**Garda Vetting 2017**

 **Questions & Answers**

**1. Who needs to complete a Garda Vetting Form?**

Anyone aged 16 or over and working or volunteering with children (aged 0 -18) on behalf of the Presbyterian Church In Ireland within the Republic of Ireland needs to be appointed by the Kirk Session before they take up their post. This appointment process includes a Garda Vetting form. This is a legal requirement with the only exception being occasional work.

**2. What does occasional mean?**

**Occasional** can be described as literally a **‘one off’**. It is usually an unforeseen circumstance. That would include helping out for one evening at Youth club or crèche one morning at the last minute because another leader was unable to make it.

**3. Do 16 and 17 year old helpers need to complete a form?**

16 and 17 year olds **do need to be vetted** if they are working with children unless it is occasional. For a 16 or 17 year old to be vetted they require:

1. To use a parent’s email address on the application form
2. A completed parental consent form which must be sent into the Taking Care Office along with their application form.

**4. Where can I get the parental consent form?**

The parental consent form is on the website in the Garda Vetting section.

**5. What about people coming from overseas?**

The law applies to people coming from other countries, they also require to be Garda Vetted, even if they have never lived in Ireland before. Police certificates from country of origin for non-Irish applicants should still be requested along with at least one reference from their home country.

**6. What about people coming from Northern Ireland?**

The law applies to people who live in Northern Ireland and want to work/volunteer with children in the Republic of Ireland. For example, those who live in N.I but whose church is in the Republic of Ireland as well as summer teams coming from a church in N.I to help at a week’s Holiday Bible Club. These people will all need to complete a Garda Vetting form.

**7. What about someone who has already been vetted by a different organisation?**

A person still needs to be vetted by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland even if they have already been vetted by a different organisation.

**8. What about a person coming to work on behalf of another organisation in our church?**

If a person comes to work/volunteer on behalf of another organisation e.g. community employment, Christian Evangelism Fellowship, then the church should **check that they have been vetted and ask for this in writing.** If they have not been vetted then the church should do so.

**9. What about someone who has already been vetted by a different congregation?**

No, if a person has been vetted by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland we do not need to vet them again.

**10. What about people in our church who have never completed a Garda Vetting form?**

These people need to complete a Garda Vetting Form but an interview and references are not required as they are already in post. We have been given until the end of December 2017 to submit these forms.

**11. Do people who previously completed a paper based Garda Vetting form need to do the online one?**

No, anyone who has already completed a Garda vetting paper form for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland does not need to complete an online form.

**12. Do people who don’t have access to the Internet or an email address have to complete the form?**

If a person does not have an email address or does not know how to use a computer, they should ask for help from someone who has an email address or is computer literate. That person could create an email address for them or let them use their email address. e.g. a new Sunday School teacher could ask another Sunday School teacher, an elder, a grown up son/daughter etc. etc.

**13. How does the process work?**

The Garda forms can only be completed online. Please see ‘Garda Vetting Step by Step Guide’ on the website for information on how to apply for a Garda Vetting Form.

**14. Is this a quicker and more efficient service?**

Yes! There are significant benefits for applicants and congregations with this new online process, notably a much quicker turnaround time.

**15. Will I need to be vetted again?**

At the present time, a person is only required to be vetted once for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

**16. When will this happen?**

For those who are currently a leader and never been vetted before we have been given until the **31st December 2017** to have everyone who needs to be vetted. All new leaders need to be vetted in advance of their appointment.

**17. Is Garda Vetting now the law?**

The National Vetting Bureau (children and vulnerable persons) Act 2012 & 2016 has brought in changes to who, how and when Garda vetting is to be done. These laws have also made Garda Vetting a legal requirement.

**18. What about I.D documents?**

I.D. is now required as part of the vetting process. The Application form provides guidance on what I.D. documents are required. The applicant will bring them along to the Designated Person/Minister with their completed form. A copy (NOT the original) should be sent to the Taking Care Office along with the form.