

SCOTLAND: PVG Checks for Interim Befrienders

In response to the Covid19 pandemic Disclosure Scotland and Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services will be prioritising checks for volunteers in certain sectors. These include Befriending.

As a result of the Coronavirus situation organisations are now permitted to recruit and start staff/volunteers after a PVG check is submitted. You do not need to wait until you receive your certificate, you can place people in their role while you wait for the PVG. Disclosure Scotland can now check the UK barred list when processing PVG applications. You should consider the risk involved in starting people before the PVG is received and look at whether any additional safeguarding (such as closer supervision) is an option.

In order to qualify for a PVG check, new volunteers would need to be carrying out a regulated work activity with children or protected adults regularly and as part of their normal duties with an organisation. Further information can be found here and organisations need to consider the volunteer role description against the regulated work description:

<https://www.volunteerscotland.net/for-organisations/disclosure-services/pvg-and-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Disclosure Scotland is suspending all fees for key workers and volunteers who are being drafted to help Scotland fight against coronavirus. This is a temporary measure, in place for an initial period of six weeks, before being reviewed and extended further, if needed.

The below excerpt is taken from the above website and provides some further guidance around roles which don't need a PVG. It also contains the following statement which you may wish to consider:

“Your organisation may also consider that the new services or increased provision is in response to a crisis / emergency situation (which would not require a PVG).

What roles don't need a PVG?

There has been a rapid increase in 'community volunteering' in response to local needs. Many organisations are concerned that until a PVG has been accessed, they will be unable to utilise new volunteers, increase their capacity or introduce new services such as telephone befriending and community transport.

While many of these activities may be considered a regulated work activity, we need to give further consideration to whether (at this time)

the new volunteers will be carrying out their role regularly and as part of their normal duties. We also need to consider whether the activities are being directed at children or protected adults, or more generally to the community, as not every person in self-isolation will have symptoms of the virus (e.g. they may be self-isolating as someone else in their household has symptoms, they may have an underlying condition which puts them at greater risk or they may be self-isolating due to Government advice based on their age).

In order to qualify for a PVG check, new volunteers would need to be carrying out a regulated work activity with children or protected adults regularly and as part of their normal duties with an organisation. As we are in the very early stages of self-isolation, it's currently not possible to determine if the activities will be regular or normal duties. Your organisation may also consider that the new services or increased provision is in response to a crisis / emergency situation (which would not require a PVG).

There are several support activities which definitely **do not require** a PVG check such as shopping, cash handling, having access to people's details and dog walking. Each organisation has to risk assess these activities and consider whether there is a need for any further safeguarding such as supervising new volunteers more closely.

Further information/support

We are here should you wish to discuss this further, the Befriending Networks team can be contacted on <https://www.befriending.co.uk/contact/>