



This document is intended to help individuals applying for PVG scheme membership through the Church of Scotland to have all the information they require, as well as the Safeguarding Coordinators.

Top tips for applicants:

1. Your application consists of one form: the SG03 PVG Information Request & Self Disclosure Form. If you are required to obtain an overseas police check, this should be submitted along with your application. If your application is for a paid role, a copy of your job description should also be sent with your application.

The Coversheet (and job description, if the application is for a paid role) will be sent to the Safeguarding Service directly by your Safeguarding Coordinator. You only need to submit your SG03 form and any relevant criminal record checks.

2. Your form must be dated no more than three months prior to the date you submit it to us.

3. Once you have completed the SG03 form, please check that you have answered all questions as requested.

4. The SG03 should be emailed by you to safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk The document should be in .docx or .pdf format if possible. Please note we are unable to open documents that are in .pages format. All documents sent should be provided as attachments to the email and not as links to cloud services such as Google Drive or iCloud.

5. If you are not able to email your document(s) to us, your Safeguarding Coordinator can email them to the Safeguarding Service on your behalf as long as the sender copies you in to the email (cc's you in) using the email address you have given on your SG03 form.

Application checklist

Before you send your application to the Safeguarding Service, please use this checklist to ensure you have included everything required:

- Fully completed SG03 PVG Information Request & Self Disclosure Form
- Overseas police check documents *(if required, as detailed on the SG03 PVG Information Request & Self Disclosure Form)*

1. What is the process for applying to join the PVG scheme through the Church of Scotland?

Safer Recruitment process for roles requiring a PVG Certificate

	Task	Who is responsible?
1	Job/Role description is created or reviewed to ensure it still covers the duties and responsibilities of the role – The Safeguarding Coordinator should always be consulted when a role requires safer recruitment checks to ensure the appropriate checks are applied for.	Kirk Session – they may delegate this task but they are responsible for all work being carried out within the congregation.
2	Advertise role and receive applications – this does not need to be formal, it can be an announcement at worship that a group is looking for volunteers and the person approached the group leader to say they are interested – Applicant should be given a copy of the job/role description and should complete the application form to ensure we have all necessary details.	
3	Interview of candidates – the formality of this will depend on the role. It may be a formal panel interview or it may be a chat about the expectations of the role and how the skills/experience of the applicant mean they can fulfil the requirements of the role. SG Coordinator must be involved.	SG coordinator must approve the references even if they have not personally made the requests.
4	Seek two references for the preferred candidate.	

	At least one must be from someone who knows the person outwith the Church context and neither can be family members	
5	Safeguarding Coordinator downloads the 2 application documents (Coversheet and PVG Information Request & Self Disclosure Form - SG03).	Safeguarding Coordinator
6	Safeguarding Coordinator meets with the applicant and explains the PVG process to the applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID checks • SG03 completion and submission • ScotAccount • PVG application from link in email from Disclosure Scotland • Viewing and sharing PVG Scheme Record certificate 	Safeguarding Coordinator
7	Safeguarding Coordinator verifies the applicant's 3 forms of ID and notes these on the Coversheet. Email completed Coversheet to the Safeguarding Service. safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk If the application relates to a paid role, include a copy of the job description with the coversheet. Download blank SG03 form from the website and email it to the applicant along with a copy of this FAQs document.	Safeguarding Coordinator
8	Where necessary, apply for relevant Overseas Criminal Record Check(s)* and email this to the Safeguarding Service when received. safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk	Applicant
9	Complete the SG03 form and email it to the Safeguarding Service. safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk	Applicant
10	Create a ScotAccount, if they do not already have one.	Applicant
11	Create a Safeguarding Record for the application and submit information to Disclosure Scotland.	Safeguarding Service
12	Monitor email account (including junk/spam folder) for communication from Disclosure Scotland: When email received from Disclosure Scotland advising of the application process, sign into ScotAccount and complete the PVG application via the link. This must be done within 14 days .	Applicant
13	Process the PVG Scheme application and email the applicant once the certificate is available to view.	Disclosure Scotland
14	Monitor email account for communication from Disclosure Scotland: On receipt of email from Disclosure Scotland, log into ScotAccount to view the certificate. NB. The certificate is only available to view for 14 days from the date of the email.	Applicant
15	When logged into ScotAccount and viewing the PVG Scheme certificate, give permission for the Safeguarding Service to see the Certificate by clicking on 'Share'.	Applicant
16	Review information on PVG certificate and update Safeguarding Service records. Notify Safeguarding Coordinator of clearance decision	Safeguarding Service
17	If SG Clearance is approved, enter applicant's details on the SG Register (SG07) and arrange start date. If Clearance is denied, inform applicant and Session Clerk or person responsible for recruiting the applicant (if not Session Clerk).	Safeguarding Coordinator

*** Applicants who have lived overseas for 12 months or more, either continuously or in total, in the last 10 years requires to provide an Overseas Criminal Record check.** Details of how to apply can be found within the SG03 Self Disclosure form.

If the applicant requires assistance with creating their ScotAccount or accessing their PVG certificate, they should contact Disclosure Scotland directly at dsdigital@disclosurescotland.gov.scot or 0300 02000 40.

The applicant must not begin undertaking their new role until the PVG clearance email has been received by the Safeguarding Coordinator.

2. Is the application process the same for paid roles as it is for volunteer roles?

No. There is a cost for PVG applications for paid roles (see question 16 below).

Also, when the application relates to a paid role a job description must be sent to the Safeguarding Service by the Safeguarding Coordinator with the coversheet .

3. How long does the application process take?

A typical application takes 4-6 weeks from the date the forms are emailed to the Safeguarding Service, although incomplete paperwork or errors can extend this time by several weeks.

You can help to minimise the time taken for your application to be processed by double checking the information on the forms before you submit them, and by double checking the information you submit to Disclosure Scotland when you follow the email link from them. A simple typo in a date of birth or postcode can cause a delay of 1-2 months.

4. Where can I get copies of the application forms?

All forms can be downloaded by applicants and Safeguarding Coordinators from our website at <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding-service/safeguarding-publications>

Safeguarding Coordinators should not save blank forms to their computer/device but download them from our website for each application.

This is to ensure you are using the most up to date version as we may periodically make amendments to the forms. Applications sent in on old versions of the forms risk being rejected, thereby increasing the time taken for the application to be completed.

5. If an applicant is having issues completing the SG03 PVG Information Request & Self Disclosure Form electronically can someone else complete and submit these on their behalf?

The applicant must give consent for someone else to complete/submit the documents on their behalf.

Where documents are being submitted by a person other than the applicant (e.g. the Coordinator or family member) due to them having technical issues with the process, the applicant must be cc'd in to the email when the application is sent to the Safeguarding Service.

This is due to the confidential nature of the information shared on the application form. It also serves as a security measure due to the use of electronic signatures.

6. Can I request a paper PVG application form and SG03 PVG Information Request & Self Disclosure Form?

If you have difficulty with the online process, please ask your Safeguarding Coordinator to contact the Safeguarding Service. You will need to let them know whether you have ever joined the PVG scheme (for any role, through any organisation) in the past or whether this is your first time joining the scheme. Please note that applications made on paper forms take longer to be completed.

7. Can an applicant complete an online PVG application with Disclosure Scotland if they do not have an email address?

No – all applicants are required to have their own personal email address. If you do not have an email address, please see question 6, above.

8. Can an Existing member applicant complete an online PVG application with Disclosure Scotland if they have forgotten or do not have access to their PVG membership number?

If an existing PVG scheme member does not have a note of their PVG membership number they can obtain this by calling Disclosure Scotland on 03000 2000 40.

9. Can a PVG Applicant or Safeguarding Coordinator approach Disclosure Scotland direct to complete an application?

No – all PVG application requests must come via the Safeguarding Service.

10. What happens if an applicant fails to complete the online PVG application within 14 days?

The application process will start again with all forms having to be re-submitted.

11. How should Identification Checks be undertaken?

ID checks are required for all applicants.

The Safeguarding Coordinator should meet with the applicant and view three forms of ID. Where it is not possible for the two people to meet in person, a video call should be arranged between the two and the ID documents should be shown on the camera.

It is never acceptable to carry out the ID verification from photos or scans of documents.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will then complete a coversheet, on which they will note what ID has been seen.

Disclosure Scotland require that three forms of ID must be verified. We can no longer accept applications that include the old-style coversheet that only asked for two forms of ID.

These ID documents combined must verify the applicant's name, date of birth and current address. At least one document must be photographic, and must be a different document from the one that confirms their current address.

A full list of acceptable forms of ID can be found on the PVG Information Request Coversheet form.

Safeguarding Coordinators must not oversee applications of family members. If the congregation does not have another coordinator who can carry out the ID verification and complete the coversheet, the Safeguarding Coordinator should reach out to a coordinator in a neighbouring congregation and ask them to oversee their relative's application. Where this is not possible, the Session Clerk or Minister can carry out the ID verification and complete the coversheet.

12. Who requires an overseas police check?

- As per the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Act (2018) applicants must provide a criminal record certificate, where available, from their government or an appropriate government/police agency of any country (excluding the UK) where they have lived for 12 months or more (whether continuous or in total), in the 10 years before their application, while aged 18 or over

If you have already obtained this overseas police check/s, we are able to accept these if they are dated within the last six months of your residence in that country, or later.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to apply for any police checks required. The UK Government provides advice about this [on their website](#).

Once received, the police check(s) must be emailed to the Safeguarding Service along with the SG03 PVG Information Request & Self Disclosure Form

If the political situation in the relevant country means you are unable to obtain a police check, please contact the Safeguarding Service for advice.

12b. Are there any exceptions to the requirement to obtain a police check?

If an applicant is applying for PVG to work with children only and a police check is required from their country of nationality, Disclosure Scotland will check their criminal history information in the following countries and the UK through the PVG process. A separate police check from their country of nationality will not be required.

Germany
Lithuania
Netherlands
Portugal
Romania
Hungary
Greece
France
Ireland
Italy
Spain
Poland

Please note that this relates only to applicants who are nationals/citizens of the country/ies on the list.

It does not relate to UK citizens who lived in any of the countries on the list.

13. I'm already a member of the PVG scheme through another organisation. They didn't ask me for an overseas police check – why does the Church of Scotland need me to get one?

The requirement for overseas police checks does not come from Disclosure Scotland and the PVG scheme legislation. Rather it comes from the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Act. This act functions as Church law, and must be followed by the Safeguarding Service with no exceptions.

14. Can an applicant start their role while their PVG application is being processed?

No – an applicant must not be put in to post until clearance from the Safeguarding Service is received by the Safeguarding Coordinator.

15. Can an applicant carry out a modified version of their role - under the supervision of someone who has PVG clearance - while their PVG application is being processed?

No - an applicant must not be put in to post until clearance from the Safeguarding Service is received by the Safeguarding Coordinator.

16. Does the applicant have to pay for the PVG scheme application?

If the applicant will be carrying out a voluntary role, there is no charge to join the PVG scheme.

If the applicant will be carrying out a paid role, they will have to pay online by credit or debit card as part of the Disclosure Scotland online application process. They will be issued with a payment reference number and receipt which can be used to re-claim the cost from the recruiting congregation.

17. Will applicants receive paper copies of their certificates?

No, applicants are sent an email advising them how to view their certificate online. The only exception to this is if the applicant applied using a paper application form – in such cases a paper copy of the certificate will be sent.

If you have any problems with this process you can contact Disclosure Scotland by email at [dscdigital@disclosurescotland.gov.scot](mailto:digital@disclosurescotland.gov.scot) or by phone on 0300 02000 40.

18. I already have a Level 1 disclosure (previously known as basic disclosure) certificate. Why have I been told to join the PVG scheme?

The PVG scheme differs from Level 1 (basic) disclosure checks. Level 1 disclosure checks are available to all. They are one-off checks that look at an individual's record and reports any unspent convictions.

The PVG scheme, in contrast, is an ongoing check which continually monitors the records of its members. You can only join the PVG scheme if you are undertaking a regulated role; and you must be a member of the PVG scheme in order to undertake regulated work.

19a. I'm already a member of the PVG scheme through another organisation. Do I still have to join through the Church of Scotland?

Yes. PVG applications are organisation-specific. We require you to apply for a PVG scheme update so that the Church of Scotland can be added as an interested organisation.

The Scottish Government website has an excellent summary of how the PVG scheme works at <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-scheme>

19b. I'm already a member of the PVG scheme through another Church of Scotland congregation. Do I have to apply again if I'm moving to a new congregation?

If your new congregation has recruited you to work (paid or volunteer) with the same group(s) of protected people your existing Church of Scotland PVG scheme membership covers you to work with (e.g. a Sunday school teacher in your old congregation and a Youth Group leader in your new congregation), your new congregation should use the SG08 Volunteer Transfer Form.

If you will be working with a new group of protected people (e.g. a Sunday school teacher in your old congregation and a Pastoral Care Worker/Visitor in your new congregation) then a PVG application is required.

20. What happens when I stop volunteering with the Church of Scotland?

When a volunteer or worker steps down from any post that involves regulated work, they must complete an SG22 Leaver's Form which will be signed and submitted by the Safeguarding Coordinator.

The volunteer/worker must also contact Disclosure Scotland directly to inform them that they are no longer carrying out regulated work for the Church of Scotland. This is a legal requirement.

Safeguarding Coordinators should not contact Disclosure Scotland about anyone's PVG membership other than their own.

21. Once I'm a member of the PVG scheme, what should I do if I change my name or move house?

The Disclosure Scotland website contains guidance on what information you should keep updated with them. This can be found at <https://www.mygov.scot/manage-pvg>

If you change name or address, as well as informing Disclosure Scotland, you should also inform the Safeguarding Service. To do this, please send a scan or photo of an ID document showing your new name/address to safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk

22. I cannot edit documents when using Apple devices, what can I do?

We do not have any Apple specific Safeguarding forms available. The documents can be opened and edited in Pages, if applicants have this application downloaded, and then click 'Save as' to save them as a PDF to enable them to be sent to the Safeguarding Service for processing. If applicants are able to download Google Docs, they may also be able to open and edit the documents in this application.