



VETTING POLICY

(Including Handling Vetting Records and Disclosures)

FILE MANAGEMENT

Date of this revision	February 2023
Scheduled review date:	2026
Approved by the Board on:	11.03.2023
Version Number	V4.0
Drafted By	Volunteer Services
Revision History (Version /Date)	<i>Summary of Changes</i>
V3 – 2019	
V3.1 - 2023	Formatting edits.

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1) Introduction

Special Olympics provides a sports training and competition programme for people with an intellectual disability. Additional opportunities are offered to our athletes in related programmes such as Health and Wellbeing and Athlete Leadership.

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, any individual wishing to volunteer or work as an SOI employee, 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. SOI uses the services of the relevant vetting authorities in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to facilitate vetting to help SOI assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust in Special Olympics Ireland.

Requirements for gathering consent and documentation to validate identity as laid out by both the National Vetting Bureau and AccessNI are adhered to by SOI. Codes of Practice for both authorities are also adhered to and SOI is open to auditing by the National Vetting Bureau and AccessNI.

Volunteers and employees engaging in relevant activities will be subject to re-vetting at least every 3 years to keep their membership/appointment active. Volunteers are required to advise SOI (via the Volunteer Manager or Safeguarding and Disability National Children's Officer) of any convictions within or outside the jurisdiction where they volunteer. Prospective employees are required to advise the SOI HR Manager.

2) Scope

The policy applies to any applicant volunteer or volunteer renewing their membership and to prospective and current employees of SOI, including those on permanent or fixed term contracts and work placement.

3) Purpose

SOI has developed this policy to assist with the safeguarding and protection of Special Olympics athletes and volunteers.

4) Policy Statement

In compliance with legislation and best practice, all Special Olympics Ireland (SOI) employees and volunteers engaging in relevant activities¹ with children and/or vulnerable adults are required to complete a vetting application with either AccessNI or the National Vetting Bureau as part of the organisation's selection process and ongoing safeguarding initiatives.

It is the policy of SOI to implement best practice in the correct and safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure Records.

If, during the processing of an individual's application to become a registered volunteer or staff member, the vetting process results in a disclosure (other than Nil), from the relevant authority, SOI will ensure any disclosure information and content received is subject to data security arrangements in compliance with Data Protection legislation and the Code of Practice – AccessNI and the Code of Practice – National Vetting Bureau 2017.

¹ Any work or activities, carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to or contact with children or vulnerable persons.

In terms of the security of the information, Disclosure information is received directly by the Lead Signatory/Liaison Persons and can only be viewed by those entitled to in the course of their duties.

Disclosure information is stored securely based on how the disclosure information is received by SOI (electronic transfer or hard copy receipt). For systems containing restricted and personal information and data, access control measures are in place to allow only authorised access. The appropriate level of access to systems and information will be determined based on role-based requirements subject to the relevant approval procedures.

Hard-copy disclosure certificates are kept in locked, non-portable storage containers at Special Olympics Ireland's Office. The Lead Signatory/Liaison Persons are the key holders and access is strictly limited to those required to do so in the course of their duties. The Disclosure certificates are only held for as long as it takes to make a decision on suitability and they are then returned to the volunteer(s).

Any soft copies of AccessNI Disclosure Certificates received are deleted and the volunteer is made aware of when this has happened.

5) Process

5.1 Retention and Disposal of Disclosure Information

Any disclosure records sent from Northern Ireland applicants are retained by SOI only until a decision has been made on suitability, after which time, they are returned to the applicant. Electronic copies are deleted and the applicant is advised of same.

All disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau are retained by SOI under the same conditions as outlined above until the volunteer or employee is either re-vetted or leaves the organisation. Disclosures for ROI applicants are made available to applicants on request.

A record of the date of disclosures issued are held on each volunteer's record on Special Olympics Ireland's database. However, no details from the Disclosure Record, other than the date the disclosure was issued and the application number, are recorded on the volunteer's or employee's record for the purposes of Volunteer Registration.

5.2 Supporting documentation

Supporting documentation required by each jurisdiction, i.e., ID validations, Consent and any supporting copy documents are also retained under the same conditions above. (Copies of documents from Northern Ireland applying through AccessNI are shredded or deleted after 90 days in compliance with AccessNI's guidelines). For ROI applicants, ID Validation documents including copies of Identity are held for 3 years. After this period, the information is shredded or deleted.

In compliance with our policy, SOI has a procedure in place for Handling Disclosure Information and Content.

6) Related documents

- Procedure for Managing Disclosure Records and use of Disclosure Information
- The National Vetting Bureau's Code of Practice 2017 is available on request.
- AccessNI's code of practice can be viewed at the following link:
[AccessNI Code of Practice | nidirect](#)