



POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

FILE MANAGEMENT

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1) Scope

This policy is made available to all AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure applicants at the outset of recruitment and registration.

2) Definitions

Special Olympics Ireland (SOI) considers serious offences to include, but not be limited to:

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

3) Policy Statement

SOI 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 applicants' suitability for employment purposes and voluntary positions. SOI 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.

SOI is committed to equality of opportunity, to follow practices, and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. SOI ensures 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 intellectual disability, political opinion or offending background or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.

SOI 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.

Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, SOI 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 and 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 SOI will be subject to a request for an Enhanced Disclosure through Access NI.

In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), SOI will only ask about convictions which are defined as "not protected" for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or an Enhanced Disclosure.

Offences of a sexual nature and/or Gross Bodily Harm will automatically prohibit an applicant from being successfully recruited as a volunteer or an employee.

SOI undertake to ensure an open, 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.

SOI may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate. SOI are only able to discuss what is contained in 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.

SOI 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 SOI. 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.

4) Responsibilities

The SOI Volunteer Manager will ensure that all employees involved in vetting and the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information.

The relevant employees will also receive appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).