

# Garda Vetting

## Simplified



Garda vetting can seem confusing and complex. There are many misconceptions about the process such as who needs to be vetted and how long it takes to complete. This simplified guide aims to clear up any confusion and answer any questions you may have.

### What is Garda vetting?

Garda vetting is a background check completed by the [National Vetting Bureau](#). When they receive a vetting application, they will check to see if that person has a criminal record. They may also check with a 'scheduled organisation', such as the HSE or the National Transport Authority to see if they have specific information relating to an individual.

When vetting is complete, the National Vetting Bureau will send a vetting disclosure to the organisation that requested the vetting. This will either contain details of a criminal record or other specified information or simply a statement that there is no criminal record or other information. A vetting disclosure is sent following every vetting application – it does not automatically mean there is something to be disclosed.

There are some important facts to remember about Garda Vetting at this point:

- Only a registered organisation can submit a vetting application. An individual cannot vet themselves.
- Garda vetting can only be completed with the written consent of the individual being vetted.
- A vetting disclosure is only sent to the 'liaison person' in a registered organisation. It is not sent to the individual being vetted or anyone else in the organisation.
- The National Vetting Bureau only provides information through Garda vetting – they do not make any decisions about a person's suitability for a role, this is the sole responsibility of the organisation.

### Who needs to be vetted?

Not everyone who wants to volunteer needs to be vetted. An individual must only be vetted if they will be volunteering in a role that involves necessary and regular access to children or vulnerable persons and there is potential to build a relationship of trust. Each organisation must decide for themselves whether a volunteer should be vetted. They must carry out a risk assessment and decide if the volunteer has access to children or vulnerable persons and if that access is enough for the volunteer to build a relationship of trust with them.

For Garda vetting, a child is anyone under 18 years of age. A vulnerable person is someone over the age of 18 who suffers from a disorder of the mind or has an intellectual or physical disability which means the person cannot protect themselves from harm by another person or that they need help with daily activities such as dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

### How long does vetting take?

Since 2016, all vetting has been completed online using an e-vetting system which means the waiting time is much shorter. Waiting times vary depending on the time of year but on average the waiting time is about two weeks.

## Organisations

Garda vetting can seem like a daunting, complicated process but the important thing to get clear first is whether an individual needs to be vetted for their specific role. Only an organisation themselves can decide whether a person should be vetted or not. When making this decision, an organisation should take into account factors like whether the volunteer has access to children or vulnerable persons in their specific role and whether that access is enough to build up a relationship of trust with a child or vulnerable persons.

The piece of legislation which governs Garda vetting gives a list of relevant work and activities relating to children and vulnerable persons. Organisations should look carefully at this list and consider how the volunteer role fits into one of these areas. If the role doesn't fit into an area on the list, they should consider whether or not the individual needs to be vetted. It is an offence to vet an individual that does not need to be vetted according to the [legislation](#).

When an organisation receives a vetting disclosure, it is up to them to decide whether they want to involve the individual as a volunteer in the organisation. The National Vetting Bureau only provides information when they send a disclosure – it is the responsibility of the organisation to decide what to do with that information. For example, if an individual has an

old driving offence, an organisation may feel this is not important if the person is to volunteer as a befriender.

It's very important to remember that Garda vetting is just one part of the screening process. Application forms, interviews, reference checks and trial periods are also important to decide if a volunteer is the right fit for an organisation.

## Volunteers

Garda vetting can seem like a frustrating process because it may involve a lot of waiting and can sometimes cause a delay in starting a volunteer role. While it can seem like a lot of work, vetting is important to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

If an individual applies for a volunteer role that requires Garda vetting, the organisation must carry out the vetting on the individual's behalf. An individual cannot vet themselves and vetting is just for that specific role. For example, if an individual is vetted for one role now and applies for another role which requires Garda vetting, they will need to be vetted again for that specific role. This is to ensure that only individuals who need to be vetted are vetted and to comply with data protection laws.

When a vetting application has been completed, the disclosure will be sent directly to the organisation. The individual will not receive the vetting disclosure. However, the organisation must show the vetting disclosure to the individual if requested.

Waiting times for vetting applications have reduced quite a bit over the last few years. While it can feel like a time consuming process, it is now happening faster than ever.

It's very important to remember that vetting is just one part of the screening process for volunteers. Many organisations will use application forms, interviews, reference checks and trial periods to see if the individual is the right fit for the organisation.

## Further reading

The National Vetting Bureau has a number of resources on its website to help volunteers and organisations through the vetting process. These include a helpful [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section and a [user guide](#) to completing a vetting application.



Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure information in this publication is accurate. However it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith without accepting liability. If relevant, we therefore recommend you take appropriate professional advice before taking any action on the matters covered herein.