



Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service

Safeguarding Guidance on recruiting and supporting new volunteers to the role of Welcome Ministry at the time of COVID-19

“Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope where everyone is welcomed and loved.”

(Pope Francis)

1 Introduction

This Guidance is to assist all parishes and religious congregations to be prepared and ready to enter Phase 2 of lockdown. This Phase, in line with Scottish Government guidance, will require a new type of voluntary role. The key points of this Guidance document are:

- The volunteer must be known to the PP
- The volunteer must NOT be excluded (for any of the reasons given in 4 below)
- The volunteer must complete Application Form A or Form B.
- The Parish Priest must countersign this form and retain it.
- The PSC (if able to volunteer at present) can be given a list of the new volunteers.

2 What happens about safeguarding in Phase 2?

In Phase 2, Churches may open for specified periods of time for private prayer. New volunteers will be required to assist in a 'stewarding' role. The volunteers would be part of a new form of Welcome Ministry.

3 Who is eligible to become a volunteer with the Welcome Ministry?

Male and female parishioners who already volunteer with children, young people or vulnerable adults and have previously completed all the stages of safe recruitment.

Any other parishioner who is not already a volunteer and does not meet the exclusion criteria below.

4 Who is excluded from becoming a volunteer with the Welcome Ministry?

Even considering excluding anyone from wanting to volunteer might seem a difficult concept. The reasons for the first two excluded groups are very obvious and are applied to all safeguarding roles consistently across Scotland. Some of the other excluded groups might be difficult to accept, but this decision has been made following professional medical advice. A safe approach must be consistently implemented.

- Anyone who is Listed and Barred from any paid or voluntary role with children or adults.
- Anyone who is a Registered Sex Offender
- Anyone under the age of 18.
- Anyone who has underlying health conditions which require shielding.
- Anyone who has a long-term health condition which requires the annual flu vaccination.

5 What is involved in this new form of Welcome Ministry?

Primarily, the task is to ensure that, when Churches are open, anyone coming to the Church can be guided to enter or leave safely.

The Welcome Ministry is there to enable safe entry into the Church building, to ensure social distancing whilst in the Church and then to facilitate a safe exit from the building.

More details are provided in the *Information for new Welcome Ministry* leaflet.

6 The recruitment process

This new voluntary role will not be regulated work and therefore will NOT require a PVG. However, training and support for those who are generously willing to take on this role is a priority. This is where full compliance with this national safeguarding guidance is so important as we work together to ensure the safety of everyone.

Steps to recruit those who are part of the new Welcome Ministry:

1. Advertise via Parish Websites, Newsletters, Facebook and other social media
2. Invite parishioners who are known to the parish and who would be appropriate for this role.
3. Provide those interested with an information leaflet which explains the role.
4. If the person is already an active volunteer and has been safely recruited, they should complete Application Form A. This will include a simple tick-box endorsement by the Parish Priest that the person is suitable for this role.
5. If the person is new to any volunteer role in the parish then they should complete Application Form B.
6. The completed forms should be retained by the Parish Priest
7. Everyone about to start this role should read the *Information for new Welcome Ministry* leaflet.
8. Everyone about to start this role should view the online safeguarding training session which will be provided on the [Scottish Catholic Safeguarding Service website](#). Those who cannot access the training should email SCSS to request a printed copy.