



COMMUNITY GAMES VETTING POLICY

All policies are to be read in conjunction with the Community Games Code of Conduct. All policies belong to the members of Community Games. Every member abides by the rules and policies set out by Community Games.

POLICY STATEMENT

'The welfare and protection of children is paramount to everything that we do'

The Community Games Vetting Policy has been written in line with current guidelines for safeguarding and protecting children, to ensure a safe and transparent recruitment and selection process for volunteers and staff. Vetting is only one part of the safe recruitment practise.

AIM OF THIS POLICY

The aim of the Vetting Policy is to ensure the safe practice in the recruitment and selection of Community Games volunteers and staff.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy will help to better protect our organisation against possible perpetrators of child abuse by being a barrier for an individual who is unsuitable to work with children.

This document is written in line with current legislation and national guidelines from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Legislation and Guidelines from Republic of Ireland (ROI)

- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016
- Child Care Act 1991
- Data Protection Acts 1991 and 2003
- Children's Act 2001
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 'Children First: The National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'
- Department of Health and Children, 'Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People'
- Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland, 'The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport'

Legislation and Guidelines from Northern Ireland (NI)

- The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Disclosure) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1978
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order 2007
- Access NI Code of Practise

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- Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland, 'The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport'
- Our Duty to Care

DEFINITIONS

Vetting refers to the process of performing a background check on an individual. This includes criminal offences, convictions, non-convictions and public order offences.

An adult refers to any person 18 years old and over.

A child refers to any person under 18 years old.

Applicant refers to the person applying for Garda Vetting or an Access NI check.

VETTING REQUIREMENTS

As a National Governing Body of Sport that delivers sporting and cultural services solely for children, the majority of volunteers and all staff must be vetted prior to commencing working with children.

All members of committees at Area, County, Provincial and National level must be vetted.

All adults involved in overnight trips with children must be vetted in advance.

All adults attending the National Festival as either a National Official or as a Manager must be vetted prior to being accepted.

All volunteers and staff must be re-vetted every 3 years.

Exceptions

Individuals who volunteer at Area level on an occasional basis (4 or less times per year) are exempt from the vetting process.

There may be some regular volunteers who never have direct contact with children who may not need to be vetted. For further information please consult with the National Children's Officer.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Vetting Liaison Person

The Community Games has one Vetting Liaison Person. The Vetting Liaison Person signs off and processes all vetting applications, and corresponds with the National Vetting Bureau in relation to these applications.

National Vetting Bureau

Garda Vetting is administered by the National Vetting Bureau.

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Vetting Policy

Community Games National Vetting Committee

The Community Games National Vetting Committee is comprised of the Vetting Liaison Person/National Children's Officer and the Chief Executive Officer. The purpose of this committee is to discuss delicate or complex cases, when determining the suitability of an applicant. This may be due to the time and nature of a disclosure or to soft/specific information received.

The National Vetting Committee makes decisions on the suitability of an applicant based on the 'Threshold of Suitability' (see page 4) and on the nature of the position applied for by the applicant.

Certain convictions and/or misdemeanours may not preclude a person from involvement in Community Games unless it is deemed by the Vetting Liaison Person and/or the National Vetting Committee that to do so would put children or other members at future risk.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that he/she is vetted/re-vetted.

The Area or County committee, as appropriate, also hold a responsibility to ensure that each of their volunteers is vetted and follows the procedure to be re-vetted every 3 years.

Development staff, Development volunteers and/or Area/County Children's Officers must ensure that the vetting procedure is adhered to when recruiting new volunteers.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that all staff complete the vetting process.

SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE VETTING POLICY

Any person refusing to complete the vetting process shall be barred from volunteering or working for the Community Games.

To knowingly allow an individual to volunteer or work prior to completing the vetting process is in breach of Community Games policy. This could result in the applicant being barred from volunteering or working for Community Games. Members of the Area/County Committee may also be disciplined.

THRESHOLD OF SUITABILITY

On the return of applications from the National Vetting Bureau, the Vetting Liaison Person may also consult with the Chief Executive Officer to determine the suitability of an applicant based on the disclosure obtained. The threshold for acceptance of an application is based on the following criteria:

- Nature of the disclosure
- The position for which the applicant has applied
- Frequency or nature of contact with children in relation to the position
- Timeline in which the offence took place
- Penalty given to the applicant in relation to the offence as detailed in the disclosure

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HANDLING OF DISCLOSURES

- Disclosures are stored:
 - electronically on a secured drive and
 - in hard copy form in a secure, fireproof cabinet in the national headquarters of Community Games.
- Only the **Vetting Liaison Person/the National Children's Officer and the Chief Executive Officer have access to these files
- The Vetting Liaison Person will notify the applicant, by email if their application has been accepted based on the information provided by the National Vetting Bureau
- The Vetting Liaison Person will notify by postal mail any person who has not been accepted or if further information is required. This may also be followed up with a phone call
- The Vetting Liaison Person will also notify the Area Children's Officer by postal mail if an applicant has not been accepted
- Details of any disclosures will not be supplied to any person other than the applicant
- In some circumstances the Vetting Liaison Person may request further information or clarification from the applicant
- The National Children's Officer and the Chief Executive Officer may in exceptional circumstances request to meet the applicant in person to further clarify particular information
- Applicants may request a copy of the returned disclosure
- Applicants have an opportunity to appeal any decisions made
- Some applicants may be given one-year probation and will be requested to re-apply for vetting at the end of that year
- All volunteers and staff will be re-vetted every 3 years or as directed by the Department of Justice in both ROI and NI respectively

RIGHT TO APPEAL

An applicant who has not been accepted to work or volunteer for Community Games based on the information obtained in the disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau Unit has a right to appeal the decision.

The Appeal must be made in writing, outlining why the applicant feels that he/she is suitable to work or volunteer for the Community Games.

The Community Games National Vetting Committee will review this in accordance with the Community Games appeals process and in line with the Community Games Child Protection Policy.

VETTING PROCEDURE

The NVB vetting applications for Community Games are processed by the Liaison Person. Vetting is required for any person who carries out work or activities which mainly consist of them having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable adults.

The NVB application process is a two part process for the applicant:

1. Complete the 'Community Games E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form'

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2. Complete the online vetting application- through the Garda Vetting portal

Step 1

Download the 'Community Games E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form' from the Community Games website: www.communitygames.ie, or email vetting@communitygames.ie to request a copy to be sent to you.

The purpose of this form is to seek consent from the applicant to be vetted and for Community Games to receive disclosures relevant to the applicant. This form also provides information verifying the applicant's identity.

Step 2

Complete the Community Games 'E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form', using block capitals.

Section 1 is to be completed by the applicant and all fields must be completed.

Sections 2 and 3 to be completed by the Area/County Children's Officer or in his/her absence, the Secretary.

If the applicant is under 18 years of age, the Parent/Guardian must also complete the Parent Consent Form for Vetting (available for download at www.communitygames.ie).

Step 3

Sections 2 and 3- Verifying Identity and Identification Documents

- Identity is to be verified by the Area or County Children's Officer. If the applicant is the Area Children's Officer, the Secretary or the County Children's Officer may verify the identity
- The Children's Officer must check the identity of the applicant against original valid forms of ID e.g. passport, driver's license, student card, household utility bills
- A minimum of 2 pieces of ID is required to verify identity
- The 100 point rule for ID validation must be observed- for example a driver's license (credit card type) carries 80 points and therefore an additional form of ID is required. Other forms of ID carry fewer points and multiple documents may be required to verify identity
- The Children's Officer must then complete Sections 2 and 3 of the 'E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form'
- Children under 18 may not have appropriate ID therefore the 100 point rule is allocated differently. Please see Section 3 of the 'E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form'
- For volunteers from new Areas, this process must be completed at County level or by either a Regional Development Officer or the National Children's Officer

Step 4

The applicant must provide photocopies of all documents used to verify his/her identity.

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Step 5

The Community Games 'E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form', the photocopies of the ID used to verify identity and the Parent Consent form (if applicant is under 18) must be sent to the Liaison Person to the following address:

Community Games, 20 Inish Carraig House, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Please note that only the original 'E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form' will be accepted, as the applicants original signature is required. Photocopies of this form will not be accepted.

Step 6

On receipt of the 'E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form', the Liaison Person will send the applicant an email, inviting the applicant to start the online process.

This email will contain a link and log in details to the vetting portal. From the time you receive this email you have 30 days to complete the online application.

Follow the instructions in the portal. All sections must be completed and the portal will not allow you to move to the next section until this is done.

Please note: if you make an error in a section you will not be allowed to 'go back' and edit it. You will have to start the application again. Ensure that all sections are correct before moving to the next page.

Step 7

Once you have submitted the application, the Liaison Person will check the application prior to submitting the application to the NVB. If there are any queries or anomalies at this point, the Liaison Person will send the application (online) back to the applicant. The following choices are available to the applicant:

1. Cancel the application- you will need to reapply using the 'E-vetting Invitation and ID Validation Form'
2. Cancel and resend the invitation- The Liaison Person can cancel the application and resend the original online invitation for you to complete again
3. Submit to the NVB

Please Note: no application can be partially changed or saved. Once you have completed the application this cannot be altered. If there are any errors the application must be entirely completed again.

Step 8

A disclosure certificate is issued to the Liaison Person via the vetting portal once the application has been processed by the NVB. A decision will be made about an applicant's suitability according to the Community Games Vetting Policy. No position may be taken up prior to this decision. This is a requirement by law.

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Vetting Policy

USEFUL CONTACTS

For more information on vetting please see:

www.garda.ie

or

www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

Contact Details for Community Games

All applications for vetting must be sent to the following address:

Private and Confidential, Community Games, 20 Inish Carraig House, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Community Games Mandated Person

Caitriona Reynolds

Community Games, 20 Inish Carraig House, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

caitrona@communitygames.ie

090 6433388 or 086 7953564

National Children's Officer and Vetting Liaison Person

Caitriona Reynolds,

Community Games, 20 Inish Carraig House, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

caitrona@communitygames.ie

090 6433388 or 086 7953564

COMMUNICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy is available for download at www.communitygames.ie.

The Area/County Children's Officer, as appropriate, shall inform children, adults, parents and volunteers of the Community Games Vetting Policy. The CEO shall inform staff of the Community Games Vetting Policy.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive Officer by the 1st February of each year.

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