Scottish Episcopal Church

Safeguarding Office

Guidance on online PVG applications

When you are recruited to a Regulated Role (voluntary or paid work with children or protected adults) for the Scottish Episcopal Church it is a condition of your appointment that you apply for Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme Disclosure (criminal record check) before you take up your new role.

This means that you will need either to update your PVG Scheme Record if you are already a member because of your current employment or voluntary role, or, if you have not previously worked with children or protected adults in Scotland, complete a slightly longer application process to join the PVG Scheme.

Before starting your application for PVG please read the following policy documents available on the SEC website or by following the links below:

Safeguarding Policy (2020)

SEC Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

SEC policy on the secure handling, use, storage and retention of Disclosure information

Hard copies of SEC policies are available on request.

The PVG Scheme is operated by Disclosure Scotland. Further information about PVG is available at https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme

Employer Guidance

To ensure legal compliance, all PVG applications must be approved by or on behalf of the individual or church body that has responsibility for the appointment, usually a diocesan Bishop (form SEC PVG 1a for Clergy and Lay Ministry roles) or a PVG Co-ordinator (form SEC PVG 1b for Vestry appointments). In the absence of a PVG Co-ordinator a Vestry Secretary or Rector may countersign applications. Bishops may delegate responsibility for PVG applications to a member of diocesan staff.

PVG legislation does not allow organisations to apply for PVG to work with a vulnerable group unless there is an intention that the individual will commence work with the relevant group as soon as PVG membership is confirmed.

All SEC PVG applications are made in the name of the Scottish Episcopal Church and can only be submitted to Disclosure Scotland by the Safeguarding Team at the General Synod Office.

Please refer to the latest PVG guidance on the SEC website. The regulated roles approved by Disclosure Scotland are:

(1) **Clergy**: all ordained ministry roles (form 1a)
(2) **Lay Ministry**: All Licenced Lay Readers and Lay Worship Leaders appointed by a Bishop (form 1a)
(3) Training for Ministry (included under Lay Ministry): SEI students (SEI form)

(4) **Children's Worker**: All church activities provided for young people under the age of 18 (form 1b)
(5) **Pastoral Care Worker**: includes pastoral visitors and other pastoral support roles where the work is carried out on behalf of the SEC (form 1b)
(6) **Church Counsellor**: where a church offers a Counselling Service (form 1b)
(7) **Outreach Project Worker**: drug/alcohol dependency support, dementia support, etc, where **all the participants are protected adults** (form 1b)
(8) **Church Manager**: where the role includes the recruitment and supervision of employees and volunteers in regulated roles with children and vulnerable adults. General caretaking duties and other administrative roles, including that of PVG Co-ordinator) do not come under PVG requirements. (form 1b)

Many of our volunteers take on several different roles working with children and/or protected adults. Each volunteer need only apply for PVG once for the relevant workforce. Someone who joins PVG to teach Sunday School does not need to reapply to help with a Youth Group at a later date. However, they will need to apply to add protected adults to their PVG registration if they become a Pastoral Care Worker or a Lay Worship Leader.

If PVG Co-ordinators have any questions about PVG or other roles that may require PVG please email us at: **pvg@scotland.anglican.org**

How do I apply for PVG?

Our preferred method of application is the online process. If you are uncertain about how to do this your PVG Co-ordinator may assist you to set up a **ScotAccount** or complete your online application.

Online PVG applications can only be accessed through a ScotAccount. You will therefore need to set up a personal ScotAccount both to complete your online PVG application, view the result and share your result with the SEC PVG Team.

Once your application request is with Disclosure Scotland, you will receive an email with details of how to set up a ScotAccount if you do not already have one. Details of how to apply for a ScotAccount can also be found at: https://account.disclosure.scot/

There is an offline application process if you are unable to complete a PVG application online, but this is likely to be much slower than the online system.

What do I need to do to apply online?

To start your PVG online application you will need to complete TWO forms for the SEC. Your PVG Co-ordinator is likely to have sent them to you with this guidance note.

SEC PVG Form 1a (clergy and licenced lay ministry appointments) or SEC PVG Form 1b (vestry appointments): These forms are for you to provide the details that the Safeguarding Team needs to register your PVG application with Disclosure Scotland. **Please ensure you complete the correct form for your role.** Once you have added your personal information your PVG co-ordinator or other authorised ID checker will ask to see your ID and add the information to the form.

SEC PVG Form 2: This is a self-declaration form which gives consent for the SEC Safeguarding Team to process your PVG application. You should use the form to disclose any information that may be relevant to your application. Please refer to the SEC Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Please contact pvg@scotland.anglican.org for advice if you are unable to open or edit these forms and we will advise you and provide alternative versions if necessary.

Where do I send the completed SEC PVG forms 1&2?

Please save your completed forms 1&2 preferably in Word (not PDF) format in your name (e.g. SMITH Fiona Anne SEC PVG form 1b) and return them to your PVG Co-ordinator (or Bishop for form 1b) who will arrange to check your ID documents and complete the relevant sections.

Please note: If you are already a PVG Scheme member, the Safeguarding Team needs confirmation of which group(s) you have previously been checked for as this affects the type of online application we request for your work in the SEC.

You will have received either a paper PVG certificate (for applications from 2011 to December 2022), an email certificate (for applications during the period December 2022 to May 2024) or through your ScotAccount. If your paper disclosure certificate is dated before March 2011, it will be an enhanced disclosure certificate and not PVG Scheme membership and you will need to apply to join PVG.

Co-ordinators and Bishops: please complete the role description and ID section of SEC PVG 1 and send both forms in Word (not PDF) format to: pvg@scotland.anglican.org

What Proof of Identity do I need to show to my PVG Co-ordinator?

Three separate proofs of ID are required. These must include photographic ID and separate proof of current address. If you do not have photographic ID please email pvg@scotland.anglican.org for guidance.

If you are unable to have your ID checked in person, please send scanned copies of your ID documents with your application.

Photographic Verification (at least one required from this list)

1. Passport (UK or overseas)
2. Driving licence with photograph (also counts as one of the two required address verification documents)
3. Other forms of **CURRENT** photo ID: UK Government Department Pass/Card, Employee ID Card, NHS Scotland ID Card, Armed Forces ID Card, National Union Student ID, University ID, Young Scot Card, National Entitlement Card (bus pass)

Verification of Current Address (at least two required from this list)

1. Bank or building society statement (within last 3 months)
2. A utility bill (within last 3 months)
3. Credit or store card statement (within last 3months)
4. Financial statement (e.g. Mortgage, Personal loan papers, ISA) (within last 3 months)
5. Correspondence from statutory bodies (e.g. Benefits Agency, Employment Services; Central or Local/Government Departments) (within last 3 months)
6. Pension or other benefits book
7. Visa
8. Work Permit
9. **Paper driving licence issued prior to 1998.** Please note: Paper licences issued prior to 1998 remain valid ***only*** if the address is current. Since 2015 the paper counterpart to a photo driving licence has had no legal status and only the photocard can be accepted as proof of ID.

What happens next?

When the Safeguarding Team receives your PVG forms 1 & 2, your details will be entered on the Disclosure Scotland system. The Disclosure Scotland system will send automatically an email to you notifying that your application is available for completion online using your **ScotAccount**. Please be aware that emails from Disclosure Scotland may end up in your junk mail. The SEC Safeguarding Team

will endeavour to let you and your PVG co-ordinator know by email as soon as we have requested your online application.

When you receive your email from Disclosure Scotland you will have 14 days to complete the online application using your ScotAccount. If the details that appear on the Disclosure Scotland email or online application are incorrect, eg work with protected adults instead of children, please notify the SEC Safeguarding Team.

If you are applying to join the PVG Scheme you will need to provide details such as your National Insurance Number, passport and driving licence number and five full years of address history. The process is shorter for existing PVG members. When you enter the required information online it will be validated as you enter it. The system will not allow you to miss out information that is mandatory.

If you do not complete the online form within 14 days the application will be terminated by Disclosure Scotland. A new application request will be submitted by the Safeguarding Team and the process will start again. Please let us know if you miss the deadline.

Do I have to pay for my PVG application? PVG applications in respect of non-stipendiary and voluntary roles continue to be provided free of charge. For salaried and stipendiary positions the fee is £59 (join) or £18 (update). If applicable the fee is payable by card as part of the online application process. If you pay a fee for a PVG application for a stipendiary or salaried post for the SEC, please ask your Vestry Treasurer or Diocese to reimburse you.

What happens after I complete my PVG form online? From 10 June 2024 Disclosure Scotland moved to the new online results service. For most applications paper PVG certificates will no longer be issued.

Once you have provided all the necessary information and submitted the online form, Disclosure Scotland will run checks and send you an email confirming that you can view your results online. You will be able to view your PVG application result using your **ScotAccount**.

To complete the PVG process you need to share your result so that the SEC has 'interested party' status in your PVG membership. You have 10 working days in which to do. If you miss this deadline, we will need to start the application process all over again. Once you have shared your result with the Safeguarding Team, we will send you and your employer a notification by email to confirm we have viewed your PVG result.

Please note:

- For clergy and licenced lay ministry appointments (orange highlight on **SEC PVG 1a**) the notification will be sent to your Bishop
- For vestry appointments (blue highlight on **SEC PVG 1b**) the notification will be sent to the PVG co-ordinator for your congregation

Here are some ways in which PVG Co-ordinators and applicants can help us to improve processing times:

1. Check that SEC PVG form 1 has all the required information (preferably typed and in Word format, or clear handwriting for scanned forms) before sending to the PVG Team at: pvg@scotland.anglican.org

2. Disclosure Scotland requires applicants to provide a personal email address and not one shared with family members or work colleagues. This is particularly important where a couple are applying for PVG. Each partner must use a unique email address to set up their ScotAccount.

3. Our experience is that people encounter more problems in setting up their ScotAccount than completing the PVG application process. Most problems with the online processes have a solution, so please contact the PVG Team for advice.

4. In order to process an online application, we need an applicant's full names (including all middle names), their full postal address (including postcode), and their job title (with an explanation of the duties in the covering email if not obvious from the job title). The job title should refer to the role being applied for, such as Sunday School Teacher, Messy Church Helper, Parent and Toddler Group Assistant or Warm Space Pastoral Care Worker.

5. Applicants should complete their online application as soon as possible on receipt of their link from Disclosure Scotland. They will receive an email from Disclosure Scotland and from the SEC PVG Team.

6. Applicants should share their result with the SEC as soon as they receive the notification email from Disclosure Scotland. Without this the process is incomplete.

Disclosure Scotland allows applicants 14 days (formerly 7 days) to complete stage 5 and stage 6 above. This means that if an applicant waits to the end of both 14-day periods, the processing time is lengthened by 28 days.

Applicants receive automatic reminders from Disclosure Scotland when a deadline is approaching. The PVG Team also sends email reminders to applicants at the different stages of the process.

When an applicant misses the deadline to submit their application, or fails to share their online PVG result with the SEC within the 14-day period, we have to resubmit the application.

We recognise that unforeseen circumstances can delay or prevent an applicant completing their application within the deadlines, but resubmissions add significantly to the processing time and the workload for the Team.

What are my ongoing PVG Scheme Membership Responsibilities?

From 1 April 2026 PVG membership will last for 5 years. You will be notified by Disclosure Scotland when you need to renew your membership, so it is important to keep your details up to date. You are required to inform Disclosure Scotland of any changes in personal details such as change of name or address. You should also advise Disclosure Scotland if you have ceased working for an organisation and wish to terminate your membership of the PVG Scheme. The form for making changes to your PVG membership can be downloaded at:

https://www.mygov.scot/change-pvg-member-details-form/

and sent to: DSupdate@disclosurescotland.gov.scot

Please note the above email address is for updating your personal information only.

IMPORTANT: Your PVG Disclosure application must be authorised by the Safeguarding Team before Disclosure Scotland can accept it for processing.

Please send PVG applications SEC forms 1 & 2 with associated paperwork where relevant to: pvg@scotland.anglican.org