



# RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS POLICY

## FILE MANAGEMENT

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## 1) Introduction

SOI welcomes the involvement and contribution that individuals can make as volunteers. This policy provides details of how volunteers are recruited and selected through SOI's volunteer registration process.

## 2) Scope

The policy applies to any Special Olympics Ireland (SOI) applicant volunteer.

### Purpose

SOI has developed this policy to safeguard all stakeholders and to comply with SOI's Safeguarding Policies, which includes the organisation's policy that individuals taking on a volunteering role are vetted and that a register of all volunteers is maintained.

## 3) Definitions

### Identity Validation Check

Identity validation is where an individual's personal information, such as their name, address, phone number and email address, are checked to validate that they exist in the real world.

An Identity Validation Check is required by both the National Vetting Bureau and AccessNI as part of their disclosure processes. Confirmation of Identity Validation and copies of appropriate documentation for the Identity Validation Check must be sent to SOI before a vetting application can be reviewed. A list of required documentation relevant to each jurisdiction can be reviewed on the relevant Identity Validation Form for the region.

SOI considers serious offences to include, but not be limited to:

- Offences of a sexual nature
- Violent offences
- Drugs offences

Offences of a sexual nature will automatically prohibit an applicant from being successfully recruited as a volunteer.

### Code of Practice – AccessNI

As a Registered Body, SOI complies with AccessNI's Code of Practice. For details of what is contained within that code, it can be viewed through AccessNI's website [AccessNI Code of Practice | nidirect](#) or a copy can be made available on request through SOI.

### Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014) SOI has a policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders which can be viewed through [Safeguarding | Special Olympics Ireland](#).

## 4) Policy Statement

Regardless of whether an individual is recruited to volunteer or expresses an interest in volunteering, all individuals need to apply to SO Ireland to register as a volunteer in accordance with this Recruitment and Selection policy.

To safeguard all stakeholders and to comply with vetting requirements, it is the policy of SOI that individuals taking on a volunteering role are assessed for vetting\*. Those applying for any volunteer role in a club, at regional and all-Island events and other selected events are required to be vetted. A register of all volunteers is maintained.

## 5) Volunteer Registration Process

An individual, 15 years of age or over, may volunteer with SOI, subject to their completion of the Volunteer Registration Process.

Individuals who wishes to volunteer with Special Olympics must make an application to SOI and complete the Volunteer Registration Process and be accepted and designated as a registered volunteer before he/she may undertake a volunteer role/ duties with the organisation at any level.

\*Please note a 15 year old resident in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland cannot be vetted. A 15 year old is eligible to temporarily volunteer once they have completed the other steps in the volunteer registration process. SOI will make contact with the applicant volunteer after their sixteenth birthday to ask them to complete the vetting process at that point.

The Volunteer Registration Process requires the individual (16 years and over) to undergo a vetting process. Residents of the Republic of Ireland are subject to vetting through the National Vetting Bureau and Residents of Northern Ireland are subject to an Enhanced Check through AccessNI.

SOI has a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults to create a safe environment for athletes to grow and develop within their sport and in other programme activities on offer. Therefore, all applicants, whether known to the organisation or not, will be required to submit an application to the relevant authorities, via SOI, to disclose any criminal history information or to declare none.

In summary, the Volunteer Registration Process requires that an applicant undertakes the following steps:

1. Complete and submit a SOI Volunteer Application online
2. If resident in the Republic of Ireland, complete and submit a Garda Vetting Application online  
Or  
If resident in Northern Ireland, complete and apply for an Enhanced Check through Access NI.
3. Submit the names and contact numbers of two referees
4. Complete the SOI Volunteer Online Induction Training Course
5. Submit a recent photograph
6. Complete relevant Safeguarding training (or provides a valid certificate to show completion of same)

\*Youth groups or individuals seeking to volunteer in non-regular volunteer roles may be exempt from the Volunteer Registration Process. Any exception to this process is subject to assessment using the relevant risk management procedure. Approval for any exception is granted / denied on a case-by-case basis by SOI's Volunteer Manager and SOI's Safeguarding & Disability Officer only.

### 5.1 Enhanced Disclosure (Northern Ireland)

Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, SOI is eligible to request an Enhanced Check through AccessNI in Northern Ireland as the volunteering roles within the organisation involve working with children or vulnerable adults in regulated and unsupervised activity. An Enhanced Disclosure Certificate may contain details of any spent and unspent convictions as well as cautions, informed warnings where such information is held on the Police National Computer. It may also have relevant non-conviction information from police records and information from the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) if the applicant volunteer is prevented from working with children or vulnerable adults. All applicants for volunteer roles with SOI will be required to request an Enhanced Check through Access NI.

## **5.2 Garda Vetting (Republic of Ireland)**

From 29th of April 2016, in compliance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, anyone who wishes to volunteer with SOI over 16 years of age is subject to vetting legislation. Applicants in the Republic of Ireland will be required to apply for a Vetting Disclosure Certificate through the National Vetting Bureau (An Garda Síochána). Disclosure Certificates will show any convictions (subject to the Administrative Filter) or none.

## **5.3 Equality of Opportunity**

SOI is committed to equality of opportunity for all applicants including those with criminal convictions. Disclosures are requested by SOI in order to assist the selection process and will be taken into account only when the conviction is considered relevant to the role. Any disclosure will be seen in the context of the nature of the offence and the responsibility for the care of athletes/volunteers and employees.

## **5.4 Selection**

If a decision is made by SOI not to accept an individual as a volunteer, for reasons of information disclosed and/or suitability for the role, then the individual will be contacted.

The decision to accept an individual as a volunteer lies entirely with SOI, i.e. the vetting process in itself is not the sole factor that determines if an individual will be accepted as a volunteer. Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar an applicant from being a registered volunteer with SOI. This will depend on the circumstances and background of the offence(s) or other information contained on the Disclosures or provided directly to us by the authorities.

## **5.5 Registered Volunteer Status**

An applicant will be notified in writing when they have been designated as a registered volunteer member with SOI.

Once registered as a volunteer, the volunteer membership will remain valid for a three-year period, that is, unless there has been cause to revoke/terminate the volunteer's membership within the period. After three years, the volunteer will be required to undergo a vetting process to renew their membership.

## **6) Non-compliance**

If a person is found to be volunteering in a Special Olympics role without having completed the Volunteer Registration Process, the individual will be asked to cease volunteering until such time as their Volunteer Registration is complete.

## **7) Related documents**

- Risk management procedure for assessing non-regular roles or youth group volunteering
- Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders