General Guidance Notes for the PVG Scheme

This guidance provides a snapshot of the main issues that arise within the University with regards to the PVG scheme. Ideally, it should be read in conjunction with the PVG policy and particularly, with Appendix 1 of the policy which provides a list of University positions that require a PVG check.

1. Casual Tutors no longer have to be checked unless they have specifically been employed to solely tutor children.

2. In the Sports Centre, instructors will only need to be checked if, as part of their duties, they will be teaching/instructing groups of children (under 18s). Other instructors, who teach mixed classes, will not need to be checked even though children form part of the mixed class.

3. When considering research projects with children and protected adults, it is important to look at whether there is going to be any unsupervised contact with these vulnerable groups as the research itself is not considered an ‘activity’ under the Act. If there is always going to be a responsible person present while you are conducting your research e.g. teacher/care home attendant/youth worker, there is no need to be checked but if you are going to be left unsupervised, then it is likely that you will need to be checked. Unsupervised contact with children under arrangements made by a responsible person is an activity under the Act. This is particularly important if you are in a school where the possibility of even being alone with a child in a corridor is considered enough to warrant a PVG check.

If the research involves a cross section of society and contact with children is only incidental to the research, it may be that the check is not required. However, Human Resources should be contacted in these circumstances.

See section 9 of the PVG policy for more detail.

4. Occasionally, Units/Schools take school aged children for work experience. If the children are 16 or 17 years old, then it is quite clear that staff interacting with them do not have to be checked.

If the children are under 16, most staff will not have to checked, but if a member of staff is going to be spending more time with that child than they normally would with other employees on day to day basis, they should probably be checked as this ‘above and beyond’ contact would bring it outside the incidental rule.

Staff working with employees under the age of 18 e.g. apprentices do not have to be checked.

5. Schools are classed as ‘establishments’ under the Act and are more tightly regulated than Universities. The same goes for establishments like care homes and FE Colleges. There are some areas of the University that regularly visit Schools, however whether you need to be checked depends on what type of activity you are doing within the School and whether you have any unsupervised contact with the children. For more detailed advice, you should read section 8 of the PVG policy.

6. When considering the issue of unsupervised contact with children, a check will probably not be required if this contact is merely ad hoc and happens as part of general contact with the wider public or student body as this contact would fall under the incidental rule. Please contact Human Resources if you require further advice regarding this.
When completing part G3 of the PVG form that asks for ‘Position Applied For’, it is important to be as descriptive as possible (within limited space available) so that Disclosure Scotland knows why a PVG check is being requested. For example, it is not enough just to put Fitness Instructor on the form. You will have to put ‘Fitness Instructor – instructing/unsupervised contact - children’.

A Lecturer who is going to be undertaking research that means that they will have unsupervised contact with children should put something like: Lecturer- research- unsupervised contact with children. As there is no requirement to check Lecturers now, simply putting Lecturer would mean that Disclosure Scotland would reject it.

These descriptions are important because Disclosure Scotland has to be convinced that a check is necessary and if they are not, the form will be returned to us.

*Please note that for individuals who join the University and are already members of the PVG scheme, a Scheme Record Update is applied for using a different form to the one normally used. These forms are available from Human Resources.*