

Required Level of Disclosure / PVG Scheme Membership Guidance¹

1. This document is to help researchers making an application to Research Ethics Committees determine the required level of disclosure and whether they are required to be registered on the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme for their research work.
2. The PVG Scheme is Scotland's response to the principal recommendation of the Bichard Inquiry Report which was undertaken following the tragic murders in Soham in 2002. This recommendation called for a registration system for all those who work - whether paid or unpaid - with children and protected adults in the UK that would confirm that there is no known reason why an individual should not work with these groups. This is achieved by Disclosure Scotland maintaining a list of people who are barred from working with children and a list of people who are barred from working with protected adults. The PVG Scheme was established by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007².
3. **What is considered a Protected Adult?** An individual aged 16 or over who is provided with particular services further defined at section 94 of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. An important principle underpinning PVG is that a person is a protected adult by virtue of a service they receive, not because of a particular condition or disability, and that they are a protected adult only while receiving that service. In that sense, all of us may at one time or another be a protected adult: for example, when receiving medical treatment.
4. If a researcher is unsure on the required level of disclosure or whether they are required to be registered on the PVG scheme, they should contact the University Research Ethics Panel (researchethics@qmu.ac.uk) in the first instance for advice.

¹ This guidance has been adapted from Glasgow University's website.
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/humanresources/mgrs-admin/mgr-guidance/pvgscheme/faqs/> . Accessed: 24/05/2017

² <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/09/29114859/0>

Clinical Research

The responses to questions 1 to 5 are premised on the fact that any potential research is either health or medical-related and is concerned with the provision of a health service. So, if the research is to be used by a health service then a Standard Disclosure or PVG will be required.

1. A Researcher is conducting research involving Protected Adults in a hospital.

Face to face interview to elicit information from patients by asking questions in connection with health or medical issues.

ANSWER: Standard Disclosure required – Position which is concerned with the provision of a health service and the Researcher has access to patients in the course of his/her activities.

2. A Researcher is conducting research involving Protected Adults in a hospital.

Face to face interview with patients, gathering information and providing advice, making recommendations relating to the patients' health/medical condition/s.

ANSWER: PVG Scheme Membership required as the Researcher is considered to be in regulated work with Protected Adults and is deemed to be "delivering a health service"

3. Lecturer visiting an NHS Trust to meet with students (working at a Hospital on Placement), for academic supervision and/or mentoring purposes.

The Lecturer is there for discussion only with the students and the NHS staff, and is not required to interact directly with patients.

ANSWER: Basic Disclosure required – a Standard Disclosure would not be required as the Lecturer is 'not concerned with the provision of a health service'. S/he is there for academic purposes only.

4. A Researcher is conducting research involving Child Patients from a local Hospital, in a University setting.

Researcher is in sole charge of the children during the research.

ANSWER: PVG scheme membership required as the Researcher is deemed to be in regulated work with Children - "Being in sole charge of Children".

5. A Researcher is conducting research involving Child Patients from a local Hospital, in a University setting.

Researcher carries out the research with the child's parents present.

ANSWER: PVG scheme membership required if the Researcher is providing advice in relation to the child's health or is carrying out medical examinations/tests, even with the child's parents present.

If the Researcher is simply asking questions, then a Basic Disclosure is required.

Non-Clinical Research

The responses to questions 6 to 13 are premised on the fact that any potential research does not relate to the provision of a health service. The Researcher will be carrying out regulated work with children and/or regulated work with adults if the research being conducted can be categorised as:

- caring for children, Protected Adults
- teaching, instructing, training or supervising children or Protected Adults
- being in sole charge of children or Protected Adults
- providing advice or guidance to children or Protected Adults which relates to physical or emotional wellbeing, education or training.

Research Involving Protected Adults

6. A Researcher is conducting non-health- service related research involving Protected Adults in a University or community setting.

Face to face interview to elicit information from participants by asking questions or conducting a questionnaire. The individual's carer is present.

ANSWER: Basic Disclosure required – a Standard Disclosure would not be required as the Researcher is 'not concerned with the provision of a health service'. S/he is there for academic research purposes only.

7. A Researcher is conducting non-health-service related research involving Protected Adults in a University or community setting.

Face to face interview to elicit information from participants by asking questions or conducting a questionnaire. The individual's carer is not present.

ANSWER: Basic Disclosure required – a Standard Disclosure would not be required as the Researcher is 'not concerned with the provision of a health service'. S/he is there for academic research purposes only. "Protected Adults" are only "Protected Adults" when they are in receipt of one of the designated health services.

8. A Researcher is conducting non-health-service related research involving Protected Adults in a University or community setting.

The research involves physical contact (taking measurements of the participant's height, weight, waist circumference, and skin-fold thickness – the last of these requires the lifting of clothing). The individual's carer is present.

ANSWER: Basic Disclosure required – a Standard Disclosure would not be required as the Researcher is 'not concerned with the provision of a health service'. S/he is there for academic research purposes only.

9. A Researcher is conducting non-health-service related research involving Protected Adults in a University or community setting.

The research involves physical contact (taking measurements of the participant's height, weight, waist circumference, and skin-fold thickness – the last of these requires the lifting of clothing). The individual's carer is not present.

ANSWER: Basic Disclosure required – a Standard Disclosure would not be required as the Researcher is 'not concerned with the provision of a health service'. S/he is there for academic research purposes only. "Protected Adults" are only "Protected Adults" when they are actually in receipt of one of the designated health services.

Research Involving Children

10. A Researcher is conducting research involving children at a local school.

Researcher carries out the research, which involves an interview or questionnaire, with teacher or parent present.

ANSWER: Standard Disclosure required. However, a school is an establishment under the PVG Scheme and if there is an opportunity for the Researcher to have UNSUPERVISED contact with children, then s/he would be eligible for PVG Scheme membership.

11. A Researcher is conducting research involving children at a local school.

Researcher carries out the research, which involves an interview or questionnaire, with no teacher or parent present.

ANSWER: PVG Scheme membership required as the Researcher would be deemed to be in regulated work with Children.

12. A Researcher is conducting research involving children at a local school.

Researcher carries out the research, which involves physical contact (taking measurements of the child's height, weight, waist circumference, and skin-fold thickness – the last of these requires the lifting of clothing). Teacher or parent is present throughout.

ANSWER: Standard Disclosure required. However, a school is an establishment under the PVG Scheme and if there is an opportunity for the researcher to have UNSUPERVISED contact with children, then s/he would be eligible for PVG Scheme membership.

13. A Researcher is conducting research involving children at a local school.

Researcher carries out the research, which involves physical contact (taking measurements of the child's height, weight, waist circumference, and skin-fold thickness – the last of these requires the lifting of clothing). No teacher or parent is present.

ANSWER: PVG Scheme membership required as the Researcher would be deemed to be in regulated work with Children.