



Scottish Gymnastics Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures

Approval

Approved by	Owner	Dept	Date
Wellbeing and protection committee	Head of Wellbeing and Safe sport/ Head of Operations	Safe sport/ Operations	September 2024

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Introduction

Safer recruitment is a vital part of our wellbeing and safe sport practices. It is our commitment in action, to ensuring that those who are recruited in paid or unpaid roles in the sport of gymnastics are suitable to work with children and vulnerable groups. The vast majority of those who work or volunteer in sport do so for many positive reasons. We also recognise that there are individuals who wish to access vulnerable groups and go on to abuse. These individuals gravitate to situations where little vetting or checking takes place. It is impossible to know who just by looking at someone who is or will go on to abuse their position of trust. Therefore, it is important that all reasonable steps be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable groups.

Our approach to a safer recruitment process is informed and based on legislation and policy in particular the following:

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 states:

Committed, paid and unpaid coaches, officials, volunteers and workers will often become significant role models and trusted people in a child's life. Those responsible for the organisation of activities should ensure that:

- safeguarding is integral to practice in recruitment, training and oversight of staff and volunteers
- children know how and with whom they can voice questions and concerns.

The Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport states:

Standard 5: Every child has volunteers and staff working alongside them who have been considered suitable to work with children and young people

Safeguarding is everybody's business and as an organisation we are committed to not only developing policies and procedures but to providing information, guidance and training opportunities to ensure those working with vulnerable groups adopt best practice as part of our commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment that actively looks to reduce risk, prevent harm and keep children and vulnerable groups safe.

Coaches, officials/helpers and other volunteers are committed, dedicated people who are motivated to work within gymnastics for commendable reasons. However, we must take all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people or people with an inappropriate motivation are prevented from working with vulnerable groups.

The Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers, Staff and Contractors

It is important that standard procedures are used, whether people are paid or unpaid, part-time or full-time or contractor. For all volunteers / staff / contractors working within our organisation who have regular contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults the following safer recruitment steps will be undertaken:

Scottish Gymnastics Safer Recruitment Process

Our safer recruitment process is set out below.

Pre-application information

Anyone who expresses an interest in the job or role should be given information about the role. For bigger or more formal roles this would include a role description and person specification, which clearly states the required qualifications and experience, time commitment and PVG or other checks. If the role is less formal or less senior such as a volunteer helper, a shorter description with a general set of duties can be shared. Regardless of how big or little the pre-application pack is, clear expectations should be shared at this stage, along with the club and organisation's commitment to using the safer recruitment process and requirement for those in *regulated roles* to undertake a PVG check.

Application forms/CV and cover letter

All potential staff and volunteers being considered for senior roles or *regulated roles* should complete an application form or provide a CV and cover letter which is designed to elicit information about an applicant's past career - including any gaps in involvement or employment, and any relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken. Request to see all relevant coaching certificates and qualifications will be undertaken.

For lower-level roles or those of helpers/less frequency, a shorter and lower-level approach such as accepting an email of interest with a few points as to why the person wishes the role would be a suitable option as long as the checking of any required qualifications and training for that role steps are undertaken.

For contractors the tender for service process will include a process to gather relevant information on the individuals suitability to undertake the contract for service including qualifications, experience and relevant training. This includes checks of all relevant coaching certificates, qualifications and insurance.

Interviews

Interviews are used to assess the applicant and attempt to verify all information given and to check that the person is a good fit for the ethos and values of the organisation.

For bigger roles both paid (employed/contracted) or volunteer e.g. executive director etc a formal interview with structured questions and approach will be undertaken. If the recruitment is for a role that has specific practical skills such as a coach it is strongly recommended that a skills demonstration or activity where those skills can be observed is undertaken.

For lower-level roles, which are often volunteers a more simple, informal interview or discussion can be undertaken.

Referees

References from at least two people (not relatives) who have known the applicant for at least two years and who are able to comment confidentially on the person's previous work with children and any former involvement in sport. One must be from a current (or recent if unemployed) employer.

Provisional Recruitment Decision

Once all recruitment process steps have been completed in the safer recruitment process, the recruiting manager must make a provisional recruitment decision, based on all consideration of the information gathered. If the recruiting manager deems the individual to be suitable for a *regulated role*, then the PVG

check should be requested. No appointment can be confirmed, or a person start in a *regulated role* until the PVG check has been completed and Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team has returned a suitability decision.

No PVG, no start, no exceptions.

Self-Declaration

As part of our safer recruitment process, the applicant will be asked to complete a self declaration form at the point the PVG check is requested.

This form and the information within it, is managed by Scottish Gymnastics and is only completed when the recruitment process is complete and the individual is provisionally offered the role, subject to a PVG check.

Once in post, any member of staff, contractor or volunteer who gains any new convictions, must complete the self-declaration form again and notify Scottish Gymnastics as soon as possible. It is important to note that failing to follow this ongoing self-disclosure process may result in disciplinary action and could ultimately result in dismissal.

PVG Scheme Membership

A PVG Scheme application **must be undertaken for all regulated roles in gymnastics** for those aged 16 years and above. *Regulated roles* is the new term for what was previously called *regulated work* both paid or unpaid with children/vulnerable adults where an individual has contact with a vulnerable group and has an agreed normal duty, or a reasonably anticipated duty that is part of their role to care for, train, supervise, be in sole charge of children/vulnerable adults or be in a position of power and authority over children/vulnerable adults. Individuals who have a responsibility to manage or supervise those who are carrying out a regulated role with children/vulnerable adults also require a PVG, even if they do not have direct contact with children in their own role.

Below is list of the most common regulated roles within Scottish Gymnastics, this is not an exhaustive list:

- head coach/coach/assistant coach
- helper in the gym - assisting children
- safeguarding officer
- gymnastics support service: physio/choreographer/strength and conditioning
- first aider
- team manager (trips away)/chaperone
- mentor
- Love to Move
- tutor
- charity trustee
- Committee member
- Judge
- Events personnel
- those with managerial responsibility for individuals in regulated roles such as the above positions should also complete a PVG application

- Individual Scottish Gymnastics employee's / contractors / volunteers where the role description has had a PVG assessment that determined that the role required a PVG
- NOTE: Any role not on the above list that directly supervises children/vulnerable adults, or you believe might need a PVG, contact Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team to have the role assessed.

NB: This list is not an exhaustive list and is reviewed and updated regularly. To view the most up-to-date list of roles please check the [Scottish Gymnastics safe recruitment and PVG webpage](#): and look at the [regulated roles matrix](#).

PVG and Suitability Decision

The recruiting manager has overall responsibility to complete the safer recruitment process and conclude if they wish to appoint an individual to a role subject to satisfactory PVG check and suitability decision.

The PVG check will be made for anyone taking on a *Regulated Role*. On receipt of the PVG disclosure, Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team will assess the information it contains and make the *suitability decision*.

When Scottish Gymnastics receive a copy of an individual's PVG disclosure certificate, we will compare it to the self-declaration form which the individual has completed. If there are any differences between the details on the two documents, Scottish Gymnastics will arrange to discuss this with the individual.

Scottish Gymnastics will not make any judgement on the reasons that information differs prior to our discussion as we understand that the rules around what information an individual should share with us are complex.

How the PVG disclosure information will be used

Any information disclosed with Scottish Gymnastics will be treated in the strictest confidence and only authorised people required to see the information to help assess it will have access to it. There may be instances where Scottish Gymnastics need to seek support or guidance externally (for example, from a solicitor). When this is necessary, Scottish Gymnastics will not share any information which will identify the individual, only the information which Scottish Gymnastics require support or guidance on.

Where conviction information has been detailed on the self-declaration form but is not shared on the disclosure certificate, Scottish Gymnastics must always disregard this information as this means that the individual has provided information that they were not required to share with them.

Scottish Gymnastics does, however, need to risk assess any conviction or vetting information carefully to ensure a fair and consistent practice when assessing any conviction or vetting information, Scottish Gymnastics will consider the following criteria when reaching a suitability decision:

- Is the conviction relevant to the position being offered?
- How serious was the offence?
- How long is it since the offence took place?
- Is there a pattern of offending behaviour?
- Have the personal circumstances changed since the time of the offending behaviour?
- How has the person become rehabilitated?

- Is the person barred from the type of regulated role they have applied for?

The *suitability decision* returned by Scottish Gymnastics will fall into one of three outcomes:

1. The PVG check is satisfactory, and the recruiting manager can proceed with the appointment.
2. The PVG check returned information that is relevant and significantly serious that no appointment can be made, the recruiting manager cannot proceed with the appointment. This may also result in the applicant being disqualified from working in a *regulated role* within a Scottish Gymnastics registered club (whether paid or voluntary).
3. The PVG check returned information that is relevant and further information is required to determine if appointment can proceed - a suitability assessment meeting is required.

NB: Non conviction relevant information is intelligence held by Police Scotland. When an applicant applies for PVG, any intelligence held on the applicant which is deemed to be relevant to the type of regulated role will be documented on the PVG certificate in typed text.

Suitability Assessment Meeting

The meeting is carried out by a member of the Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team, when the information returned on a PVG is insufficient to make the suitability decision. PVG is only one item of information used to make an informed suitability decision as part of the Safer Recruitment Process.

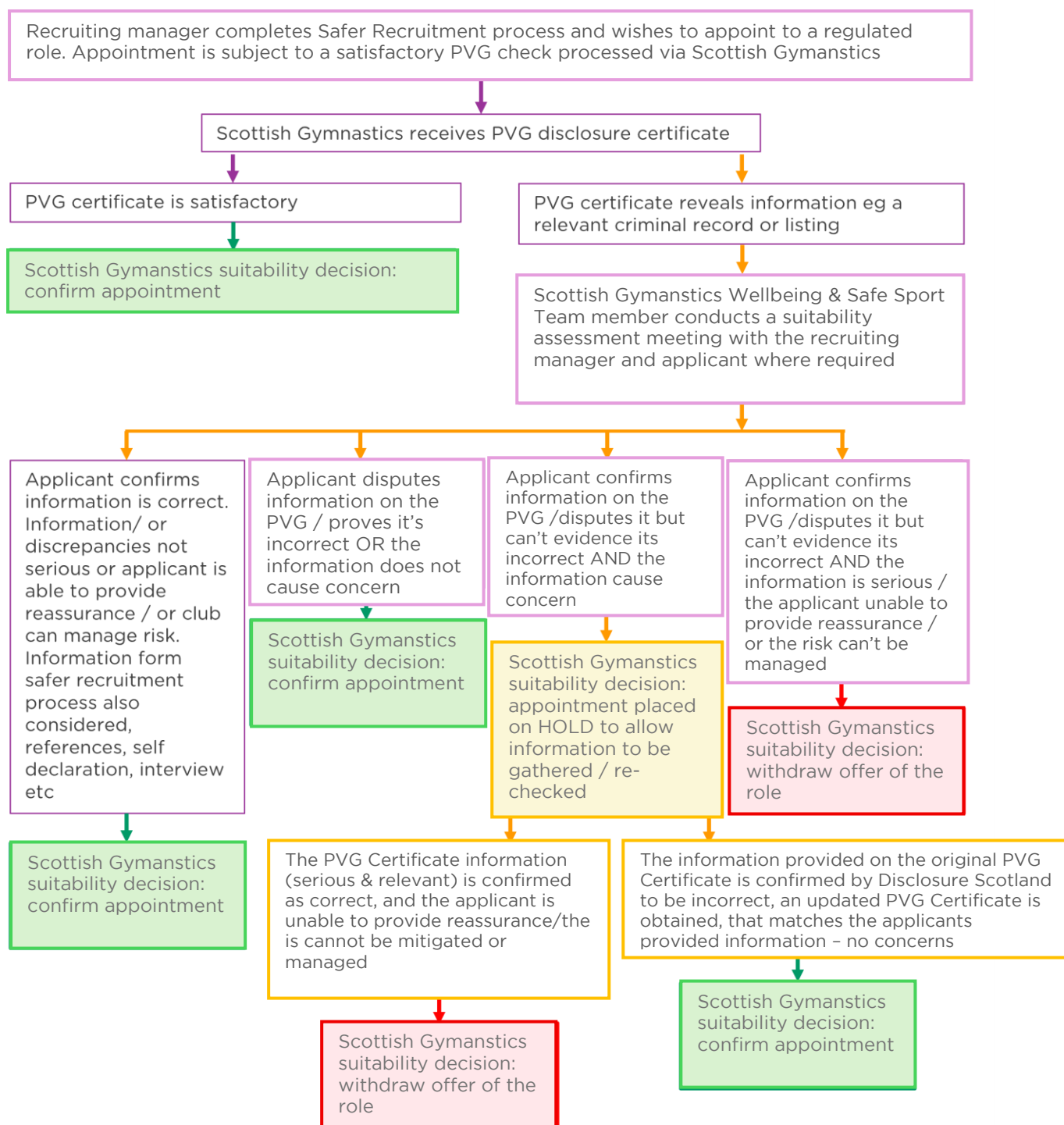
The recruiting manager will be contacted, and the information contained on the PVG will be shared with them. The recruiting manager will share the information gathered as part of the safer recruitment process, references, any relevant information from interview and other checks e.g. social media or qualifications etc. Additional information may be gathered from the recruiting manager such as risk assessment, modified or alternative duties and supervision provision to help considered if any risks identified can be safely managed.

The applicant is often contacted as part of this process and asked to provide more information and discuss the information returned on the PVG certificate.

Once the additional information has been gathered it will be used to inform the suitability decision and one of three outcomes will be returned:

1. The recruiting manager can progress with the appointment.
2. The recruiting manager can progress with the appointment with restrictions / risk assessment / supervision in place.
3. The recruiting manager cannot progress with the appointment and the recruitment is terminated.

The Safer Recruitment and Suitability decision making process



No PVG, No Start, No Exceptions

Appeals

If an individual feels that the risk assessment has not been carried out appropriately or that the suitability decision of Scottish Gymnastics is unfair, the individual has the right to appeal.

Should they wish to appeal a suitability decision, the appeal must be submitted in writing to head of operations or the CEO within seven days of receipt of the decision being communicated, clearly indicating the reasons for appeal. The process will be progressed as quickly as practically possible.

Recruiting people with convictions

Scottish Gymnastics treats all applicants fairly and consistently in accordance with the requirements of Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended). We do not differentiate our approach between paid and unpaid roles and recognise that having a criminal record does not necessarily mean that someone cannot work or volunteer for our organisation.

We are obligated to consider and assess whether any conviction information provided to us in a disclosure certificate impacts on a person's ability to carry out the role that they have applied for or which they hold within our organisation.

There is clear guidance on how conviction information returned on the Scottish Gymnastics self-declaration form and on the returned PVG form is considered. The assessment is based entirely on the requirements of the role and any information returned on the PVG disclosure certificate or the self-declaration completed with Scottish Gymnastics as part of the PVG application request.

Post Recruitment actions

Induction

An induction procedure for all new starts is recommended. New starts will then be made aware of the relevant club policies and able to sign appropriate codes of conduct and membership requirements. A period of probation is advisable with regular probation review meetings held to discuss and share feedback and raise any concerns from both the new start and the manager.

Training

All volunteers and staff in a regulated role must complete Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Protection training at the appropriate level.

All volunteers and staff must become members of Scottish Gymnastics.

For help and advice on the PVG Process

Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team for safer recruitment process, safeguarding, PVG advice and support: PVG@scottishgymnastics.org

Process A

Scottish Gymnastics Secure Handling of Disclosure Information Process

Purpose

As part of the Safer Recruitment Process, PVG checks are undertaken for those in Regulated Roles for the purpose of assessing individual's suitability for paid and/or voluntary work.

This policy is to provide guidance and instruction on how to appropriately handle disclosures for those at the club who will have access to them and to provide assurance that disclosure information will be handled, used, stored and destroyed appropriately and in accordance with the Disclosure Scotland Code of Practice.

Terminology

For the purpose of this policy, PVG Scheme Records and Updates, and Basic and disclosures will be referred to as *disclosures*.

Commitment:

In accordance with the Scottish Government Code of Practice, for registered persons and other recipients of disclosure information, Scottish Gymnastics will ensure the following practice.

Requesting Disclosures

Disclosures will only be requested when necessary and relevant to a particular post and the information provided on a disclosure will only be used for recruitment purposes.

Scottish Gymnastics will ensure that an individual's consent is freely given before seeking a disclosure. We will also ensure that all sensitive personal information that is collated for the purposes of obtaining a disclosure will be always managed confidentially by those involved in the disclosure process.

Consent is also taken by Scottish Gymnastics for sharing information returned on a disclosure, this is taken at the point the application is made. An individual has the right to withdraw consent at any time.

Should consent be withdrawn then the recruitment process will be terminated at that point as the Safer Recruitment process cannot be completed without the consideration of all information including Disclosure information and other relevant safeguarding information. A person cannot be appointed to a *Regulated Role* without the completion of the *Safer Recruitment process*.

If an individual is delivering a *Regulated Role* and withdraws consent to share Disclosure/Safeguarding information, then their ability to remain in their role will be reviewed, they may be assigned alternative non regulated role duties while the assessment is undertaken and where appropriate disciplinary process will be initiated. This may result in removal from role and if they hold other regulated roles within Gymnastics, this could have an affect on their ability to hold those as well.

Processing

Scottish Gymnastics will receive the Disclosure certificate information and our Wellbeing and Safe Sport team are responsible for making the suitability decision in relation to the disclosure information.

Sharing Information

Disclosure information will only be shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.

Fair Processing Notice (FNP): Safeguarding

The following information applies to individuals working in a Scottish Gymnastics regulated environment which Scottish Gymnastics is and, who are conducting Regulated Work/in a Regulated Role, and whom are members of (or applying for membership of) the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

The Data Protection Act 2018 requires that you are informed about how your personal information will be used. For the purposes of safeguarding, wellbeing and safe sport matters in Scotland, if Scottish Gymnastics or your club receives information of concern; Scottish Gymnastics or your club may share information about you with each other, as well as British Gymnastics and where relevant other governing bodies in the UK. This may be related to, but not exclusively restricted to, where the organisation sharing the information has been alerted to circumstances that might affect your status as a member of the PVG scheme for regulated work/regulated roles with children or vulnerable adults. Or your suitability to carry out the regulated work/regulated role for which you have applied/been appointed or already doing. In the event such sharing is deemed necessary, it will normally only be carried out between the Safeguarding Officers in the Club, Governing Body, and those appointed representatives within a relevant partner organisation.

Storage

Scottish Gymnastics process all PVG requests via the Wellbeing and Safe Sport team. These are received, handled, stored and disposed of by in secure conditions as follows:-

Personal Records

Scottish Gymnastics do not keep disclosure information on an individual's personnel file. It is kept securely, either in lockable, storage containers or electronically with double authentication required. Access to storage units and electronically stored information is strictly controlled and is limited to authorised named individuals, who are entitled to see such information in the course of their duties.

Digital Certificates

Care will be taken in relation to electronic disclosure information, and we will endeavour to prevent unauthorised viewing, transmission, storage, printing or fraudulent manipulation.

Access to digital certificates will be restricted to those who are entitled to see it in the course of their duties. All electronic certificates are stored with double authentication.

We will not retain any electronic image of the disclosure information. We will, however, record the date of issue, the individual's name, date of birth and email address, the disclosure type and the role descriptor for which it was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure, the Scottish Gymnastics suitability decision and our appointment decision along with any conditions or restricts placed. The same conditions relating to secure storage and access apply irrespective of the period of retention.

Record Keeping

It is our organisations responsibility to keep accurate information about disclosures we have accessed. The following information will be recorded on our Disclosure Tracking Record:

- Date of issue of disclosure
- Date PVG should be updated
- Applicant's Date of Birth
- Applicant's email address
- Name of Applicant
- Disclosure type/level
- Unique reference number of disclosure
- Position for which the disclosure was requested
- Recruitment decision taken, including any restrictions or conditions placed

We will not record any vetting information as the code of practice prohibits this.

Retention

We will not retain disclosure information (hard copy or electronic) for longer than is necessary for the purpose for which the disclosure record was obtained. PVG disclosures will not be retained beyond the last day that a scheme member is carrying out regulated work for our organisation.

Destruction/Deletion

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that disclosure information is destroyed by suitable and secure means, for example, shredding, pulping or burning. Electronic images or communications with disclosure information will also be deleted permanently from both the email address where it was received and from where it is stored.

We will ensure that all staff with access to disclosure information are aware of this policy and have received training and support to help them to comply with both this policy and the code of practice. A copy of this policy will be made available to any applicant, member of staff or volunteer who requests it.

Process B

Scottish Gymnastics Barred and Under Consideration for Listing Process

Scottish Gymnastics aims to ensure that all children and/or vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm while they are with our staff and volunteers.

As part of the Safer Recruitment process all those who will undertake *Regulated Roles* with children and/or vulnerable adults within our organisation will be asked to complete a disclosure (PVG level) application.

Disclosure Scotland continually monitor scheme members suitability to carry out regulated roles and will notify Scottish Gymnastics if someone is barred making them ineligible for a *Regulated Role* or if someone is moved to consideration for listing. This can happen either at the time that someone applies to join the PVG Scheme or throughout the period that they deployed in a regulated role.

Barred Individuals

If Disclosure Scotland informs Scottish Gymnastics that an individual is/has become listed and is therefore barred from deployment in a *regulated role*, the member of staff/contractor/volunteer will be removed from any and all regulated work with children/vulnerable adults immediately. Our organisation will be committing an offence if we appoint and deploy someone or fail to remove someone who is barred from the relevant regulated work. This would also be a breach of Scottish Gymnastics PVG and suitability decision policy.

The case will also be passed to the Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team for review if the individual is also an active member of the gymnastics community, sport level restrictions or management may also be applied and relevant conduct in sport proceedings initiated; separately to any action undertaken by Disclosure Scotland.

Consideration for Listing and Barring Notice – Action to be taken

Disclosure Scotland may place a scheme member ‘under consideration for listing’ if they have information that they need to take time to review. During this time, the member is not barred from regulated work. If we are notified by Disclosure Scotland that an individual is under consideration for listing, our organisation will take the following action:

At Recruitment stage

- Suspend the recruitment decision until the final determination is made.

In role

- The individual will be suspended until the final determination is made.
- Decide on a case-by-case basis. Any alternative to suspension requires a risk management meeting and agreement to be put in place and must be approved by Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport Team, possible outcomes are:
 - Place you in a non-regulated work role until the final determination is made.
 - The individual will continue in their role but will be supervised at all times until the final determination is made.

The decision will be fully explained in accordance with our current HR policies. This policy will be made available to all of our staff/volunteers.

Process C

Scottish Gymnastics Referral's Process

Purpose

This process is relevant to all those involved in making recruitment/disciplinary decisions for Scottish Gymnastics staff, contractors or volunteers.

Obligation to make a referral

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 creates the framework to ensure that people who are known to be unsuitable on the basis of past behaviour do not gain access to children or protected adults through paid or voluntary work and that those who become unsuitable are detected early and removed from these workforces.

There are certain circumstances where an organisation is legally required to notify the Protection Unit at Disclosure Scotland that a person has been removed or left a regulated role this is called "Making a Referral".

Making Referrals to Disclosure Scotland

Where it is necessary to make a referral, this process will be instigated by:

- Scottish Gymnastics Head of Wellbeing and Protection, the organisations lead signatory
- In their absence, the referral process will be carried out by a member of the Wellbeing and Safe Sport team or the Operations Manager.
- A member club safeguarding officer (person with PVG processor credential)

The responsibility to submit a referral lies with the organisation's whose discipline procedures were implemented and who made the decision to remove the individual from regulated work.

Scottish Gymnastics has an obligation to make a referral in the circumstances outlined below and acknowledges it is a criminal offence not to make such a referral.

Two conditions must be met before Disclosure Scotland are notified that something has happened in relation to an individual who is in a regulated role:

Condition 1 – A person has been permanently removed/removed themselves from regulated work. Removal from role can happen in a range of ways:

- Scottish Gymnastics /Member Club has dismissed the member of staff, contractor or volunteer.
- The member of staff, contractor or volunteer would have been dismissed as a result of the incident had they not resigned, retired or been made redundant.
- Scottish Gymnastics /Member Club has transferred the member of staff/contractor/volunteer to a position which is not regulated work with children/protected adults.
- The member of staff, contractor or volunteer would have been dismissed or considered for dismissal where employment or volunteer role was not due to end at the expiry of a fixed term contract or had the contract not expired, Scottish Gymnastics /Member Club will also refer the

case of a staff member/contractor/volunteer where information becomes available after the member of staff/contractor/volunteer has been through any of the process/circumstances noted above.

Condition 2 – At least one of the following five grounds apply:

- Caused harm to a child or protected adult.
- Placed someone at risk of harm.
- Engaged in inappropriate conduct involving pornography.
- Engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct.
- Given inappropriate medical treatment.

Making a referral is not optional. It is a legal requirement to report circumstances where both conditions are met. This should be done within 3 months of making your decision.

Historical behaviours/removals and Referrals

Where there is an historical allegation of harm or inappropriate behaviour about someone who is no longer in regulated role with us but which we believe would, in all probability, have led to the two conditions being met, we will consider whether we want to make a referral, but the legal responsibility applies only after 28 February 2011 when PVG was first introduced.

Guidance and support

For guidance on the grounds and process for making a referral, contact the Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport Team: safegym@scottishgymnastics.org

Further guidance on referrals can be found at www.mygov.scot/pvg-referrals/

Notifying the Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team

Those within our organisation who are in a position or have an involvement in carrying out disciplinary action which may result in the removal of a staff member, contractor or volunteer from a regulated role or dismissal of someone employed in a regulated role must notify the Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport Team: safegym@scottishgymnastics.org

Failure to notify Scottish gymnastics wellbeing and safe sport team or to make a referral where required, beyond any legal implications may result in disciplinary proceedings being initiated.