

POLICY

Title:	Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders
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Policy Statement

1. Special Olympics Ireland complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice NI, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes and voluntary positions. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
3. Special Olympics Ireland are committed to equality of opportunity (see separate Equality and Diversity Policy), to following practices, and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. We ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
4. Special Olympics Ireland actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and accepts applications from a wide range of volunteers and employment candidates, including those with criminal records. The selection of job applicants for interview will be based on those who meet the required standard of skills, qualifications and experience as outlined in the essential and desirable criteria.
5. Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, Special Olympics Ireland is eligible to request an Enhanced Disclosure through AccessNI (for applicants who are resident in Northern Ireland) as employment and volunteer roles require working with children or vulnerable adults. An Enhanced Disclosure 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. It may also have information from the Independent Safeguarding Authority if the applicant volunteer is prevented from working with children or vulnerable adults. All applicants for volunteer roles with Special Olympics Ireland will be subject to a request for an Enhanced Disclosure through Access NI.
6. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), Special Olympics Ireland will only ask about convictions which are defined as "not protected" for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or an Enhanced disclosure.

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7. Special Olympics Ireland considers serious offences to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Offences of a sexual nature
 - b. Violent offences
 - c. Drugs offencesOffences of a sexual nature and/or Gross Bodily Harm will automatically prohibit an applicant from being successfully recruited as a volunteer or an employee.
8. We undertake to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment or declining an application to volunteer.
9. Special Olympics Ireland may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate. We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate, and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the Police, with the subject of that Disclosure before considering withdrawing a conditional offer of employment or declining an application to volunteer.
10. We ensure that all those in Special Olympics Ireland who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).
11. We undertake to make every subject of an AccessNI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar you from volunteering or working with Special Olympics Ireland. This will depend on the nature of the position, together with the circumstances and background of your offences or other information contained on a disclosure certificate or provided directly to us by the police.

We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the police.