Guidance note for the Districts and Circuits in Scotland

We have received some queries from the Circuits and Districts in Scotland relating to the need to send copy documents with returned PVG application packs. Please see below an FAQ section taken from the Methodist Quick Start Guide, plus some additional information in relation to this query.

One of concerns raised is an issue with sending personal information through the post. Unfortunately, the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme is a paper-based system with applicants required to enter their personal information on to a form, including details of identity documents, and then sign this paper form. Whilst Disclosure Scotland are working on an online solution this is not currently available. As soon as this becomes available DDC will ensure that a fully online system is in place for all applicants and Verifiers.

If any applicant has concerns about the postal system then the copy documents can posted using Royal Mail 'Signed For' or a similar service. The copy documents can also be redacted to remove details such as photos, signatures or bank details/transactions. Please remember to check that any signatures on the original documents match the signature on the form. To enable DDC to process the application we need to be able to see information that is matched with something on the form and the issue/print/postage dates to confirm document age validity. Please be aware that we would also need to be able to identify the source of the document(s) and confirm under what category it is classed e.g. if it is a bank statement or bank account opening letter.

Jonathan Bazely
DDC Director

Working in partnership with:

Why do I need to send photocopies of the identity documents to DDC with the application?

The checking of identity is the most crucial part of the process and any errors at this point can lead to an inaccurate Certificate being issued, and an employment/recruitment decision based upon wrong information. The PVG application process can be summarised as a three-stage system, aimed at meeting the Government standard for remote identity checking:

  i. *Check that the documents are original, any signatures match the form, and any photos are a true likeness for the person presenting the identity document.*
  ii. *Confirm that the documents meet the defined Government requirements, in terms of the number of documents, their age and validity*
  iii. *Cross reference the form and document information to ensure both are accurate and consistent.*

The Verifier plays a crucial role in ensuring that the first part of this process is completed and there are minimal errors in the second part of the process. Sending photocopies of documents enables DDC to carry out the second and third stages of the identity checking outlined above, and ensures that a compliant process has been followed.

DDC will run additional checks to make sure that all form information submitted matches the information contained in the documents and there are no discrepancies, for example another name not declared on the form. We will then keep a log of the information to provide an audit trail for the Methodist Church, should they require it. This ensures that the Methodist Church can pro-actively demonstrate that a compliant application was made with each and every form submission. This process assists church Verifiers and gives them confidence that it has been carried out diligently.

DDC recently surveyed the incoming PVG applications and found that even with the guidance, 16% of forms contained errors that could affect the application. These errors could result in an inaccurate certificate being issued, and a recruitment decision being made upon incorrect information. Thankfully these were identified due to the copy documents being produced.