



SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER



Archdiocese
of St Andrews
& Edinburgh

Welcome

I hope you are enjoying the first glimpses of Spring and looking forward to Easter which will be on us before we know it.

This edition of the newsletter covers various items of interest but with a

particular focus on some recent developments and changes in Disclosure Scotland / PVG eligibility.

I hope you will find it useful

Scott Mackenzie
Director of Safeguarding
Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor

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SAFEGUARDING TEAM ARCHDIOCESE OF ST ANDREWS & EDINBURGH



Monsignor Allan Chambers
Vicar General for Safeguarding
e: allan.chambers@staned.org.uk



Scott Mackenzie
Director of Safeguarding & *Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor*
e: scott.mackenzie@staned.org.uk
t: 0131 623 8949



Elaine Anderson
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
(Works Wed, Thur & Fri)
e: elaine.anderson@staned.org.uk
t: 0131 623 8944



Margaret McCluskey
Full-time administrator
e: margaret.mccluskey@staned.org.uk
t: 0131 623 8943

Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020

The Disclosure Scotland Act was implemented on 1st April 2025 and from this time it has been illegal to engage anyone in regulated work without first obtaining a PVG Check.

Regulated work with children and/or protected adults is defined in law and includes elements such as regular unsupervised contact with children and/or protected adults, and/or delivering teaching or instruction to them.



Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020 – the next phase

The next phase of the Act comes into effect from 1st April 2025 and from this date, the current open-ended PVG scheme will end, and a new ‘timebound’ scheme will begin.

This means that anyone joining the scheme now will be admitted to a timebound scheme and will have to confirm to Disclosure Scotland that they consider themselves to be continuing in regulated work every 5 years.

Also, anyone already in the scheme will be transferred over to the timebound scheme.

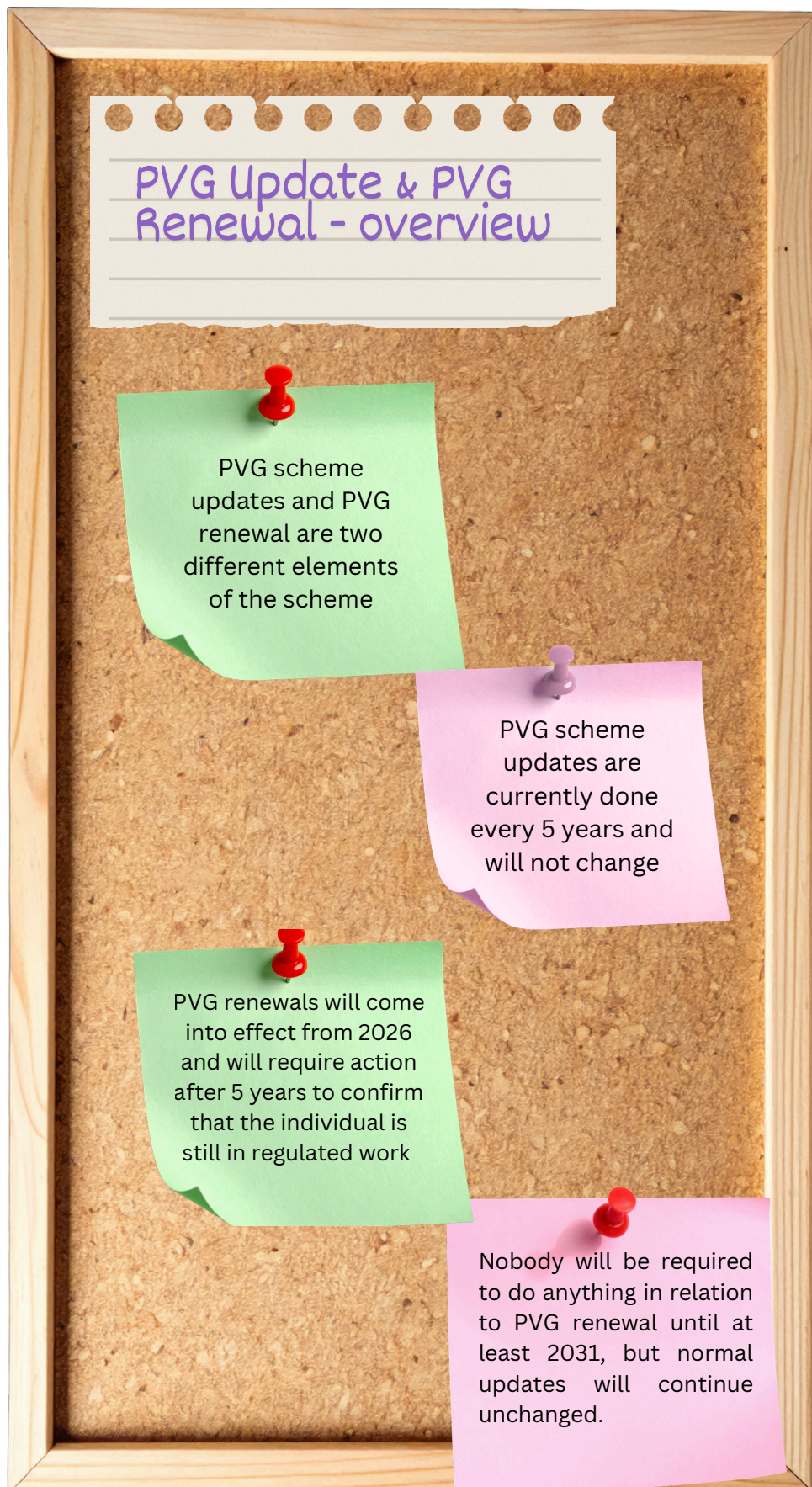


How does this relate to the current PVG 5-year update

The current arrangements whereby scheme members update their PVG check every 5 years will continue completely separately to the new 5 year renewal process. So members will now have two things to do every 5 years - update their PVG check and also confirm their continuing regulated work status.

On the following pages you will see some examples of how it will work in practice.

PVG Update & PVG Renewal – overview



PVG Scheme Record Updates



At the moment, we ask scheme members to apply for a PVG 'Scheme Record Update every five years

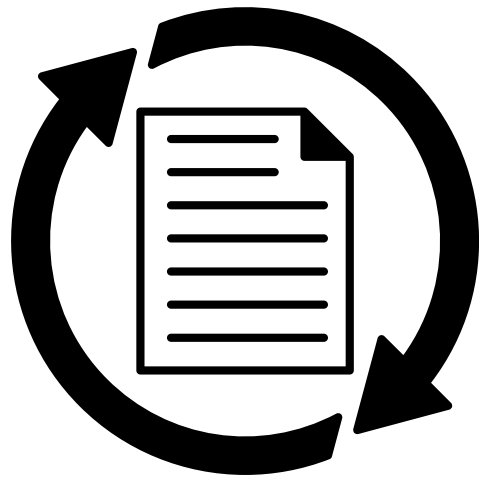
Although these updates are not required by law, they are part of the safe recruitment protocols of the Catholic Church and act as a proactive measure which can assist in obtaining any new vetting information that may be relevant to the role being performed.

These updates are not changing and will continue after 1st April.

PVG Renewal

As part of the 2020 Act, a new provision is coming into force on 1st April. This requires scheme members to confirm (to Disclosure Scotland) that they are performing a regulated role and therefore require to be a PVG scheme member. This confirmation is in addition (and separate) to the updates detailed above.

Disclosure Scotland will contact the scheme member directly and ask them to confirm that they are performing a regulated role and require to be in the scheme. The scheme member will receive instructions advising them how to respond.



If the scheme member confirms that they are still in a regulated role and require to be a scheme member, then a 5-year clock will start ticking, after which time confirmation of renewal is required.

If the scheme member advises that they are no longer in a regulated role then Disclosure Scotland will contact the Registered Body (i.e. the Catholic Church); so that the Church can check their regulated work status and take any required action.

Timescales & Examples

New Scheme Members

Anyone joining the PVG scheme from 1st April will be automatically enrolled into the timebound 5-year renewal scheme. Their renewal period will start on the date they joined the scheme and they will be due to confirm renewal in five years time.

Example

Jo wants to join the St Vincent de Paul Society to take part in visiting sick parishioners in hospital.

She joins the PVG Scheme in 2026 as a brand-new scheme member and so will be due to confirm renewal in 2031. She will also do her next PVG update in 2031.



Existing Scheme Members

Individuals who are already scheme members will be transferred over to the timebound 5-year renewal scheme in phases, prioritised by the date they first joined the scheme. Those who joined the scheme when it was created in 2011 will be moved over first and then each year individuals will be moved over in stages.



Example

Sam is a Children's Liturgy Leader and has been a scheme member since 2025 and so is not due to update his PVG until 2030. In June 2027 Sam is told by Disclosure Scotland that he has been admitted to the timebound scheme, effective from that time.

Sam will receive a request to confirm his renewal status in 5 years' time (2032). His normal scheme updates continue as before so he does his next scheme update in 2030.

If an application is made for a PVG scheme record update after 1st April 2026 but before Disclosure Scotland have moved the person to the new 5-year renewal scheme, then the individual will be moved over to the 5-year renewal scheme on the date of their update, and will therefore be due to renew 5 years from that date.

Example

Sue takes Holy Communion to the sick in their homes, and joined the PVG scheme in 2021. She is due to do her scheme update in 2026. She hasn't been moved over to the new scheme yet. She updates her PVG as normal in 2026.

Her renewal is triggered by the update, so she will be due to confirm her regulated work status in 2031 AND her normal update will also be due in 2031.



Other PVG Changes

In addition to the changes detailed above, there are also some other changes resulting from the 2020 Act which are important to consider.

Trial Periods

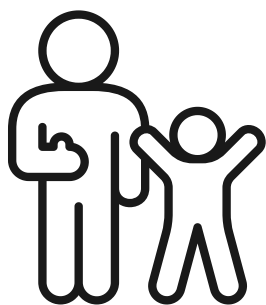
Under the new Act, trial periods are not permitted and could represent a breach of the law.

For example, someone interested in being a Children's Liturgy leader may have "tried it out" under the supervision of the cleared leaders, to see if they wanted to be a leader. This is no longer permitted.

This is different from observers which would still be allowed. The difference between the two is that a trial period involves "having a go" at doing the ministry, but attending as an observer would mean sitting on the sidelines and not getting involved in any regulated tasks or contact.



Children under the care of parents/carers



There has been a change in relation to children who attend events and are accompanied by (and are in the care of) their parents/carers. Previously, any activity like this tended to be viewed as not regulated.

However, if the activity involves the volunteer(s) doing any of the tasks included in the Act (for example – teaching and instructing) then this would be regulated, despite the fact that the children are in the care of parents/carers.

Example: A catechism class is led by a volunteer catechist, and the children come along with their parents/carers. The catechist would need to be PVG-checked due to their role in teaching/instructing

Pool of 'stand-in' volunteers

Previously, the advice from Disclosure Scotland was that recruiting contingency volunteers for regulated work was not permitted, unless there is a planned, specific and actual role for them.

It is now acceptable to recruit people into a pool (for a specific ministry) so that they can stand in, even if there is no requirement for them at present.

Example: The Society of St Vincent de Paul sends volunteers to visit the sick in hospital. They can now create a pool of PVG'd volunteers who stand in for the regular volunteer visitor, should they be unavailable.



Other News & Items of Interest

Safeguarding Risk Assessment Tool

The Safeguarding Risk Assessment template is a tool that has been designed to allow group leaders and parish safeguarding coordinators to perform a safeguarding risk assessment, and also cover some key basic elements of general risk assessment. Once the form is completed (online) a summary Risk Assessment Document is generated.

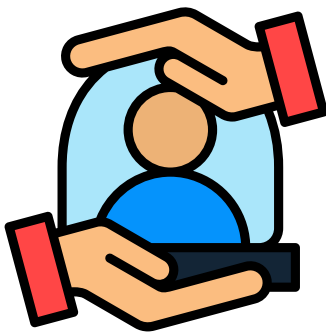
The link to the Safeguarding Risk Assessment form is:

<https://form.jotform.com/scottmackenzie578/SGriskassessment>

Clergy Safeguarding Day 2026

The mandatory clergy day took place on Thursday 19th February. 87 priests, 6 deacons and other invited guests attended.

The speaker input was provided by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation. They are an organisation whose purpose is to protect children by preventing child sexual abuse. They work with people who might cause harm and have an excellent track record of using their knowledge, experience and skills to develop and deliver innovative services that keep children safe.



The day built on work done last year, and covered barriers to safeguarding, tackling pre-conceived assumptions on how/where abuse happens, and the “bystander effect”. It also covered recognising signs, symptoms and indicators of abuse, abusive/grooming behaviour in adults; and the challenging role that the internet now plays in our lives.

From those who responded with feedback, the overall sentiment was positive: attendees consistently reported that the day was beneficial, with the afternoon session on recognising signs of abuse and online behaviour rated highest.

Participants identified an opportunity to enhance future sessions include increasing more interaction time, breaks for questions, reducing content density, and broadening coverage to areas such as psychological and spiritual abuse, as well as practical boundaries, and more case-based learning.

The Safeguarding Team

Our Safeguarding team is dedicated to assisting clergy with any queries or issues, so please do not hesitate to get in touch!

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Monsignor Allan Chambers
Vicar General for Safeguarding
e: allan.chambers@staned.org.uk



Scott Mackenzie
Director of Safeguarding & Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
e: scott.mackenzie@staned.org.uk
t: 0131 623 8949



Elaine Anderson
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
(Works Wed, Thur & Fri)
e: elaine.anderson@staned.org.uk
t: 0131 623 8944



Margaret McCluskey
Full-time administrator
e: margaret.mccluskey@staned.org.uk
t: 0131 623 8943

Thank you

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all of our safeguarding stakeholders.

They are too many to mention but include our clergy, Parish Safeguarding Coordinators, Group leaders, and safeguarding staff.

Without your essential input the Church would not be able to engage in the wide range of ministries and pastoral care that it does.

Your contribution is very much appreciated.