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# Guidance on the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme

## Background

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Membership Scheme was introduced by the Scottish Government in February 2011 under [Part 2 of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#). The scheme ensures that individuals with a known history of harm are prevented from gaining access to children and/or protected adults through their work.

## The Scheme

The PVG Scheme ends the use of the Basic, Standard and Enhanced disclosure checks under [the Police Act 1997](#). These checks are replaced with new types of disclosure records under the [Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act](#). The Scheme offers the following improvements on the previous disclosure system:

- Effective barring - the vetting information is not only collected but also assessed by [Disclosure Scotland](#) to ensure that individuals who are considered unsuitable on the basis of vetting information are prevented from entering the workforce;
- The adults list - for the first time in Scotland, a list of Disclosure Scotland keeps a list of those who are barred from working with protected adults. This is referred to as the 'the adults list'; and
- Continuous updating - after the initial disclosure check under the scheme, vetting information is continuously obtained so that new information indicating that an individual may be unsuitable can be acted upon.
- Access to Disclosures for personal employers – personal employers, such as a parent employing a sports coach for their child, can request to see a PVG Scheme Membership Statement to confirm that the person is not barred.

The PVG Act introduces the concept of 'regulated work' and makes it mandatory for those carrying out 'regulated roles' with children and adults in Scotland to apply for the scheme.

When an individual joins the PVG scheme, they are given a [PVG disclosure record](#). There are four different types of disclosure records which depend on whether you're already a member of the scheme, which groups you're a member of (either children and/or adults) and the reasons you have applied for the scheme.

## Regulated work

[Regulated work](#) is a term used by Disclosure Scotland to help employers or endorsing organisations establish whether an application to the PVG scheme is required. The PVG scheme does not apply to all paid and voluntary roles.

Regulated work is defined using the following criteria:

1. It has to be work, (paid or unpaid) – as defined in [section 95 of the PVG Act](#);
2. It has to be with either children or protected adults;
3. It has to be part of normal duties i.e. the activity is reasonably anticipated and could appear on the person's job description;
4. The work has to include - caring for children/young people - teaching, instructing, training or supervising children/young people - being in sole charge of children/young people - having unsupervised access to children/young people - being a host parent; and
5. There are no exceptions that apply.

Guidance on the types of work covered under the PVG scheme and any exceptions that may apply can be accessed [here](#).

### Types of PVG disclosure records

There are four different types of PVG disclosure record you can be given:

- Scheme Record - if you want to join the PVG scheme to do regulated work;
- Existing Scheme Record - if you're a PVG scheme member and you want to work with a different vulnerable group;
- Scheme Record Update - if you're a PVG scheme member joining a new organisation but working with the same vulnerable group; or
- Scheme Membership Statement - if you're self-employed doing regulated work or you're employing someone to do regulated work, like if you employ a personal care assistant.

Disclosure Scotland also runs free [training webinars](#) to help employers understand the different types of disclosure.

### How to apply to join the PVG Scheme

When an individual will be doing 'regulated work', their employer or the organisation they are going to be working with can [make an application to join the scheme](#). The employer or the organisation begins the first part of the application online, and the individual will complete the second part by email. The application is then submitted by the individual to Disclosure Scotland.

As part of the application process, the individual will need to provide their ID and proof of address.

A step-by-step guide on how to make an application to join the scheme can be accessed [here](#).

### The process

When Disclosure Scotland receives the application for membership, they will do the following:

- Authentication – Confirm the identity of the individual;
- Check that the applicant is not already barred from doing the type of regulated work they have applied for. If the individual is barred, they will be refused PVG Scheme membership and may be referred to the police;
- Creation of a unique ID scheme membership number;
- Undertake vetting searches (convictions; sex offender; other relevant information supplied by police forces and civil orders);

- Update the scheme record with any vetting information (in 90% of cases there will be none);
- Consider any vetting information (review any information which may suggest unsuitability and consideration for listing);
- Consider for listing;
- Issue a disclosure. If the applicant has been placed under consideration for listing, then the record disclosed will state this; and
- If an applicant is already barred a letter confirming that rather than a disclosure record will be issued.

## Fees

The fee to join the PVG Scheme is £59 unless the individual is a volunteer for a qualifying voluntary organisation, in which case it's free. Voluntary organisations can register directly with Disclosure Scotland to receive free checks or make use of a free service offered by the Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS).

If an individual who is a member of the Scheme requires another disclosure for another organisation, then the second organisation, can apply for a Scheme Record Update which costs £18. If the Scheme Record update reveals a change to the vetting information, then the organisation, can apply for a new Scheme Record for £41.

Further information on the fees and how an organisation can make a payment can be accessed [here](#).

Please contact [legalhelpdesk@apsco.org](mailto:legalhelpdesk@apsco.org) should you have further queries in relation to the PVG Scheme.

## Disclaimer

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