, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at DCMS made the following points:

- “The fund will provide upfront capital grants to restore listed places of worship, with funding targeted towards the places that need it most.”
- The previous Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme was much valued by those caring for historic places of worship, but in the current fiscal environment, the Government needs to look carefully at how funding is targeted to ensure it delivers against its ambitions; many churches had not benefited because they could not raise the capital funds up front.
- The DCMS evaluation of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme showed that 80% of those who benefited said that they would have completed the works anyway and the DCMS internal analysis on past payments in the Listed Places of Worship Grant

Scheme data also shows that it disproportionately favoured places with less disadvantage.

- As to the devolved administrations, they had received Barnett consequential funding at the spending review, taking into account any changes to the overall DCMS settlement. DCMS had made them aware that the Barnett consequentials covered the new scheme and it was for them to consider whether or not to set up new arrangements.
- It was only when all eligible projects in or serving the places that face double disadvantage had been funded that other projects would be considered.
- Second priority would be given to areas with the greatest need, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Once eligible projects in these areas have been funded, projects with the greatest financial need, urgency of repair or community benefit would be considered.

Care of places of worship was a significant challenge. She would talk to the Church of England about how the Government, the Church, the lottery and others can work together to support these buildings.

This was the first round of a new scheme and DCMS was “monitoring feedback carefully using Historic England intelligence, reviewing social media and listening to our stakeholders to understand whether improvements to the process can be made”.

[Source: DCMS, Lords *Hansard*, 26 June]

### Vagrancy Act repeal

**For information**

The Vagrancy Act 1824, which made rough sleeping and begging a criminal offence, is [repealed](#) as of 29 June. The Government regards the Act as counter-productive, because “it has pushed vulnerable people away from support, increased the risk of fines or criminal records and made it harder for people to rebuild their lives” and its repeal “is a vital step in ending a system that has failed to address the causes of rough sleeping and in shifting the focus towards prevention, support and long-term solutions”.

[Source: MHCLG, 28 June]