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| Higher Education and Skills Group  **Participation Branch Memo**  **Department of Education and Training** |

***NUMBER:*** *2015 / 07/xx*

**TO:**

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| All Learn Local organisations | Adult Education Institutions |  |
| Workplace Learning Coordinators | LLENs Chairs and Executive Officers |  |

**FROM:** Bronwen Heathfield, Director, Participation Branch

**DATE:** 01/07/2015

**SUBJECT:** *New Criminal Offence: Failure to protect children from sexual abuse*

**ACTIONS / CRITICAL DATES:**

* *The new criminal offence becomes effective 1 July 2015*
* *All providers and should familiarise themselves with the new obligations.*
* *See the Department of Justice and Regulation fact sheet at* [*http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence*](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)

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**New Criminal Offence – Failure to protect children from sexual abuse**

The Victorian Government is strengthening laws to protect children from sexual abuse. This is in response to the Betrayal of Trust report, and reflects shared community responsibility to provide a safe environment for all children.

On 1 July 2015, a new criminal offence for failing to protect a child under the age of 16 from sexual abuse takes effect.

Those in a position of authority can be charged with the offence if they know of a substantial risk that an adult associated with their organisation will commit a sexual offence against a child under their care, authority or supervision of the organisation, but fail to take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

**IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

* If a child is in immediate danger, contact Victoria Police on 000 or your local police station