



Policy & Procedures
For
Garda Vetting



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Athletics Ireland

Policy & Procedures for Garda Vetting

Introduction

Athletics Ireland is committed to the highest standards of professional practice in its recruitment process. The Association is committed to ensuring that all people who are employed or are volunteers within the Association act according to the highest standards in all aspects of their roles and responsibilities.

Garda Vetting

Garda Vetting is an important component of a good practice recruitment policy. Other components are verification of identity, interview and gathering of references.

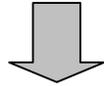
Garda Vetting is provided to Athletics Ireland members by the Garda Central Vetting Unit, through the Association, in respect of voluntary and paid staff working for the Association. All volunteers/staff who have direct access to children or vulnerable adults should be vetted.

The Vetting Process

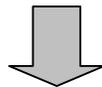
- The applicant is asked by the relevant body (Club, County, Region or Association) to complete a Garda Vetting form.
- The form is forwarded to AAI, where it is checked and signed by the Authorised Signatory (appointed by AAI and trained by Garda Vetting Unit for the role).
- Incomplete or illegible forms are returned to the applicant with a cover letter requesting the forms correction and resubmission.
- When the Authorised Signatory is satisfied with the form, the applicant's details are entered onto the AAI Vetting Database and the form is forwarded to the Garda Vetting Unit.
- Forms are returned to the Association usually within 10 – 12 weeks for the attention of the Authorised Signatory.
- When the returned forms contain information relevant to the engagement of the applicant, the Authorised Signatory will call a meeting of the review committee (see next section).
- Support and advice is available from AAI Head Office. Telephone: 01-8869933.
- Garda Vetting will be sought in respect of all volunteers/staff every three to five years thereafter, or at any time within the said five year period as deemed necessary by the Association.

Summary of Vetting Process

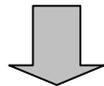
Applicant Completes Garda Vetting Form



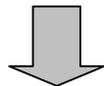
Form is sent to AAI Authorised Signatory



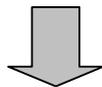
Form is checked & forwarded to Garda Vetting Unit



The Vetting Process normally takes 10 -12 weeks



Vetting Unit returns forms to AAI Authorised Signatory



Where further clarification is needed a Review Meeting takes place

Recommended procedures following the receipt of information from Garda Central Vetting Unit

The Review Committee

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Garda Central Vetting Unit, the CEO of Athletics Ireland has, following agreement by the Board, established a Decision Making Committee. This Committee is comprised of six members, one representative of each of the five regions and a Chairperson. A minimum of three must be present for any meeting. The Committee will be reviewed every two years after Congress.

Consideration of holding a Review Meeting

The Gardai provide the organisation with details of all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and/or convictions.

Consideration for holding a review meeting will occur when an application is returned from the GCVU with information **which gives cause for concern** attached. The organisation will verify any information received from the GCVU with the applicant.

Disputes

In instances where a vetting subject disputes any detail contained on a Garda Vetting Disclosure, issued to the Authorised Signatory in respect of him/her, the following procedure will apply:

- The Vetting Subject should outline the exact basis of his/her dispute and submit it in writing to the Authorised Signatory.
- The Authorised Signatory will submit the applicant's submission, with the original vetting form to the Garda Vetting Unit for further checks.
- If, following further checks, the applicant still disputes details of the disclosure, arrangements will be made for further validation procedures.
- At the conclusion of the dispute resolution process, decisions on the suitability of the applicant will be the responsibility of the Review Committee.

Risk Assessment Guidelines

A conviction, prosecution or case pending will not necessarily bar an applicant for consideration for engagement. The following criteria will be considered;

- The nature and number of any convictions
- The frequency of any convictions
- The post for which the person is seeking engagement
- The self disclosure of the conviction/case pending by the applicant
- The time lapse since the conviction

Information Storage & Data Protection

All information provided for the Garda Vetting Process will be stored securely at Athletics Ireland in order to protect the security and confidentiality of the information collected in respect of every individual. AAI complies with the data protection act.

Garda Vetting FAQs

What is the purpose of Garda Vetting?

The purpose of Garda Vetting is to provide details regarding all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed and/or convictions in respect of an individual applicant to an organisation which is registered for Garda Vetting.

Who is subject to Garda Vetting?

All members of Athletics Ireland, both voluntary and paid staff, who work with children and vulnerable adults in an athletics setting.

Why should an organisation avail of the Garda Vetting Service?

Garda Vetting is one strand of the "Safe Recruitment" policy adopted by Athletics Ireland and endorsed by the Irish Sports Council.

For the most part, people who become involved in service in any organisation are properly motivated. However, occasionally people with malicious intent will try to gain access to children and vulnerable adults through sporting organisations. Garda Vetting may deter these people from becoming involved, or may provide useful information to the Association regarding their suitability.

Is the Association obliged to use the Vetting Service?

Athletics Ireland has a duty of care to ensure that no person is appointed who is not suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults. Failure to use the service to identify those people could be seen as a failure in the duty of care.

What are the benefits of Garda Vetting?

- Protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Protection of the Association and Club
- Protection of coaches and volunteers
- Management of risk
- Garda Vetting is one of the key elements of a robust child protection system

Who provides Garda Vetting?

Vetting is carried out by the Garda Central Vetting Unit, Thurles, Co. Tipperary. Garda Vetting can only be accessed through Athletics Ireland, the GVU does not deal with individual applicants. Garda Vetting cannot be accessed through local Garda Stations.

Can I engage/employ an applicant who has not yet completed the Garda Vetting Process?

In an ideal situation an applicant should not be employed/engaged before the Garda Vetting Process has been completed. However, if you decide to employ/engage an applicant prior to Garda Vetting, you should ensure that the applicant does not have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults during this period.

What information will the Garda provide?

The Gardaí provide the Association with details of all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and/or convictions.

How does a club access Garda Vetting for an applicant?

- The applicant is asked to fill out a Garda Vetting form.
- The form is forwarded to the Authorised Signatory for Athletics Ireland at head office.
- The Authorised Signatory checks the form for errors/omissions and forwards it to the Garda Central Vetting Unit in Thurles.
- In the event that there are errors or omissions the form will be returned to the Authorised Signatory with the error/omission highlighted. The form is amended by the applicant and re-submitted to the GCVU.
- Vetting takes approximately 10-12 weeks.
- In the event of **significant** information being returned by the GVU in respect of an applicant the steps on page 3 (recommended procedures following the receipt of information from the GVU) will be followed.

Who is the Authorised Signatory?

The Authorised Signatory is appointed by the Association to administer the vetting process. The Authorised Signatory is trained by the Garda Vetting Unit and reports to the C.E.O. The AS maintains strict confidentiality regarding applicant details.

Who has access to information on a Garda Vetting Form?

The Authorised Signatory and the Garda Vetting Unit. If a disclosure needs to be discussed by the Review Committee, the applicant will be advised in advance, and will be invited to attend in order to discuss the information received from the Gardaí. The process is EXTREMELY confidential.

What are the implications if I have previous convictions?

All applicants must declare previous convictions on the Garda Vetting Form.

Details of any previous convictions will be listed on the form by the Central Vetting Unit and returned to the AS.

The Association will decide whether the information is relevant to the role and to the suitability of the applicant to fulfill that role.

What if I have a case pending against me?

An applicant should provide relevant information, which will be taken into account when considering the application.

What if I do not disclose a previous conviction?

Applicants are required to disclose all relevant information on the Garda Vetting Application Form. If this is not done, and if the conviction is such that would give cause for concern regarding the appointment of the applicant, he/she will be given an opportunity in a review meeting to explain the omission and the Association will make a decision based on all the information.

What happens if I do not have all my address details?

The applicant should write a short explanation to the Gardaí in the margin of the form. If the Gardaí need further clarification, they will return the form to the applicant through the Association AS.