

Paper S1

URC roles eligible for a criminal record check – protecting vulnerable groups

Safeguarding Committee

Basic information

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Action required	For information only.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Due to the change in PVG's requirements brought in by the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, the DBS/PVG Matrix agreed at Assembly Executive 2023 (Paper T1) has been separated out with the DBS requirements staying the same and the PVG requirements now meeting the new legislative changes which come into force in April 2025.
Main points	The new PVG matrix ensures as a denomination we are meeting the legislative requirements of the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council: November 2018 – Paper R3 General Assembly: July 2021 – Paper T6 Assembly Executive: February 2024 – Paper T1.
Consultation has taken place with...	Disclosure Scotland Synod of Scotland Executive Synod of Scotland Pastoral Committee Safeguarding Committee Secretary for Ministries Data Analyst and Administrator for Ministries.

Summary of impact

Financial	None anticipated.
External (eg ecumenical)	None anticipated.

Introduction

The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2000 has introduced a number of changes to the system of obtaining a criminal record check in Scotland. These changes are being implemented from April 2025. The matrix below, which sets out the appropriate type of criminal record check for roles within the National Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church, has been prepared as a result of direct consultation with Disclosure Scotland in readiness for the changes which will come into force in April 2025¹

From April 2025 it will be mandatory for all people undertaking regulated work with children and protected adults to be members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme.

From April 2026 membership will only be for a period of five years and members will need to reapply for membership if they continue to undertake regulated roles. Currently there is no charge for membership for volunteers but the Scottish Government is consulting on introducing charges for volunteers.

The new legislation also requires all charity trustees to be members of the PVG scheme if the charity undertakes regulated work with children or protected adults regardless of whether the individual engages directly in regulated roles.

It remains the case, that with the exception of charity trustees, a person cannot be a member of the PVG scheme unless they are directly undertaking a regulated role as defined by the legislation. Types of work covered by PVG: mygov.scot. Regulated role guidance is being prepared by Disclosure Scotland; information about how to access this information will be available from the Synod and Ministries Offices.

In the new legislation there are two levels of disclosure. Level 1 replaces the 'Basic' Disclosure, Level 2 means membership of the PVG Scheme is required. The new terminology is used in the matrix.

Where an individual carries out a number of roles within a local church and these roles require different levels of criminal record check then the check applied for should be the highest level of check required.

There is currently no minimum age for applying for PVG membership.

¹ Implementing the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 - Disclosure Scotland

Role	Type of criminal record check	New and five year renewals to be actioned by
Ministers		
Ministers, stipendiary/NSM and Church Related Community Workers – Active	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of PVG scheme)	Ministries Office
Ministers, stipendiary/NSM and Church Related Community Workers – Retired Active	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of PVG scheme) if undertaking regulated work, otherwise Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Ministries Office
Ministers, stipendiary/NSM and Church Related Community Workers – Non Active	No check	Ministries Office
Ministers of other denominations employed by the URC	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of the PVG scheme)	Ministries Office
Special Category Ministry posts	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of PVG scheme) if undertaking regulated work, otherwise Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Ministries Office
Ministers and CRCWs in training	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of the PVG scheme)	Ministries Office
Synod-appointed lay pastors, local leaders and interim ministers	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of the PVG scheme)	Ministries Office
Preachers and worship leaders		
People who preach regularly (four times per year or more)	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local Church
URC Synod (Locally Recognised) Lay Preachers (including those in training)	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Synod
URC Locally Recognised worship leaders (including in those training)	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Synod
URC Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers (including those in training)	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Ministries Office

Role	Type of criminal record check	New and five year renewals to be actioned by
Trustees and Elders		
Elders as local church trustees of a registered charity providing regulated activities for children or protected adults	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of the PVG scheme)	Local church
Authorised Elders/Serving Elders/Deacons who are not trustees and who do not directly carry out regulated work with children or protected adults	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local Church
Synod of Scotland trustees	Level 2 Disclosure (Membership of the PVG scheme)	Synod
United Reformed Church Trust Trustees resident in Scotland	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Ministries Office
Safeguarding roles		
Church Safeguarding Co-ordinators, Lead/Primary Contact and Deputy/Joint	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local church
Synod Safeguarding Officer or other safeguarding professionals	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure unless they participate directly in regulated work or have line management responsibility for those undertaking regulated work in which case Level 2 Disclosure (membership of PVG scheme)	Synod
Roles working with children		
Children's and youth workers (voluntary or paid), stewards, drivers, doing regulated work with children and young people	Level 2 Disclosure (membership of PVG scheme)	Local Church
Children's and youth workers (voluntary or paid), stewards, drivers, in roles not involving regulated work	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local Church
Children and Youth Development Officer	Level 2 Disclosure (membership of the PVG scheme)	Ministries Office

Role	Type of criminal record check	New and five year renewals to be actioned by
General Assembly /Church House staff resident in Scotland who undertake regulated work with children	Level 2 Disclosure (membership of PVG scheme)	Ministries Office
Roles with Protected Adults		
Protected Adult workers (voluntary or paid), Elders and pastoral and personal care visitors where the role includes direct feeding, physical care, or driving to medical or social care appointments	Level 2 Disclosure (membership of PVG scheme)	Local Church
Protected Adult workers (voluntary or paid). Elders and pastoral carers without personal care	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local church
General Assembly /Church House staff resident in Scotland who undertake regulated work with Protected Adults	Level 2 Disclosure (membership of PVG scheme)	Ministries Office
Administrative/financial/practical roles		
Church Administrators (or equivalent working from a church office)	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local church
Church treasurer or equivalent	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local church
Building caretakers, cleaners or equivalent	Level 1 (Basic) Disclosure	Local church
Synod Treasurer/Synod Finance Officer or equivalent	Level 1(Basic) Disclosure	Synod
Synod Administrator/PA/office Manager/Admin Assistant or equivalent whose role involves safeguarding administration	Level 1 (Basic) disclosure	Synod