

Criminal Record Checks / Garda Vetting

The FAI is a registered organisation with the Gardaí for the purposes of Garda vetting. Garda vetting is a process which involves an individual giving consent for An Garda Síochána to furnish the FAI with a statement that there are no convictions recorded in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere or a statement of all convictions and / or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed in the State or elsewhere as the case may be.

Garda vetting should be completed prior to the commencement of any position for those who will be working with children and/or vulnerable persons in any capacity. Garda vetting is not a substitute for safe recruitment but provides another element in determining a person's suitability to work with children. The FAI recommends that Affiliated Members do not solely rely upon vetting checks but should also seek to determine an individual's suitability for a position through normal recruitment processes including interviews and reference checks.

FAI Vetting Obligations

- a) All those engaging with persons under the age of 18 and vulnerable persons shall be Garda Vetted.
- b) All Designated Child Welfare Officers, Designated Child Welfare Liaison Officers, Chairpersons and Secretaries of each Affiliated Member involved with teams that are competing in any age group up to and including Under 18's shall be Garda Vetted.
- c) All coaches or those involved with the management of any team that are competing in any age group up to and including Under 18 shall be Garda Vetted.
- d) Any other person working or volunteering with children in any capacity on behalf of the FAI or an Affiliated Member shall be Garda Vetted. It is the responsibility of the football body concerned to determine the relevant persons within their organisation who this applies to subject to the relevant legislation and guidelines.
- e) Failure to ensure that the relevant persons are vetted in accordance with the Policy, FAI Rules and/or legislation may result in disciplinary action against the individual and/or Affiliated Member and may also constitute a legal offence under relevant legislation.
- f) Affiliated Members shall not accept confirmation of the Garda vetting status of any individual prior to confirmation being received from the FAI that the Garda vetting of the individual is in order. It is the responsibility of each club, league and divisional association who engage individuals to ensure that they have received a copy of vetting approval.

Vetting Applications

- a) The FAI shall provide a Garda vetting service to all Members. Applications for vetting may be made by contacting the Designated Child Welfare Officers and/or Designated Child Welfare Liaison Officer of the relevant football body or directly through the FAI.
- b) The FAI shall be solely responsible for the approval of all vetting applications and final determination on disclosures provided by the Gardaí in accordance with the Policy.
- c) All persons shall complete their vetting application in good faith and shall ensure all information provided is accurate, complete and up to date.
- d) All matters disclosed as part of the Garda vetting application shall remain confidential to FAI authorised personnel, the applicant and Statutory Authorities. However, approvals and rejections shall be notified to all relevant football personnel in accordance with the Policy.



Vetting Application Process

When available applications may be made online at www.fai.ie by registering as an FAI Member and following the steps to complete a vetting application. Applications may also be made by manually completing the FAI approved Vetting Application form by hand. Incomplete forms will be returned and may delay applications.

Step 1

Once a Vetting form has been fully completed either manually or on-line all forms should be sent by the club, league, provincial association or national body by post to the Child Welfare Officer, Football Association of Ireland, National Sports Campus, Abbotstown, Dublin 15. All forms must be sent to the FAI for processing and not to An Garda Síochána.

Step 2

When the Garda vetting forms are returned to the FAI, the Garda vetting form will contain a statement which will include either that;

- (a) there are no convictions recorded against the individual in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere, or
- (b) a statement of all convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, in the State or elsewhere as the case may be.

Step 3 – No disclosures

Should the Garda vetting form disclose no convictions recorded against an individual, correspondence shall be sent to the applicant advising them of this. This correspondence should be provided to the relevant football body as proof of vetting by the individual. Verbal assurances should never be accepted.

Step 4 - Disclosures

In some instances disclosure of convictions and/or other information will be provided to the Designated Child Welfare Officer of the FAI by the Gardaí. In many cases these disclosures may not prevent an individual from working with children.

Applicants will be given an opportunity to comment on any disclosures before any decision is made by the Child Welfare Committee to ensure fairness and transparency at all times. In some cases it may be necessary to meet and interview the applicant before a decision is made. Applicants will then be advised of the decision which has been made in respect of any vetting disclosures. If the decision is negative, a letter informing them of this decision will be sent to them. If an applicant is currently engaged within football, and if a vetting application is not accepted, they may also be issued with an immediate Stand Down Order in accordance with the Policy. The FAI shall advise all relevant football bodies who are known to be associated with the applicant of the outcome of any negative vetting application. Unsuccessful applicants will be afforded an opportunity for a negative decision made against them to be reviewed by the FAI.

Step 5 – Review

Unsuccessful applicants will be afforded an opportunity for a negative decision made against them to be reviewed by the Legal and Corporate Affairs Committee. The applicant will be invited to make any written submissions to support their position. In some situations it may be necessary to meet and interview the applicant if the Legal and Corporate Affairs Committee deems this appropriate in any given case. This is a review process conducted at the sole discretion of the Legal and Corporate Affairs Committee and they shall determine what further information they may require for any particular review. Decisions made by the Legal and Corporate Affairs Committee regarding vetting applications are final and not subject to appeal.

If the recommendation of rejection is confirmed, the relevant persons and football bodies involved will be duly informed.

In the case of rejection of an applicant the Legal and Corporate Affairs Committee may also issue an automatic ban from membership of the FAI where vetting disclosures deem it necessary for the protection of children.

Vetting Enquiries

The FAI shall keep a secure central database of all vetting applications in accordance with data protection legislation. Vetting information shall be passed to Affiliated Members seeking information on applicants where the applicant has indicated their consent to such information being disclosed. Affiliated Members shall not engage any person to work with children without such information being provided either by way of production of a letter confirming the vetting status of an individual or an enquiry being made to the FAI with the consent of the individual concerned.

Length of Vetting Status

An individual's criminal record may change at any time hence the importance of general practices being put into place around safe recruitment, references and safe practices in working with children. The current recommended vetting period is every 3-5 years. Notwithstanding this if any person has a concern that an individual should be re-vetted at an earlier interval this should be requested.

Convictions

Any member charged with or convicted of an offence in any jurisdiction for an offence which may raise concerns regarding their appropriateness to work with children may be issued with a Stand Down Order and/or Automatic Ban as referred to in the Policy.