

Major delays in processing disclosure checks

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Major delays in processing checks for people who want to work with children and protected adults have been revealed.

The SNP government is meant to ensure anyone applying for disclosure checks like Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) applications are given the result within two weeks.

However, in September more than half of PVG submissions were dealt with late, and by October just 12.5 per cent were processed on time.

That's despite the rest of the year having a near 100 per cent rate.

The Scottish Conservatives said the delays were making it harder for organisations like nurseries and other childcare providers to plan properly for the future.

The statistics were revealed following a Freedom of Information request by the party.

It showed performance levels for all disclosure checks, including basic, standard, enhanced and PVGs are slipping.

Anyone who wants to work with children or protected adults must receive a PVG before beginning employment.

Disclosure Scotland blamed the delays on "seasonal increase in our work and the bedding in time" of a new IT system.

The Scottish Government's Disclosure (Scotland) Bill, currently progressing through parliament, intends to greatly increase the extent to which disclosure checks are handled digitally, requiring another new and improved IT system.

Scottish Conservative early years spokeswoman Alison Harris said:

"No-one doubts the importance of these checks to ensure our children and vulnerable adults are protected.

"But clearly the major delays in processing PVG checks are having an impact on childcare providers.

"These businesses are already finding it hard to cater for demand, and this log-jam is only making matters worse.

"It means parents of young children – who frankly have enough on their plate – are being denied the kind of access to childcare the SNP government has promised them.

"This is a failure of government, and the SNP must sort it out as a matter of urgency."