

Safer Recruitment and the PVG Scheme

The process of recruiting volunteers is a vital stage in the child protection procedures. Using an application form, interviewing and taking up references for volunteers ensures that you know something about the volunteer and their interest in volunteering. This doesn't need to be a very formal process and can be a great way of getting to know your volunteers. It also gives them an opportunity to tell you about any issues that might come up on their PVG Scheme Record.

Obtaining, or updating, PVG Scheme membership is an important part of the recruitment and selection of volunteers.

Further information about the recruitment and selection of volunteers, including template forms, can be found in the Safe and Sound channel of Youth Work Essentials www.youthworkessentials.org

Background to the PVG Scheme

The PVG scheme was established by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. It replaced the Disclosure system in February 2011. The PVG Act requires that individuals undertaking 'regulated work' are not barred from working with vulnerable people. The only way to check if an individual is 'listed' (i.e. barred from working with children or protected adults) is to use the PVG Scheme.

The Scheme aims to ensure that those who have regular contact with vulnerable groups through the workplace (in paid and unpaid positions) do not have a history of inappropriate behaviour.

It will exclude people who are known to be unsuitable, on the basis of past behaviour, from working with children and/or protected adults. It will also detect those who become unsuitable while in post.

The PVG Scheme is a membership scheme that allows employers to easily access relevant information about potential workers. The Scheme stores information about members so records are quick and easy to check.

What is 'regulated work'?

Most youth work volunteer positions will be within the 'regulated work' criteria. This is because they carry out any of a number of specified activities:

- Caring for children
- Teaching, instructing, training or supervising children
- Being in sole charge of children
- Unsupervised contact with children
- Providing advice or guidance to a child or particular children which relates to physical or emotional wellbeing, education or training

If your volunteers carry out any of the above activities as part of their 'normal duties' at the youth club they will need to become PVG Scheme members at some point. There are a number of exemptions and specific guidelines around some areas of work. If you are in any doubt about which volunteers should be in the PVG Scheme please phone Youth Scotland, 0131 554 2561.

I run a youth club – what do I need to do?

The PVG Scheme opened for applications from new volunteers or workers in February 2011. All your new workers/volunteers in regulated work should be asked to join the Scheme as soon as possible.

From 29 October 2012 the Scheme opened to existing workers and it is expected that all workers in the regulated workforce will enter within three years. When you ask your existing workers to join the Scheme will depend on how you access the PVG Scheme – directly or through an 'Umbrella Body' – as there are accounts limits in place to prevent the 'swamping' of the system.

How much does it cost?

PVG Scheme membership for paid staff in any sector costs £59. This provides them with their first PVG Scheme Record. Subsequent updates cost £18; an update tells you if the PVG Scheme member has had information added to their record since the last Scheme Record was printed.

Volunteers in the qualifying voluntary sector do not have to pay for membership and updates are also free. PVG Scheme membership and updates for volunteers in other sectors (e.g. public sector) incurs the same fees as paid staff.

I thought the PVG Scheme was transferable – why do I have to fill in another form?

The PVG Scheme Record gives details about an individual's criminal record and other information held by the police. There could be many months or years between the PVG Scheme Record being printed and it being seen by a new employer. Therefore, to ensure that employers have the most up to date information available on that worker, an update should be requested by each new employer.

This is a short form for workers to fill in and it allows employers to see if new information has been added to a record. This process also links the worker to the new employer, so they will be made aware if the PVG status of a worker changes.

How can I access the PVG Scheme?

Youth Scotland is an 'Umbrella Body' which means it can process PVG Scheme Record requests on behalf of other organisations. Youth Scotland carries out this role for member groups that register to use the Scheme.

For more information about PVG or Youth Scotland Membership, please contact:

Youth Scotland, Balfour House, 19 Bonnington Grove, Edinburgh EH6 4BL

Tel: 0131 554 2561 www.youthscotland.org.uk

LAYC and Youth 1st are also Umbrella Bodies, so if you are a Youth Scotland member in Edinburgh and the Lothians or Fife please contact:

www.layc.org.uk

www.youth1st.co.uk

You can also access the Scheme via Volunteer Scotland:

www.volunteerscotland.net/disclosure-services

Thank you !