



Belong To LGBTQ+
Youth Ireland

Vetting Policy

Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland

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Introduction

Belong To is committed to take all necessary steps to ensure all individuals who access our service are safe and protected from harm as far as reasonably possible. Our vetting policy is one of many policies that help us to achieve a high record in child welfare and safeguarding within the organisation. As such, this policy should not be considered in isolation.

Other relevant policies and procedures include:

- Health and Safety statement;
- Volunteer Policy;
- Recruitment Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; and
- Child Safeguarding Statement

This vetting policy has been developed with these in mind, as well as best practice within the youth work sector, our legal obligations, and the values that underpin our work.

Since the introduction of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012-2016, there is now a statutory requirement that people who carry out relevant work¹ (i.e. work that involves regular and necessary access to and/or contact with children² and/or vulnerable adults³) must be vetted prior to commencing employment or carrying out relevant volunteer work.

At the outset, it is important to note that having a criminal record will not automatically exclude an individual from employment or volunteering with Belong To Youth Services. Factors that will be considered in such circumstances, including:

- The individual's abilities, skills, experiences, and qualifications;

¹ For a full definition, please see the relevant section of the legislation here: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/47/schedule/1/enacted/en/html#sched1-part1>

² The Child Care Act 1991 defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or who has been married.

³ "vulnerable person" means a person (including, a child aged 17 years old) who—
(i) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia, or
(ii) has an intellectual disability, which is of such a nature or degree as to severely restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against serious exploitation or abuse, whether physical or sexual, by another person, or
(b) who is suffering from an enduring physical impairment or injury which is of such a nature or degree as to severely restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against serious exploitation or abuse, whether physical or sexual, by another person or to report such exploitation or abuse to the Garda Síochána or both.

- The nature of the conviction(s) and sentence(s) imposed;
- Disclosure of the offence(s) by the person;
- The length of time since the offence(s) took place;
- The age of the person when the offence(s) was/were committed;
- The potential risk to service users, volunteers, employees and the reputation of the organisation; and
- Conduct of the person before and after the offence

What is Vetting?

Vetting is a criminal background check undertaken by an organisation on prospective new employees, volunteers, students, and others carrying out relevant work. It is carried out with the permission of an applicant to establish what, if any, criminal record⁴, pending or completed, relating to them is held by the Gardaí which may deem them unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

Vetting will also include a check for any relevant “specified information⁵” - which is information other than criminal convictions held by the Gardaí that leads to a genuine belief that a person poses a threat to children or vulnerable persons.

If specified information is going to be disclosed to Belong To Youth Services, the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) must, in advance, notify the person of their intention to disclose this.

What is included in a vetting disclosure?

A vetting disclosure will include the following information:

The criminal record (if any) relating to the person and a statement of specified information (if any) relating to the person which the Chief Bureau Officer has determined in accordance with Section 15 of the Act should be disclosed.

⁴ A criminal record in relation to a person means:

- a) A record of the persons convictions, whether within or outside the State, for any criminal offences together with any ancillary or consequential orders made pursuant to the convictions concerned
- b) A record of prosecutions pending against the person whether within or outside the state for any criminal offence
- c) Or both

⁵ Specified information relates to a finding or allegation of harm to another person received by the National Vetting Bureau from An Garda Síochána

or

State that there is no criminal record or specified (soft) information in relation to the person.

Information of a conviction that falls under the Spent Convictions Act (2016)⁶ will not be included in a disclosure. The following convictions will always be disclosed:

- Offences against the person (except minor public order offences)
- Sexual offences
- Convictions on indictment that go to circuit court or higher court

All Garda Vetting applicants (staff, volunteers) who have resided outside of the Island of Ireland from the date of their 18th birthday will need to provide a national police clearance for each jurisdiction in which they have resided in for a period of 12 months or more. All appointments requiring garda vetting will also require satisfactory security clearances. The clearance must be dated not more than six months prior to leaving the country or can be dated any time after leaving the country

- Providing a clearance certificate is the responsibility of the applicant.
- The clearance should be sought as early as possible as the process can take considerable time

Only certified copies of police clearance documentation should be submitted. Applicants should note that uncertified documents and photocopies will **not** be accepted.

If a satisfactory police or criminal records disclosure is not available, a sworn Fit and Proper Person Declaration will be required. The declaration must be signed, dated, and stamped by a practicing solicitor or a Commissioner for Oaths.

Fit and Proper Person Declaration will be acceptable in the following circumstances only:

- The relevant country is at war or experiencing political upheaval
- The applicant travelling through the country and had no fixed address

⁶ The Spent Conviction Act allows for certain convictions to become "spent" after a period of time has elapsed (7 years being the standard).

The following convictions will always be disclosed:

- a) Offences against the person (except minor public order offences)
- b) Sexual offences
- c) Convictions on indictment that go to circuit court or higher court.

- The applicant resided in the country more than 10 years ago and has provided correspondence proving that police clearance cannot be obtained.
- The applicant is unable to request vetting/police clearance from their country of origin due to a legitimate risk to their safety, such as the threat of persecution based on factors like sexual orientation, political affiliation or other protected characteristics, if their whereabouts were to become known.

Please note, we will only request applicants to produce this information once throughout their employment/ volunteering period within Belong To. If staff or volunteers leave and come back again to their role or a different role, they may be required to share their police clearance/ fit and proper person declaration again.

Why we undertake vetting

Vetting is undertaken primarily to ensure that the people who access our services are safe and protected within the organisation. Vetting is one of many steps that we take during the recruitment and selection process to help ensure that only those suitable to work with the young people and vulnerable adults that access our service are given the opportunity to do so. All youth organisations have an obligation under law to undertake vetting.

Who is responsible for vetting

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to ensure that the correct policies are in place to facilitate vetting within the organisation.

Day to day operational management of vetting and the design of specific vetting processes has been delegated to the Designated Child Protection Liaison Person (DPL) who is the Director of Youth Services. The Director of Youth Services will be Garda Vetting Officer and will be supported by the HR and Volunteer Manager. The HR and Volunteer Manager is assigned the Garda Vetting Administrator for Belong To.

Who should be vetted?

The Vetting Act defines people who should be vetted in [schedule 1, parts 1 and 2](#). It is the policy of Belong To Youth Services to review each role (whether paid or voluntary) against the requirements of the Act to determine if the occupants of those roles should be vetted in accordance with the Act.

Garda vetting is conducted in respect of personnel working in a full-time, part-time and voluntary or student placement capacity in a position in a registered organisation, through which they have unsupervised access to children and/or vulnerable adults

Students on Placement/Interns

The Vetting Act outlines that it is the responsibility of the sending organisation of placement students/trainees to undertake their vetting.

Belong To will satisfactorily establish, in writing, that this has taken place and that where a disclosure has been made, Belong To will revert to its vetting decision-making process in respect of the placement.

An agreement in writing or by email outlining the responsibility of the Educational Institution to obtain a vetting disclosure will be made prior to a student/intern being given a placement with us.

Where a student is coming from an organisation outside the State, a valid police check must be conducted by the sending organisation and Belong To shall satisfactorily establish that this has taken place.

Re-vetting and retrospective vetting

It is the practice of Belong To to re-vet **every three years**.

For relevant staff or board members and volunteers who have heretofore not been required to be vetted, until the commencement of this policy, Belong To will seek to complete the vetting process for them as soon as practicable.

Vetting for transgender persons

The law requires that you disclose all of your previous names and addresses to the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) so that your application can be correctly processed. The NVB does however have a process whereby you can disclose your previous gender/name to the NVB only and not reveal this data on the vetting application form.

This is known as the 'Sensitive Applications Process'. This process ensures that applicants information is handled sensitively and securely by the NVB and not revealed to the registered organisation seeking vetting in respect of the applicant.

In order to utilise this process the applicant must contact the NVB's Sensitive Applications Team. This will ensure that the applicants previous gender/name is not released while permitting the applicant to comply

with the law. A member of the team will be able to answer all the applicant's questions about completing the application form and will record the applicants details so that we can track their application when it arrives. Once it arrives at the NVB will monitor their application and check the content of the NVB disclosure before it is issued.

Contact 0504-27300 and look for the Sensitive Applications Team.

How does vetting happen?

E-Vetting Process:

Belong To transitioned to E-Vetting in 2017. This process will be explained to vetting subjects prior to them beginning the process by their the Director of Youth Services or the HR & Volunteer Manager.

Step 1 – Identification Check

Identification of the vetting subject will be verified by either their (prospective) line manager. The identification provided must be accepted under the *NVB 100-point* check list below.

Copies of the identification documents provided shall be taken and held on file. The **100-point check** is a personal identification system. We require vetting subjects to present identification totalling 100 points to ensure the NVB are checking the correct person. At least one form of photographic evidence must be supplied, along with proof of current address (Appendix)

Step 2 – Complete a Vetting Invitation Form

Next the vetting subject shall be required to complete a vetting invitation form (*see the appendix for a sample and guidelines on completing this form*), giving permission for the vetting check on them. This form should be completed in full and the particulars entered must match those provided at step 1. This form should be returned to the DLP or deputy DLP who is leading the process.

It is the duty of the person leading the process to ensure that the form is signed off by the Director of Youth Services , who is the DLP, who emails details of the vetting invitation to the Youth Work Garda Vetting Consortium⁷ (Consortium) for processing using NYCI's vetting request

⁷ This is operated by the National Youth Council of Ireland. It provides a vetting service in order to ensure access to the NVB for members, including Belong To.

form (see attached below in Appendix). The original Vetting Invitation Form will be stored in the secure HR filing cabinet.

A functioning email address is required for the e-vetting procedure and should be entered onto this form.

The Consortium shall input this data into the e-vetting system which will generate an e-mail to the vetting subject inviting them to complete their vetting form online.

Step 3 – Online Data Entry

The online vetting form will be prepopulated with information given in previous steps. The vetting subject must complete the form, including details such as place of birth, passport number and where applicable, any previous criminal record. This information is submitted directly to the NVB by the Consortium where it will be processed.

The information provided by the vetting subject will be reviewed against Garda records. Once completed, the NVB will issue a vetting disclosure to the Consortium who will forward it on to Belong To where the DLP will review.

Step 4 – Vetting Disclosure

A vetting disclosure will either be:

- a statement from the NVB that there is no criminal record or specified information in relation to the person (subject to the Spent Convictions Act 2016), or
- A statement from the NVB detailing a criminal record(s) and/or specified information related to the applicant.

If specified information is to be disclosed to Belong To, the NVB's Chief Bureau Officer will have, in advance, notified the vetting subject of the intention to disclose such information. The vetting subject will have had an opportunity to make an appeal against that decision.

Should a disclosure of a criminal record be made, Belong To shall as soon as practicable give the vetting subject an opportunity to verify the information. They may be asked to provide additional details to the incident(s) relating to any offence committed. Any discussion should be noted, particularly where a conviction was not disclosed by the vetting subject in advance.

The vetting subject should be given details of the disclosure made against them and told of their right to dispute the disclosure with the NVB. They should also be informed of the vetting decision-making process.

Disputing a vetting disclosure

Where a vetting subject disputes the details contained in a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau, they may dispute the disclosure in one of two ways.

1. In relation to disputes around a **criminal record** they may refer the issue to the National Vetting Bureau dispute process.

This process is activated by the vetting subject and the following procedure should be implemented:

- a. The vetting subject should outline the exact basis of their dispute and submit it in writing to Belong To's CEO within 5 working days of them becoming aware of the disclosure.
 - b. The CEO will submit the report received from the vetting subject, along with the vetting subject's original Garda Vetting Application Form to the Liaison Person in the Consortium who will submit them to National Vetting Bureau for further checks to be conducted.
 - c. If the vetting subject indicates there were errors or omissions made by them while completing the original application form, they should be requested to complete a new application form; and both the original and the new application forms should then be submitted together with the request for further checks to be conducted via the Consortium.
 - d. If, following the result of further checks, the vetting subject still disputes any detail in the Garda Vetting Disclosure issued in respect of them, arrangements will be made for further validation procedures to be undertaken in order to resolve the matters at issue in the dispute.
 - e. At the conclusion of the dispute resolution procedure, decisions in respect of the suitability of the vetting subject for a position are solely the responsibility of Belong To.
2. In relation to disputes around **specified information** a vetting subject should follow the process as outlined in section 18 of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 and 2016. Further details on this can be found at the following website: <https://vetting.garda.ie/Disputes/Appeal>

Vetting decision-making

The vetting process is one of the factors to take into account when an individual is being considered for a role in Belong To. Where there are no disclosures of a criminal record or specified information, Belong To will

proceed with the recruitment process as prescribed by our relevant policies.

In all matters relating to a vetting disclosure being received from the National Vetting Bureau, or self-disclosure by an individual, the decision to issue an offer of employment/volunteer position or the continuation of their position, is a matter for Belong To.

Minor charge(s)/prosecution(s) and/or conviction(s)

In the cases of a previously unknown to Belong To minor charge/prosecution and/or conviction, which within the absolute discretion of Belong To are not considered to pose any risk to children, vulnerable adults or the wider community, they will be discussed with the vetting subject by one or more of the Belong To Quality, Safety and Safeguarding Committee.

Following discussions, if the vetting has been cleared, a written assurance to the recruiting officer/line manager that the vetting subject has been subject to vetting and has been deemed appropriate to take up/retain their position.

If the vetting subject has not been cleared, the case will be escalated and considered in accordance with Serious charge(s)/prosecution(s) and/or conviction(s).

Serious charge(s)/prosecution(s) and/or conviction(s)

In the case of a previously unknown serious charge/prosecution and/or conviction, the nature of which could indicate a potential risk to children, vulnerable adults or the wider community, at least 2 members of the Quality, Safety and Safeguarding Committee, will seek to meet with the vetting subject to discuss the circumstances of the charge/prosecution and/or conviction. In consideration of a disclosure, the members of the Committee will be guided by factors that include but not limited to:

- The nature of the conviction(s) and sentence(s) imposed;
- Disclosure of the offence(s) by the person;
- The individual's abilities, skills, experiences, and qualifications;
- The length of time since the offence(s) took place;
- The age of the person when the offence(s) was/were committed;
- The potential risk to service users, volunteers, employees and the reputation of the organisation;
- Conduct of the person before and after the offence; and

- The paramountcy principle of the protection of children and young people within our service.

It is important to note that whilst the factors above shall be considered, the list is not exhaustive and the assessment shall be made taking into account all relevant factors and circumstances pertaining to the particular vetting subject and their current/prospective position.

Following review by the Committee, it will be decided if the vetting subject has cleared the vetting process and if they can continue with their (current/prospective) position. If the Committee is of the view clearance has not been obtained, the case shall be escalated and the disclosure shall require further review in accordance with the section on Further review of serious charge(s)/prosecution(s) and/or conviction(s) as laid out below.

If the vetting subject has been cleared at this point, the Committee will provide written assurance to the recruiting officer/line manager that the vetting subject has been subject to vetting and has been deemed appropriate to take up/retain their position.

Further review of serious charge(s)/prosecution(s) and/or conviction(s)

If a further review is required, the assessment criteria outlined in the previous section, plus any other relevant factors or circumstances will be considered by at least 3 members of the Safeguarding Sub Committee (plus the prospective/current line manager) and a further meeting with the vetting subject may be requested. It will be evaluated whether there are sufficient grounds on which the vetting subject can continue/take up their position.

If sufficient grounds do not exist, it will be decided that the vetting subject cannot retain/take up their position. Following the review the vetting subject will be advised of the decision in writing.

Appeals Mechanism

In the event that the vetting subject is dissatisfied with the decision of the Safeguarding Sub Committee, they may appeal the decision within 10 days to the CEO, to have their case reviewed by the HR and Remunerations Sub Committee.

Should the vetting subject be dissatisfied with the decision of the HR and Remunerations Sub Committee, they must appeal the decision within 10 days to the CEO, to have the case reviewed by the Board of Directors.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information in the vetting process will be held in a manner consistent with the Belong To's confidentiality policy. Belong To also complies fully with good practice regarding the secure storage, handling and use of the Vetting Bureau disclosures and personal vetting information as per Data Protection Policy and legal obligations under Data Protection Legislation.

Belong To will not rely on vetting disclosures conducted by a previous employer, nor shall it forward on disclosures of past staff or volunteers to their new or prospective employers.

Appendix

Parent/ Guardian Consent Form

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA



NATIONAL VETTING BUREAU

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM (NVB 3)

Applicant Details

Forename(s):	<input type="text"/>
Surname:	<input type="text"/>
Date Of Birth:	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Parent/Guardian Details

Under Sec 26(b) of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, it is an offence to make a false statement for the purpose of obtaining a vetting disclosure.

Forename(s):	<input type="text"/>
Surname:	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to applicant:	Father: <input type="text"/> Mother: <input type="text"/> Guardian: <input type="text"/>
Address:	
Line 1:	<input type="text"/>
Line 2:	<input type="text"/>
Line 3:	<input type="text"/>
Line 4:	<input type="text"/>
Line 5:	<input type="text"/>
Eircode/Postcode:	<input type="text"/>

Parent/Guardian Consent

I, being the Parent/Guardian of the above named applicant, consent for the National Vetting Bureau to conduct vetting in respect of the above named applicant in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

Parent/Guardian
Signature:

Date:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	/	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	/	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Guidelines for completing Vetting Invitation Form (NVB 1)

Please read the following guidelines before completing this form.

Miscellaneous

The Form must be completed in full using **BLOCK CAPITALS** and writing must be clear and legible.

The Form should be completed in ball point pen.

Photocopies will not be accepted.

All applicants will be required to provide documents to validate their identity.

Applicants Under 18

If the applicant is under 18 years of age, a completed NVB 3 - Parent\Guardian Consent Form will be required.

Please note that where the applicant is under 18 years of age the electronic correspondence will issue to the Parent\Guardian. This being the case, the applicant must provide their Parent\Guardian Email address and phone number on the NVB 1 form.

Transgender Applicants

The law requires that you disclose all of your previous names and addresses to the National Vetting Bureau (NVB) so that your application can be correctly processed. The NVB does however have a process whereby you can disclose your previous gender/name to the NVB only and not reveal this data on the vetting application form.

This is known as the 'Sensitive Applications Process'. This process ensures that applicants information is handled sensitively and securely by the NVB and not revealed to the registered organisation seeking vetting in respect of the applicant.

In order to utilise this process the applicant must contact the NVB's Sensitive Applications Team. This will ensure that the applicants previous gender/name is not released while permitting the applicant to comply with the law.

Contact 0504-27300 and look for the Sensitive Applications Team.

Personal Details

Insert details for each field, allowing one block letter per box.

For Date of Birth field, allow one digit per box.

Please fill in your Email Address, allowing one character/symbol per box. This is required as the invitation to the e-vetting website will be sent to this address.

Please allow one digit per box for your contact number.

The Current Address means the address you are now living at.

The address fields should be completed in full, including Eircode/Postcode. No abbreviations.

Role Being Vetted For

The role being applied for must be clearly stated. Generic terms such as “Volunteer” will not suffice.

Declaration of Application

The applicant must confirm their understanding and acceptance of the two statements by signing the application form at Section 2 and ticking the box provided.

Processing of Your Data

All vetting is conducted by the Garda National Vetting Bureau. Liaison Officers, appointed by the Vetting Bureau, channel the thousands of vetting requests. Please be advised your details will be processed through the Liaison Person for the Youth Work Garda Vetting Consortium in the National Youth Council of Ireland. Belong To is a member of this Vetting Consortium. For this reason, you will see **The National Youth Council of Ireland** referenced in your e-vetting invitation email.



Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland

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Form NVB 1

Vetting Invitation

Section 1 – Personal Information

Forename(s):[illegible]

Middle Name:

Surname:

Date Of Birth:**Email Address:****Contact Number:****Role Being Vetted For:****Current Address:**

Line 1:

[illegible]

Line 2:

Line 3:

Line 4:

Line 5:

Eircode/Postcode:

**Applicant's
Signature:**

--

Date:

 /

 /

Note: Please return this form to

An invitation to the e-vetting website will then be sent to your Email address.

Section 2 – Additional Information

Name Of Organisation:

I have provided documentation to validate my identity as required *and*

I consent to the making of this application and to the disclosure of information by the National Vetting Bureau to the Liaison Person pursuant to Section 13(4)(e) National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016. **Please tick box ☐**

NYCI Vetting Request Form

[illegible]

100 Point Check

This 100 point check is an information sheet developed to support conferences in verifying identity of vetting applicants, as required.

How to use this 100-point checklist:

Step 1. Vetting applicant to produce ONE FORM OF PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION listed from 'Proof of Identity' section below and present it to the Authorised Person

Step 2. Vetting applicant will produce ONE FORM OF PROOF OF ADDRESS listed in 'Proof of Address' identification section below and present it to the Authorised Person

Step 3. Belong To Authorised Person who is verifying identity must check that Current Address details on the NVB1 or NVB 2 form match the Proof Of Address document the Vetting applicant has produced

Step 4. The Vetting applicants Photo ID must be that of the person whom the Authorised Person has met and is in respect of the Vetting applicants completed NVB1 or NVB2 form

Step 5. The Authorised Person has scored documents presented by the vetting subject in the table below and has checked that the score adds up to 100 or more.

100 Point Check for over 18's

Proof of Identity	Score	Tick or Mark X
Irish driving licence or learner permit (new credit card format)	80	
Irish Certificate of naturalisation	50	
Passport (from country of citizenship or an Irish Passport Card)	70	
Birth Certificate	50	
Garda National Immigration Bureau Card	50	
National Identity Card (EU/EEA/ Swiss citizens)	50	
Irish driving licence or learner permit (old paper format)	40	
Employment ID- ID card issued by employer with name and address	35	
Employment ID- ID card issued by employer with name	25	
Employment ID- Confirming name and address	35	
Proof of Address Identification	Score	Tick or Mark X

P60, P45 or Payslip (with home address)	35	
Utility Bill e.g. gas, electricity, television, broadband (must be no more than 6 months old, online prints acceptable, mobile bills unacceptable)	35	
Social Services Card or Medical Card (with Photo)	40	
Social Services Card or Medical Card (no Photo)	25	
Bank, Building Society or Credit Union Statement	35	
Credit/ debit cards/ passbooks (only one per institution)	25	
National Age Card (issued by An Garda Síochána)	25	
Membership Card: Club, union or trade, professional bodies Educational institutions	25	
Correspondence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From an educational institution/ SUSI/ CAO • From an insurance company regarding an active policy • From a bank/ credit union or government body or state agency 	20	
100 Point Check for under 18's - Identification type	Score	Tick or Mark X
Birth Certificate	100	
Passport	100	
Written Statement by a Principal confirming attendance at educational institution on a letter head of that institution.	100	
Affidavit witnessed by a Commissioner of Oath	100	
Total Score		

Revision History

Revision	Date of Release	Purpose
Initial Draft	April 2018	Initial Release
Update	April 2020	2-year review and updated in light of new guidance from the Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB)
Update	February 2024	3 year review
Update	April 2025	Update text about vetting applicants who have resided abroad