



VETTING POLICY

(Including Handling Vetting Records and Disclosures)

FILE MANAGEMENT

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V3 – 2019	
V3.1 - 2023	Formatting edits.
V4.0 – 2023	Approved by the Board
V4.1 – October 2025	Scheduled review – edits made to Section 4 Policy Statement and Section 5 Process
V5.0 – November 2025	Approved by the Board

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1) Introduction

Special Olympics Ireland provides a sports training and competition programme for people with an intellectual disability. Additional opportunities are offered to 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 with an intellectual disability 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 existing volunteer refreshing 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 (SOI Volunteer Manager) 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. 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 is determined based on role-based requirements subject to the relevant approval procedures.

In the rare occasion that a disclosure needs to be printed, such hard-copy disclosure certificates are kept in locked, non-portable storage containers at Special Olympics Ireland's Central 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 can only be opened once and only remains accessible while unopened for 5 days as per AccessNI system for sharing disclosures.

5) Process

5.1 Retention and Disposal of Disclosure Information

Relating to disclosure certificates processed through AccessNI as digital-only disclosure certificates cannot be viewed beyond 5 days of sharing or opening once (whichever happens first), certificates are not retained. In the very rare occasion that a disclosure certificate needs to be printed by SOI following consent of the applicant, the certificate will be retained in a locked cabinet within an office used by the Lead Signatory

All disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau are retained electronically by SOI until the volunteer or employee is either re-vetted or leaves the organisation. Access to disclosures are restricted to those required to update membership records. Disclosures for ROI applicants are made available to applicants on request.

A record of the date of disclosures issued and vetting reference/case numbers are held on each volunteer's record on Special Olympics Ireland's database. However, no details from the Disclosure Record, other than these 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., ROI identity validations, evidence of consent and any supporting copy documents, NI declaration regarding working with children or vulnerable adults are also retained under the same conditions above. (For ROI applicants, as of 3rd of November 2025, hard copy NVB1 Forms will be held on file for 6 months in a secure room in SOI's central office after which they will be scanned and uploaded to the member's profile and only accessible to those who need to access them when requested. The original hard copies are then shredded securely. Copies of identity documents received from vetting subjects are held for 3 years. After this period, the information is shredded and 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](#)