

CLAS CIRCULAR 2026/15 (24 August)

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

New rules requiring DBS for volunteers

For action

From **1 September 2026**, an important DBS rule change will affect organisations that use volunteers and some other supervised workers to teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children.

The change **removes the existing supervision exemption from regulated activity with children**. This means that the fact that volunteers are supervised will no longer automatically keep an otherwise qualifying role outside regulated activity.

Further guidance is [here](#), including what constitutes a 'volunteer', and the type of check volunteers will need in line with new regulations.

[Source: DBS, 18 August]

Reminder: changes to small charities' accounts and examination threshold

For information and **possibly for action**

Following a public consultation last year, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport announced changes to accounting thresholds to help reduce costs and administrative effort for smaller charities. This is a reminder that these changes will come into effect on **30 September 2026** and will apply to accounting years that end on or after 30 September 2026.

The changes apply only in England and Wales.

[Source: The Charity Commission, Oct 2025]

FAITH AND SOCIETY

New Minister for Faith

For information

Florence Eshalomi (Vauxhall and Camberwell Green) [was appointed](#) Minister of State in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 21 July 2026. It has now emerged that she has been given the faith brief as Minister for Homelessness, Democracy, Communities and Faith. According to the Religion Media Centre, though she was appointed in July, her portfolio and appointment as Faith Minister was only confirmed in the last week.

[Source: GOV.UK, 19 August]

SCOTLAND

Support for listed places of worship

For information and **possibly for action**

Following the closure of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, the Scottish Government has [announced](#) a pilot scheme, the Scotland's Places of Worship Fund, to support eligible listed places of worship by helping them recover VAT costs associated with repair works. It is expected to open for applications in autumn 2026 and will operate as a standalone scheme until the end of March 2027, with up to £1 million available through the existing Historic Environment Scotland Grants budget. Funding will be allocated to eligible applicants first-come, first-served. The pilot will help assess demand for the scheme and provide evidence to inform any potential future funding arrangements.

[Source: Scottish Government, 18 August]

WALES

Call for evidence: inform the new Culture and Sport strategy for Wales

For information and **possibly for action**

The new Welsh Government is developing a Culture and Sport Strategy for Wales, and has issued a call for evidence on the future of culture and sport.

The new strategy will build on existing evidence, previous engagement and the knowledge held by sectors, communities and public bodies across Wales. Further information can be found [here](#); questions to consider include the current state of heritage. **Welsh members might use this as an opportunity to express concern about the closure of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme**, and we should be interested to see any responses from members.

Views can be submitted to: CultureandSportStrategy@gov.wales. The deadline for submission is **Friday 18 December 2026**.

[Source: The Welsh Government, 5 August]

NORTHERN IRELAND

Open consultation: Historic Environment Policy for Northern Ireland

For information and **possibly for action**

The Northern Ireland Executive is seeking views on the direction and priorities for Historic Environment Policy for Northern Ireland.

The historic environment includes all aspects of the environment resulting from interaction between people and places through time and is important for cultivating and maintaining identity and place.

The focus of this consultation is based on the draft vision statement and on the proposed seventeen policy aims which will form the basis of a new policy for the support and management of the historic environment.

Some of these policy aims include:

1. Developing best practice to identify and safeguard the historic environment
2. Supporting inclusive and diverse access to historic places for everyone
3. Investing in the capacity of owners, volunteers and organisations to care for and use local historic assets to meet their needs
4. Supporting heritage education and activity for inspiration, learning and enjoyment.

More of these aims and information on the background of the consultation can be found [here](#).

This consultation will close on **23 October** and views can be submitted [here](#).

[Source: Department for Communities, 14 August]

CLAS EVENTS

CLAS aims to hold meetings throughout the year on issues that are important and of concern to members. We currently have three meetings planned. Further information is below, and if you would like to attend, please email info@churcheslegislation.org.uk.

AI-Generated Complaints:

Churches are dealing with an increasing number of AI-generated complaints. The Charity Commission's current guidance is outdated because of the speed at which AI is moving. There is also evidence that complaints are becoming a legal issue whereas, previously, complaints were dealt with without recourse to law.

Jeremy Isaacson, a Partner at *Farrer & Co*, has kindly agreed to speak to us about how churches can best prepare for this new threat. Jeremy is a specialist in data protection and freedom of information law, and he regularly advises public authorities on request handling and dealing with complaints to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The meeting will be held online on **Thursday 10 September at 13:30**. Please let us know if you can join us and whether there are any specific points or types of complaints you would like Jeremy to address. To join the meeting on the day, please follow this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82757997549?pwd=lqfrAv7mUpfd8UpVCWiBXOxVuA7TaE.1>.

Meeting ID: 827 5799 7549

Passcode: 214109

The Equality Act and the EHRC Draft Code of Practice

Recent changes has included updated definitions of gender reassignment and new guidance on applying equality law in practice.

CLAS is holding an **online meeting on 28 September at 11:00** where we will discuss recent changes and steps that charities and churches may need to introduce to adhere to the guidance and any regulations.

Please let us know if you can join us and whether there are any specific points or questions you had. To join the meeting on the day, please follow this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85401725781?pwd=XxMyOKdLPQC0zohbNOs5IYgjlUUAUp.1>

Meeting ID: 854 0172 5781

Passcode: 430165

Future meetings:

CLAS is also holding an **in-person meeting** in October 2026, and we will inform members in due course. If you have any concerns or issues, please email us: info@churcheslegislation.org.uk.