

Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

FILE MANAGEMENT

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1. Policy Statement

To safeguard all stakeholders and to comply with Special Olympics Ireland's Safeguarding Policies, the organisation requires that all volunteers are vetted and that a register of all volunteers is maintained.

Special Olympics Ireland welcomes the involvement and contribution that individuals can make as volunteers. Regardless of whether an individual is recruited to volunteer or expresses an interest in volunteering; all individuals need to apply to Special Olympics Ireland in accordance with this Recruitment and Selection policy.

An individual, 15 years of age* or over, who wishes to volunteer with Special Olympics must make an application to Special Olympics Ireland, complete the Volunteer Registration Process, be accepted, and designated as a registered volunteer before they may undertake a volunteer role/duties with the organisation at any level.

The Volunteer Registration Process requires that the individual agrees to undergo a vetting process. Special Olympics Ireland provides sports training and competition opportunities for people with an intellectual disability and, as the safety of Special Olympics Athletes is paramount, all applicants, will be required to submit an application to the relevant authorities. Applicants 16 years and over must apply via Special Olympics Ireland, to disclose criminal history information or none if applicable. 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.

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

- i. Complete and submit a Special Olympics Ireland Volunteer Application online
- ii. If resident in the Republic of Ireland, complete and submit a Garda Vetting Application or if resident in Northern Ireland, complete and apply for an Enhanced Check through Access NI.
- iii. Submit the names and contact numbers of two referees
- iv. Complete the Special Olympics Ireland Volunteer Online Induction Training Course
- v. Submit a recent photograph.
- vi. Volunteer applicants 16 years and over must attend a Sport Ireland or Sport NI approved safeguarding course i.e. Safeguarding 1 or Safeguarding Children and Young People (NI)

2. Enhanced Disclosure (Northern Ireland)

Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, Special Olympics Ireland is eligible to request an Enhanced Check through AccessNI in Northern Ireland as volunteer roles require 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. It may also have information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the applicant volunteer is prevented from working with children or vulnerable adults. All applicants for volunteer roles with Special Olympics Ireland will be required to request an Enhanced Check through Access NI.

3. 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.

4. Equality of Opportunity

Special Olympics Ireland is committed to equality of opportunity for all applicants including those with criminal convictions. Disclosures are requested by Special Olympics Ireland 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. Selection

If a decision is made by Special Olympics Ireland 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 Special Olympics Ireland, 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 Special Olympics Ireland. 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 police.

6. Registered Volunteer Status

An applicant will be notified in writing when they have been designated as a registered volunteer with Special Olympics Ireland.

*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. Special Olympics Ireland will make contact with the applicant volunteer after their 16th birthday asking them to complete the vetting and safeguarding process at that point. Volunteer applicants between 16 years and 18 years must complete appropriate safeguarding training which will be signposted on application.

7. Definitions/ Additional Details

Identification Check

ID validation checks are required by both the National Vetting Bureau and AccessNI as part of their disclosure processes. Confirmation of ID validation and copies of appropriate documentation presented at time of ID check must be sent to Special Olympics Ireland before a vetting application can be reviewed. A list of required documentation relevant to each jurisdiction can be reviewed on the relevant ID Validation Form for the region.

Special Olympics Ireland 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 an organisation using Access Northern Ireland to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Special Olympics Ireland, complies with AccessNI's Code of Practice. For more details you can view AccessNI's code of practice here

https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/accessni_-_code-of-practice.pdf and a copy can be made available on request through Special Olympics Ireland.

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014) Special Olympics Ireland has a policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders is available from Special Olympics Ireland upon request, before submitting your AccessNI form.

8. Exceptions to the volunteer registration process

The only exceptions to the registration process are as follows:

- **Second-level students** aged between **15-18 years** who are volunteering as a group at an event/activity. These volunteers do not need to complete the full screening process but it is the responsibility of the school to assign a nominated adult to supervise this group while they carry out their volunteering duties on behalf of Special Olympics Ireland. This adult must be a Special Olympics Ireland registered volunteer over 18 years old. Ratio of supervisor: student group should be 1:20.
- For the **Youth groups** below, volunteers aged between **12-14 years** will be permitted to act as volunteers

Scouting Ireland	Northern Ireland Scouts	Red Cross	Order of Malta
Irish Girl Guides	Catholic Guides of Ireland	Girlguiding Ulster	Girls Brigade Northern Ireland
Boys Brigade NI			

These volunteers do not need to complete the full screening process but there must be a group liaison person from their relevant organisation with them while they carry out their volunteering duties on behalf of Special Olympics Ireland. This adult must be a Special Olympics Ireland registered volunteer over 18 years old. Ratio of supervisor: group should be 1:20.

1. **Gaisce/Duke of Edinburgh participants** See Special Olympics Ireland Protocol on Engaging with Gaisce/Duke of Edinburgh/Prince's Trust participants.
2. For **the groups below**, permission will be granted for them to act as volunteers when they are in full uniform and on duty:

An Garda Síochána	The Defence Forces	Police Service of Northern Ireland
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9. Consequence of breach of policy

If a person is found to be volunteering for Special Olympics Ireland without becoming fully registered they will be asked to cease their volunteer role until such time as registration is complete.