

May 2018



# Garda Vetting Policy

Franciscan Province of Ireland



proibhinse fhroinsiasach na h-éireann

franciscan province of ireland

provincial office – 4, merchants' quay – dublin 8 – ireland

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**Forward:**

Garda Vetting is one of a range of safeguards put in place by the Franciscan Province of Ireland to help protect Children and Vulnerable Adults. Garda Vetting can act as a deterrent to those who are a danger to children/vulnerable adults. It is now a legal requirement for everyone working with children or vulnerable adults to be vetted **before** they start work. It is Franciscan policy that all Friars and Employees be vetted as part of the recruitment process. It is also Franciscan policy for all Volunteers who work directly with children or vulnerable adults, to be vetted prior to starting work. This policy will provide clear guidelines on who should/should not be vetted.



Aidan McGrath, OFM,  
Minister Provincial

Date: May 2018



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## **Garda Vetting and Legislation**

In April 2016 new legislation was introduced by the government that will bring changes to the Vetting Process. The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012—2016 are now in operation. E-Vetting is a recent initiative introduced by the Garda Central Vetting Unit designed to enhance and improve the vetting process. These changes have highlighted the need for a Franciscan Garda Vetting Policy that will inform all Franciscans, their co-workers and volunteers of the new Vetting system. There are considerable benefits to the Franciscans in having Vetting procedures in place. These include...

- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Protection of Franciscans who provide services to Children and Vulnerable adults
- Protection of personnel within the Franciscan organisation who provide services to children and vulnerable adults.
- Assists with management of risk in respect of former offenders.
- An essential part of Human Resource Management practice within the Franciscan organisation.
- Partnership relationship with the National Vetting Bureau
- A key element in the delivery of a comprehensive and robust Child Protection Policy.

### **Definition of Relevant Work:**

*Any work or activity which is carried out by a Friar, Franciscan Staff Member, External Contractor or Volunteer, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to or contact with children or vulnerable adults.*

### **Definition of Vulnerable Adult (ROI)**

*“A vulnerable adult means a person, other than a child, who –*  
*a) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,*  
*b) has an intellectual disability,*  
*c) is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or*  
*d) has a physical disability, which is of such a nature or degree –*  
*i) as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or ii) that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing”. National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.*



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### **Who Should Be Vetted?**

It is Franciscan Policy that all Friars, Staff and some External Contractors regardless of their role are vetted by An Garda Síochána as part of the recruitment process.

The Franciscans are committed to fairness in all cases but are also entitled to reach a decision on the basis of the information before them. Additional information may be requested from prospective Friars, Employees or Volunteers. If the Vetting Application returned to the Franciscans by the Gardaí contains information relevant to the role applied for by the applicant, the Provincial/Guardian must consider whether or not to review the applicant's suitability for that role.

Staff and Volunteers who **work directly with children/vulnerable adults (see definition above)** are required to complete the vetting process before they take up their position.

All Friars, Staff and any Volunteers who **work directly with children/vulnerable adults** will be re-Vetted every five years. The Franciscan Province of Ireland reserves the right to re-vet any Friar, Staff or Volunteer within that five-year timeframe.

External groups using Franciscan facilities are responsible for their own Garda Vetting processing and must have appropriate Insurance and Safeguarding Policies in place if children/vulnerable adults are part of the group.

All new Friars/Staff (or volunteers who will be working directly with children) must provide photographic identification in the form of drivers licence, passport, other, as part of the recruitment process. Copies of Applicant's ID will be kept on file (in line with Franciscan Data Protection Policy) should Gardaí have a query regarding the application. NB—all new staff must be provided with the Franciscan Staff Handbook which will include the full range of Safeguarding Policies, including this Garda Vetting Policy, and will be asked to sign a Declaration Form to say that they have read and are prepared to abide by these policies.

### **The E-Vetting Process:**

- Vetting Applicant is given an Invitation to Vetting Form which is returned to the Franciscan Vetting Office along with a copy of photographic ID.
- Franciscan Vetting Office submits the form to the National Vetting Bureau (NVB).
- The NVB send a link to an online Garda Vetting Application Form for Applicant to complete.
- Once completed, the applicant submits the form for review to the Franciscan Vetting Office- [fvo@franciscans.ie](mailto:fvo@franciscans.ie)



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- The form is reviewed by the Franciscan Designated Signatory who then submits it to the Garda National Vetting Board for processing.

**NOTE:**

- Applicants must specify the role they are applying for in the application form (Volunteer will no longer suffice).
- Post Codes must be included.
- The application must be completed in one sitting. There is a time limit of 1 hour per page.
- Applicants have 30 days in which to complete and submit the online form. If not completed within 30 days, the link will be closed.
- If the information in the form is incorrect, the Designated Signatory can cancel the application by contacting the Garda Central Vetting Office. The Designated Signatory must give a reason why the form has been cancelled to the Gardaí. The Gardaí will then send the applicant a new link. **NB: The reason for cancellation will also be seen in an email to the Applicant.**
- Once reviewed and signed by the Designated Signatory, the application form will be sent to the Garda Central Vetting Office for processing.

Franciscan Vetting Office (FVO) sends Vetting Invitation to Applicant. Applicant completes form and returns to FVO with photo ID or other. FVO submits to NVB who send link to online form which applicant completes and submits for review.



Once the form has been reviewed and signed by the Designated Signatory, the application form is sent to the National Vetting Bureau for processing.

**Further Information:**

In some cases, it may be necessary for Franciscan Vetting Office staff to input applications for Vetting on behalf of Friars/Volunteers who are elderly or who do not have email addresses.

Vetting Disclosures will be made available to applicants on request.

Administration staff will not have access to disclosures.

For Volunteers/Staff who do not have email addresses, the staff of Libraries and Citizens Information Centres have been trained to assist people with setting up email addresses and filling in the Garda Vetting Application Forms online.



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It is important that the prospective Friar/Employee/Volunteer feels confident that the details appertaining to their convictions or prosecutions will not be disclosed to anyone.

All information in relation to Garda Vetting is treated with the utmost confidentiality and in line with the Franciscan Province of Ireland Privacy Statement and Data Protection Policy which is available on our website [www.franciscans.ie](http://www.franciscans.ie).

For vetting queries please contact [fvo@franciscans.ie](mailto:fvo@franciscans.ie) or  
phone 01-6742510



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## Appendix

### Who should be Vetted?

- It is the policy of the Franciscan Province of Ireland that **All Friars** are Vetted.
- It is the policy of the Franciscan Province of Ireland that **All Staff** are Vetted.
- It is the policy of the Franciscan Province of Ireland that all **Volunteers who work directly with children/vulnerable adults** are Vetted.
- It is the policy of the Franciscan Province of Ireland that some **External Contractors**, who work on Franciscan Property and with Franciscan Friars and Franciscan Staff, over extended periods in order to carry out their contractual obligations, be Vetted.
- Volunteers who participate in Franciscan pilgrimages in roles such as Brancardiers/Nurses/Doctors.
- Volunteers who are working in clerical roles who have access to records such as financial, employment, legal.

### Who need not be Vetted?

- Volunteers whose duties are to perform maintenance tasks such as flower arranging, cleaning, gardening.
- Volunteers who perform church duties such as Readers, Servers, Ministers of the Eucharist.
- Volunteers in choirs that do not have members under 18 years of age.
- External Contractors who carry out once-off duties e.g., builders, IT services, other.
- External groups using Franciscan facilities.
- External groups using Franciscan facilities and who are working directly with children or vulnerable adults must abide by their own Safeguarding Policies. Please check with them in advance.

**Please note Definition of Relevant Work and Definition of Vulnerable Adult contained in this document**