

STANDARD 2:**Vetting the appointment of clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers**

When admitting men to seminary, appointing clergy & religious and recruiting lay employees & volunteers, we require PVG checks on their suitability for working with vulnerable groups.

2.1 We require PVG vetting of personnel to ensure their suitability for working with vulnerable groups.

- 2.1.1 The mandatory Safe Recruitment process in the Catholic Church in Scotland is central to ensuring that everyone - whether working in ministry as an ordained or religious, or working as an employee or as a volunteer - is safe to work with vulnerable groups.
- 2.1.2 Applicants for employment in the Church will be expected to satisfy the statutory PVG vetting requirements if their duties involve working with vulnerable groups.
- 2.1.3 This Safe Recruitment process for volunteers has three key stages:
- i) **Application Form:** *The Volunteer Application Form*²¹ asks the applicant to provide information about their anticipated role and any relevant experience. It includes a request for the names of two referees (which should not be the Parish Priest, or PSC, or a relative of the applicant)²². The form also includes a *Self-Declaration Form*²³.
 - ii) **PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) Application:** We require all volunteers to be PVG Scheme Members who have received appropriate vetting for working with vulnerable groups. Some applicants might already be scheme members because of other work. However, it is vital that, in all circumstances, the applicant completes a PVG Scheme Update before commencing any role within the Church.
 - iii) **Training:** *Safeguarding Induction Part 1* training must be completed by everyone who works with vulnerable groups. This is required because all volunteers must be aware of the Safeguarding policies and standards within the Catholic Church, including the requirement of mandatory reporting of all allegations. *Safeguarding Induction Part 2* training should be completed within 18 months of commencement of role.
- 2.1.4 *A Letter of Approval*²⁴ for each volunteer must be issued by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office. It will indicate that the applicant has completed the necessary requirements of Safe Recruitment and also provide full or restricted approval for commencement of role. If a volunteer moves to another parish, then this letter should be requested by the Parish Priest.

²¹ Section C: Volunteer Application Form

²² Section C: Reference Letter and Reference Form

²³ Section C: Self-Declaration Form

²⁴ Section C: Letter of Approval (Full) & Letter of Approval (Restricted)

2.1.5 All three stages should be completed satisfactorily, and a Letter of Approval received, before a volunteer can commence role.

2.1.6 The table below illustrates the recruitment process for volunteers involved in Safeguarding.

Step 1	Role Descriptions are provided for the prospective volunteer. (See Section C for template Role Descriptions)
Step 2	Prospective volunteers are asked to complete an Application Form which includes a Self-Declaration Form.
Step 3	Two references are requested. (The Parish Priest, PSC and close relatives should not provide references.)
Step 4	PVG Scheme Application or PVG Existing Member (Update) Application is completed.
Step 5	<i>Safeguarding Induction Part 1</i> Training is completed. Volunteer is issued with a Certificate of Attendance.
Step 6	Prospective Volunteer meets with respective Group Leader for interview to discuss suitability for new role. The Letter of Approval provided by the Diocese should be received by the applicant and the Parish Priest before volunteer commences role.

2.2 We have established a Safeguarding Code of Conduct for clergy & religious.

2.2.1 While much of the advice included in the paragraphs which follow 2.3 also apply to clergy and religious, the following points of advice are specific to them.

2.2.2 Bishops, priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers are called by virtue of their consecration to God to live exemplary Christian lives in all their conduct. The public and private conduct of clergy and religious can inspire and motivate people, but inappropriate conduct and language can also scandalise and undermine people's faith. Clergy and religious, at all times, should be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their work.

2.2.3 Bishops, Major Superiors and colleagues have a duty of care to those for whom they have a responsibility, or with whom they work. Appropriate support should be offered whenever a cleric or religious brother or sister is in some difficulty with their own spiritual, physical, or emotional health, or when attention has been drawn to such a situation by another person.

- 2.2.4 Clergy and religious must not engage in physical, psychological, written or verbal harassment of staff, volunteers, or parishioners and should not tolerate such harassment by other Church staff or volunteers.
- 2.2.5 Clergy and religious, must not, for sexual gain or intimacy, exploit the trust placed in them by the faith community, particularly in relation to the young or vulnerable.
- 2.2.6 In ministering to vulnerable groups, clergy and religious are advised to take particular care:
- to respect the physical and emotional boundaries which are appropriate
 - to provide pastoral care and the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in an open and observable environment when outside of a Church, and never in the private accommodation of the Minister
 - to avoid inappropriate language and physical contact in any context
 - to avoid the sharing or viewing of any inappropriate media
 - not to provide alcohol nor any illegal substance to a minor or vulnerable adult
 - to respect the privacy of children and vulnerable adults in the provision of accommodation on any trip.

2.3 We have established a Safeguarding Code of Conduct for Church employees and volunteers.

- 2.3.1 In ensuring that they comply with the Safeguarding standards of the Catholic Church in Scotland, Church employees and volunteers who interact with vulnerable groups must:
- treat all people with respect
 - respect and protect emotional and physical boundaries
 - respect the rights of others to personal privacy
 - remember that physical contact can be misunderstood
 - meet with a child or vulnerable adult in an open and observable environment
 - remember that words and actions might be misinterpreted
 - be confident in sharing concerns appropriately
 - be confident in both challenging and reporting abusive behaviour
 - ensure that children and vulnerable adults know and understand what to do if they have a Safeguarding concern.

2.3.2 Church employees and volunteers should be aware that engagement in any of the following activities, involving children or vulnerable adults, may lead to disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution, according to their contract of employment:

- inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or vulnerable adults
- sexual relationships with minors and vulnerable adults
- behaviour or language which is intrusive, derogatory or disrespectful
- abusing alcohol while on duty supervising children or vulnerable adults
- ignoring Safeguarding concerns raised by others
- preventing anyone from reporting any failure to comply with Safeguarding policies
- participating in, or ignoring, behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.

2.4 We have established Safeguarding guidance for those in formation while on pastoral placements.

2.4.1 Pastoral placements for seminarians and those preparing for the Permanent Diaconate are arranged by Dioceses. While the contexts of these placements may vary, most take place within a parish setting and are likely to involve working with vulnerable groups.

2.4.2 Appropriate Safeguarding training should raise awareness of the Safeguarding dimensions that may impact on pastoral ministry. This training considers the important Safeguarding roles of the following key people in the parish:

- Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- Leaders of various activities within the parish
- Sacristan
- Headteacher and teaching staff (if working in a school)
- Parish Hall keeper
- Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

2.4.3 Both seminarians and those preparing for the Permanent Diaconate are trained to understand that their presence in a parish might lead to someone making a disclosure to them. Those in training learn to understand that the standard response required from them, in the event of receiving a disclosure, is:

Listen  Respond  Record  Refer²⁵

²⁵ Section C: Flowchart - Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Abuse

- 2.4.4 A Safeguarding allegation must be reported immediately to the diocesan Bishop or Major Superior, by means of the relevant Safeguarding Adviser, who must refer it to the statutory authorities without delay. The Parish Priest must also be informed, unless the allegation is about or directly implicates him. In a situation of current harm, the local Police must be contacted directly, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must be informed.
- 2.4.5 If an allegation of any form of abuse, or a disclosure of significant Safeguarding concern is made about a seminarian, this must be reported to the Bishop who must refer the allegation to the statutory authorities. If the Bishop is not available, the information must be referred to the appropriate Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser who must refer the matter as soon as possible to the statutory authorities, the Bishop and the Parish Priest. The DSA must also ensure that the allegation is discussed at a meeting of the DRAMT. The Bishop must inform the Rector, or director of the Permanent Diaconate programme. The seminarian must leave his pastoral placement immediately and must be offered advice and appropriate support.
- 2.4.6 Seminarians in formation are advised to give due attention to the following considerations, when preparing for pastoral placements:
- ensuring their sensitive involvement in pastoral situations
 - maintaining healthy professional boundaries in relationships
 - being careful in use of presbytery accommodation (keeping private rooms inaccessible to parishioners)
 - taking advice from the Parish Priest.

2.5 We have established Safeguarding requirements for supply & visiting clergy and religious.

- 2.5.1 All clergy and religious who come to Scotland must abide by the Church's Safeguarding Code of Conduct and must comply with our Safeguarding standards.
- 2.5.2 A visiting priest (on holiday, pilgrimages etc.,) who might wish to celebrate Mass in a local parish Church must be able to provide a 'Celebret' that confirms his good standing with his Bishop.
- 2.5.3 If the sole purpose of a visit is study, then a 'Celebret' is all that is required. If a priest comes to Scotland both to study and to supply in a parish, then in addition to a 'Celebret', a testimonial from his Bishop or Provincial, together with a PVG or equivalent, is required.

- 2.5.4 Any priest coming from outside Scotland to supply in a parish, or to lead a retreat, requires to be in possession of a ‘Celebret’ and his Bishop’s testimonial which should include assurance of a PVG (or equivalent) check. If the supply period is due to last for more than two weeks within a Diocese, then a PVG or equivalent is required.
- 2.5.5 If the priest is supplying for more than two weeks, or if he provides regular supply for any parish, arrangements must be made for him to take part in *Safeguarding Induction* training. He must also meet with the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and become familiar with the Safeguarding policies of the Catholic Church in Scotland.

2.6 We offer guidance on dealing with convictions recorded on PVGs.

- 2.6.1 Membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme is mandatory for anyone who is employed or who volunteers to work with vulnerable groups within the Catholic Church in Scotland. When an individual completes the PVG application form, a self-declaration is completed, providing information about any convictions, spent or unspent. At this initial stage, the applicant is required to disclose any convictions in writing and place them in a sealed envelope for the attention of the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- 2.6.2 The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must discuss any disclosed convictions with the DRAMT to decide if the application can continue to be progressed. In all cases, the DRAMT is bound by strict confidentiality and must respond with sensitivity and justice. The care and protection of the vulnerable must be paramount in their concerns.
- 2.6.3 On any occasion when a conviction is recorded on a PVG Certificate, the Diocesan Safeguarding Office must check if this conviction has already been disclosed by the applicant. If it has, then the DRAMT must consider the relevance of the conviction (in the context of the role being considered) and must offer recommendations to the Bishop as to whether the person should be given full or restricted approval as a volunteer.
- 2.6.4 If convictions are recorded without prior disclosure by the applicant, then the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must discuss with the DRAMT how to raise with the applicant his/her failure to complete the Self-Declaration form honestly.
- 2.6.5 Certain convictions will mean that an application cannot be progressed because it is not safe for the individual to act as a volunteer with vulnerable groups. Such convictions would include serious sexual offences and being ‘Listed and Barred’ from working with children or ‘Listed and Barred’ from working with adults²⁶.

²⁶ Details of the Listing and Barring process are provided in Appendix 3

- 2.6.6 If a person is being considered for Listing, either at the point of joining the PVG Scheme or whilst a member, then the National Safeguarding Co-ordinator, as the Lead Collator of the PVG scheme for the Catholic Church in Scotland, would be informed by *Disclosure Scotland*. If contacted, the National Safeguarding Co-ordinator must then alert the respective Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser regarding the individual who is being considered for Listing. This is intended to ensure that the applicant does not commence his/her role or, if already in post, is suspended from this role until a final decision has been made by *Disclosure Scotland*.
- 2.6.7 Once the decision has been made, Disclosure Scotland will inform the applicant and the office that collated the original PVG application (for most, the Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service). When informed by *Disclosure Scotland*, the NSC must immediately inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or Religious Institute. The DRAMT must then be convened to consider if the volunteer can commence (or continue) in the role, if the decision has been that he/she will not be Listed. If the applicant is 'Listed & Barred', it would be illegal for him/her to apply for a PVG in order to commence (or to continue) any work involving contact with vulnerable groups. If the individual were a parish volunteer, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser must inform the Parish Priest and the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- 2.6.8 If a cleric, a religious or a church employee has been dismissed or a volunteer has been deemed unsuitable to be working with any vulnerable groups, there is a legal requirement on a Diocese/Religious Institute to refer the individual to Disclosure Scotland for consideration under the 'Listing & Barring' process. The DRAMT must consider all grounds for making such a referral and must make an appropriate recommendation to the Bishop / Major Superior who must be the signatory to the referral. Guidance on the completion of a referral is available from *Disclosure Scotland*.²⁷
- 2.6.9 In 2015, all Dioceses in Scotland agreed that, if any applicant is listed on either List, then he/she must not be allowed to take up any paid or voluntary position which involves contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults within the Catholic Church in Scotland.

²⁷ Details of how Disclosure Scotland operates Listing and Barring are provided in Appendix 2.