

Garda Vetting 2016 Questions & Answers

What has changed?

- 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.
- As well as being part of the guidelines of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, vetting was best practice in youth work. Now it has become a legal requirement.

What has NOT changed?

- Applicants are still required to have two references, an interview and Kirk Session approval before they take up a position.

Who needs to be Garda Vetted?

- Any work or activity which is 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 adults.
- The Act shall not apply where a person gives assistance on an occasional basis at an event or activity. Unless they are involved in: coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training.
- Anyone who has NEVER been vetted before and falls into the scope above.

➤ *Who does NOT need to be Garda vetted?*

Anyone who has already completed a Garda vetting paper form for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, this includes Ministers.

➤ *Can we vet people coming from other countries?*

Police certificates from country of origin for non-irish applicants should still be requested along with at least one reference from their home country.

➤ *Do we need to vet 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.

➤ *Do we need to vet someone who has been vetted by a different organisation?*

Yes, a person does need to be vetted by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland even if they have already been vetted by a different organisation.

How will Garda Vetting be done?

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.

➤ *How will a person who does not have Internet access or is unable to use a computer complete an online 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.

Librarians in public libraries have been trained on how to complete the forms.

- *Will this be a quicker, more efficient service?*

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

Also many of the fields will be compulsory so the form cannot be completed if there are gaps in the information required. This means time and postage will be saved returning incomplete forms.

When will this happen?

- Anyone who needs to be vetted between May and September can follow the instructions on the website, 'Garda Vetting Step by Step Guide' and begin the application process today.
- Anyone who needs to be vetted from September can attend one of the Information Seminars to hear how the form can be completed. Anyone who needs to be vetted after that can speak to their Designated Person who will be in a position to explain how the process will work.
- For those who have been in post and never been vetted before we have been given until the **31st December 2017** to have everyone who needs to be vetted. In order to prevent every congregation sending in lots of forms at the same time, each congregation will be given a time frame in which to send in the forms.

How will this be communicated to congregations?

Information Seminars will be held in each Presbytery during September 2016. It is very important that each congregation sends along a representative. This could be the Minister, Designated Person or other. More than one person from each congregation can attend.

What other changes have been brought about by the Act?

- 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.
- Filtering has been brought in which will mean old and minor convictions will no longer be disclosed on a persons' criminal record. E.g. convictions over 7 years for motoring offences (serious offences which relate to dangerous driving causing death will be exempt).