

FAQs for volunteers about the PVG membership scheme

What is the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme?

The PVG scheme is a membership scheme for people who carry out regulated roles in Scotland with protected children and adults. It's managed by Disclosure Scotland and ensures someone's suitable to work or volunteer with these protected people.

How does the PVG scheme work?

When you apply to join the PVG scheme, Disclosure Scotland will carry out criminal record checks and send you the results to share with us. Once you're a member, your criminal record's monitored for any new vetting information. If you commit an offence that brings into question your suitability to volunteer with protected adults, Disclosure Scotland will be notified, and you might be barred from the scheme. You may also no longer be able to volunteer with us in your current role or another.

Why do I need to join the PVG scheme?

Disclosure Scotland will be making changes to the PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) scheme from 1 April 2025 to implement the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020. The changes mean that PVG membership will become mandatory for **all** regulated roles with protected adults. Becoming a member of the PVG scheme will ensure you can continue volunteering with protected adults. It will also ensure our organisation continues to provide services and support in the safest way possible, and that we remain legally compliant.

Why was I identified as needing to become a PVG member for the first time?

People living with MS are classified as a protected group. As someone whose role is to volunteer directly with people living with MS, the changes mean it's now a legal requirement for you to join the PVG scheme. These volunteering roles are as follows:

- Activities Organiser
- Forum Moderator
- Fundraising Group Coordinator
- Information Events Volunteer
- National Council Member
- Transport Volunteer
- Wellbeing Facilitator
- Some Group Coordinators who aren't already a member of the scheme because they don't have a Lead Support Volunteer, Support Volunteer, Volunteer Driver or Passenger Assistant in their group

Volunteers who are already members of the PVG scheme are Group Coordinators who **do** have a Lead Support Volunteer, Support Volunteer, Volunteer Driver or Passenger Assistant in their group who have PVG membership, Befriending Volunteers, Helpline Volunteers, Peer Support Volunteers and Trustees.

I've been volunteering with the MS Society for a while. Why do I need to join the PVG scheme now?

The changes to the law in Scotland mean that PVG membership will become mandatory for **all** regulated roles with protected adults.

What if I don't want to become a member of the PVG scheme? Can I still volunteer in a role that doesn't require being a PVG member?

Yes, you can talk to your Group Coordinator or the Volunteer Support Team to discuss your options. You can contact the Volunteer Support Team by calling 0300 500 8084 (select option #3) or by emailing volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk.

I'm already a member of the PVG scheme. What do I need to do now?

If your PVG membership is already linked with the MS Society, there's nothing for you to do. If it's with another organisation, then the MS Society will need to be added to your PVG membership account. This means we'll need to check your ID documents, and you'll need to share the results of your PVG membership with us through your account.

Do I need to pay to become a member of the PVG scheme?

As a volunteer, you will **not** need to pay to become a member of the PVG scheme.

How long does a PVG membership last?

Under the current scheme, there's no need to renew your PVG membership. Disclosure Scotland will keep checking your suitability to continue working or volunteering with protected adults at the MS Society.

I live in Scotland but carry out my volunteering duties in England. Do I still need to become a member of the PVG scheme?

No, you only need to become a member of the PVG scheme if you provide a service within Scotland.

I live outside Scotland but carry out my volunteering duties in Scotland. Do I still need to become a member of the PVG scheme?

Yes, if you provide a service within Scotland, you'll need to become a member of the PVG scheme.

How do I complete my PVG application?

Making a PVG application is a two-stage process:

- The MS Society will need to start the application for you by checking your ID and submitting the online request form.
- You'll then need to complete the application within 14 days. You can't apply until we start the application.

In the next four to eight weeks, we'll send you an email to arrange an online meeting. We'll provide you with the meeting details. Please ensure you have a minimum of one item with your current address on, such as a utility bill, council tax letter, or bank statement. You'll also need one piece of photographic identification, such as a passport or photo driving license. During the meeting, you'll be required to hold them up to the screen so we can verify the information.

Once we complete the first part of the application, you'll get an email with a link to complete the rest of the application. When you select the link, you'll be asked to sign in using ScotAccount.

If you don't have a ScotAccount you can create one using the unique link in the email. This allows you to access Disclosure Scotland services. Please view the YouTube video on creating a ScotAccount for more information.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTEystt7wTM&t=5s>

What is ScotAccount?

ScotAccount is a digital identity service developed by the Scottish Government. It allows you to securely sign into services like Disclosure Scotland. It enables you to access your results online and share them with us digitally.

From which email address will I receive my PVG application link?

You'll receive your application link in an email from Disclosure Scotland via disclosurescotland@notifications.service.gov.scot.

These emails may go to your spam/junk folders so please make sure you check these folders regularly.

How long is the application link valid for?

Please note that the link comes with a 14-day expiry period.

How many reminders will I get?

You'll get two reminders prior to your link expiring. The first will be nine days prior, and the second two days prior, to the link expiring.

How will I be able to view my results online?

To view your results, you need to create a ScotAccount and complete a verification process by clicking this link:

<https://authn.scotaccount.service.gov.scot/sign-up/sign-in-or-create>

How long will the PVG application take to process?

Disclosure Scotland aims to process applications within 14 days. It may take longer if they need more information. You can check the progress of your application in your account.

Will I receive a paper copy of the certificate?

Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services will issue a paper certificate to you by post if your application is processed offline. Online applications won't receive a paper copy of the certificate.

What if I can't complete my application online?

If you can't apply online, there are offline options. Please ask us to start an offline application for PVG membership by contacting the Volunteer Support Team on 0300 500 8084 (select option #3) or by emailing volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk.

Where can I find more support?

If you need any support, or have any questions, please contact the Volunteer Support Team on 0300 500 8084 (select option #3) or email volunteersupport@mssociety.org.uk.

You can also find further information in [this toolkit on the Volunteer Scotland Website.](#)