

PVG Guidance for Club Welfare Officers - March 2025

Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG)

The SOA is an accredited body in terms of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. It applies for PVGs in respect of employees or volunteers doing a regulated role with children or protected adults within the orienteering community.

The PVG scheme helps ensure that people who are unsuitable to work with children and protected adults cannot do regulated roles with them. People who are barred from working with these groups cannot join the scheme.

Accredited bodies can check employees' PVG disclosures to:

- help decide if they're suitable for certain types of work
- make sure they're allowed to do certain types of work

It is against the law for an organisation to employ someone to work with children or protected adults if they're barred from doing it.

From April 2025, it is an offence to have an individual in a regulated role with children and protected adults without PVG scheme membership. It's also illegal for the barred person to do or try to do a regulated role.

Types of work covered by PVG

The PVG scheme does not apply to all jobs and volunteering roles. It only applies to regulated roles being conducted in Scotland.

There are 2 types of regulated roles - work with children and work with protected adults.

How long PVG lasts

Membership of the PVG scheme lasts for life at present but from April 2026, Disclosure Scotland will be replacing the lifetime PVG scheme membership with a 5 year time limited membership.

Further details on transitional arrangements will be provided as soon as possible. Members are continuously checked, unless they decide to leave the scheme.

Regulated Roles

The PVG scheme does not apply to all jobs and volunteering roles. It only applies to regulated roles in Scotland.

There are 2 types of regulated roles- work with children and work with protected adults.

Children

Under the Disclosure Act, a child is any individual under the age of 18

Protected Adult

Under the Disclosure Act, a protected adult is any individual who is aged 18 or over and meets one of the following conditions;

- is receiving a prescribed health service
- is receiving a community care service
- by reason of physical or mental disability, illness, infirmity or ageing either has an impaired ability to protect themselves from physical or psychological harm or requires assistance with the activities of daily living
- is homeless, as is defined by section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) 1987 and is receiving counselling, therapy, advice, guidance or advocacy support in relation to health or wellbeing
- has experienced, is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing domestic abuse and is receiving counselling, therapy, advice, guidance or advocacy support in relation to health or wellbeing from
- is being supported (by an individual engaged by or on their behalf) to live independently, including personal care services, food preparation or recreational services or is receiving counselling, therapy, advice, guidance.

The SOA currently is only a member of the PVG scheme in respect of work with Children and unless clubs inform us that they require PVG for work with protected adults.

Regulated Roles with Children

Contact

The first consideration is whether there is contact with children. The Disclosure (Scotland) Act defines children as everyone under 18.

Contact can be

- Physical contact
- Written, visual or verbal communication
- Exercising Power or Influence

What is exercising power or influence?

1. assisting, facilitating, permitting or impeding progress towards a desirable objective or outcome for a particular child,
2. making decisions of an operational or strategic nature that could have an impact on a number of children, OR
3. persuading or putting pressure on a particular child to behave or act in a certain manner for the financial gain or manner for the financial gain or personal gratification of a person other than the child.

Orienteering Club Committees and Boards

Any orienteering club who is holding events or activities within which children will be participating will qualify as an organisation who is providing benefits for or to children even if this is not written specifically within the constitution.

All roles within an orienteering club who have a “position of responsibility” as they are exercising power of influence over children will require PVG scheme membership even if there is no direct contact with children. It will depend upon how each club committee or board works but essentially anyone who is involved with making decisions on events or activities or the club which relate to children will require a PVG. If you have any doubts as to whom is required to have a PVG within your club committee please just ask.

Regulated Role Activities

Once contact has been determined, we then need to consider whether the contact is in relation to at least one regulated activity as detailed in Schedule 3 of the Disclosure (Sc) Act. ,

Those which relate to orienteering are as follows:-

Childcare

- being in charge or caring for children other than as a foster carer

Care, Health and Accommodation Services

- Position re medical, care or influence over policy

Leisure Activities

- providing cultural, leisure, social or recreational activity for children

Sports Activities

- coaching children in relation to sports or physical activity

Miscellaneous

- driving or escorting children in connection with transport services mainly or exclusively for children
- holding a position or responsibility in an organisation which has as one of its main purposes the provision of benefits for or to children

Checklist for PVG scheme membership

When determining whether a volunteer requires membership of the PVG scheme in respect of their orienteering work the following checklist can be applied:-

1. Is there contact and an activity which would constitute a regulated role?
2. Who are they working with? Children or protected adults?
3. Is the role taking place in Scotland?
4. Is the regulated role part of their regular or normal volunteer role description and rather than contact being incidental? Regular can be daily, weekly, monthly or yearly.
5. Does the volunteer role description include the day to day supervision/ management of someone carrying out a regulated role?

6. Are they training to carry out a regulated role and so need a PVG?
7. Are there any exceptions which apply?
 - a. activity takes place in relation to children's work
 - b. is carried out in the course of a family relationship
 - c. is part of personal relationship, for no commercial consideration and for benefit of child or their family/ friends

Be aware that a volunteer's role may change over time to encompass a regulated role and therefore the requirement for a PVG may change as a role evolves.

We have discussed orienteering specifically with Disclosure Scotland and Volunteer Scotland and based on traditional roles within the sport:-

Roles which need a PVG

- Club Welfare Officer
- Club Coach
- Coach assistant
- Club executive committee
- SOA Board
- Drivers transporting children (unless agreement with parents)
- First Aid
- People staying with children overnight on camps

Roles which don't need a PVG

- Planner
- Organiser
- Controller
- Start team
- Download team
- Control hangers
- Control collectors
- Volunteers/ welcome team

Again each club may do things differently and so if there is any doubt please ask and we can talk through things and seek clarity where there is any doubt.

PVGs in respect roles which only come under the PVG Scheme due to the new legislation (ie Board members) can not be applied for until April 2025. There is a grace period from 1st April to 30th June whereby people can carry out regulated roles but the PVG must have been applied for before 30th June in order for the sport not to be committing an offence by using these volunteers.

Once someone has become a PVG scheme member linked to SOA it does not matter than they change roles and a new PVG would not be required for the change in role provided they have a PVG scheme membership linked to SOA.

It is the responsibility of the PVG Scheme member to keep Disclosure Scotland updated with any change in name, address or email.