

	Gasóga na hÉireann / Scouting Ireland			
	No.	Issued	Amended	Next Review Date
	POL-BOD-SG-008	July 2026	July 2026	September 2029
	Category: Enter policy category			
	Owner: Safeguarding			
Scouting Ireland Vetting and AccessNI Compliance Policy				

Related Documents
Safeguarding Policy
AccessNI Invitation
Vetting Steps & Procedure
National Vetting Bureau Guidance Document
AccessNI Policy
Stay Away Policy
Policy on the recruitment of ex offenders
Membership Policy

Revision Schedule		
Revision	Date	Description
1	July 2026	This version to be read in conjunction with current guidelines and supersedes all prior Vetting and AccessNI Policies, including 2010 and 2025 versions.



Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out the requirements and procedures for vetting within Scouting Ireland. Its purpose is to safeguard children and vulnerable persons and to ensure compliance with:

- the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016; and
- the AccessNI Act.

This policy applies to all adult members, volunteers and individuals undertaking roles within Scouting Ireland that involve access to or contact with children or vulnerable persons.

Safeguarding Department

The Vetting Team, operating within the Safeguarding Department of Scouting Ireland, is responsible for:

- administering vetting applications;
- ensuring compliance with statutory requirements;
- maintaining secure vetting records; and
- supporting Scout Groups in vetting procedures.

Scouting Ireland operates its vetting procedures in accordance with relevant legislation, policy and internal processes. No individual may commence or continue in a relevant role without the appropriate vetting requirements.

Eligibility for Vetting

To apply for vetting through Scouting Ireland, applicants must:

- be 16 years of age or older;
- hold or be applying for an approved membership category or role;
- have access to a valid email address and the internet; and
- complete the proof of identity process.

Applicants aged 16–18 years must also submit a signed Parent or Guardian Consent Form.

All members aged 16–18 years **should** be vetted.

Vetting is **mandatory** for 16-18 year olds where they undertake roles or activities involving increased responsibility or access, including but not limited to:

- County and Provincial events
- National events
- International events

- County and Provincial Teams
- National Teams;
- Work Weekends; and
- Similar structured activities outside normal Group functions.

Applicants can only apply following their 16th birthday and where they undertake the roles above have a three-month period to apply and become compliant.

All 17 year olds must be vetted **before** their 18th birthday to continue their Scouting Ireland membership.

All applicants must provide:

- two referees who are not family members; and
- no more than one referee may be a Scouting Ireland member.

Approved Roles for Vetting / AccessNI

Only specific roles within Scouting Ireland are eligible for vetting applications through the National Vetting Bureau or AccessNI.

Approved roles are:

1. Scouter
2. Scouter / Rover Scout
3. Rover Scout
4. Scout Centre / Campsite Manager or Staff
5. Venture Scout
6. Staff Member Providing Advice and Guidance to Youth Members
7. Adult Supporter – Group Chairperson
8. Provincial Support Officer / Development Support Officer
9. Adult Supporter – Group Secretary
10. Adult Supporter – Group Treasurer
11. Adult Supporter – Group Quartermaster / Bo'sun (Sea Scouts)
12. Adult Supporter – Spiritual Advisor
13. Adult Supporter – Band Member / Entertainments Facilitator
14. Adult Supporter – Personal Scouting Assistant
15. Volunteer Intern
16. Campsite Office Administrator (CE Scheme)
17. Campsite Maintenance Worker (CE Scheme)

Role descriptions are set out in Scouting Ireland's Membership Policy.

Applications submitted for roles outside this approved list will not be accepted.

Vetting Process

All vetting applications are processed through the online systems provided by the National Vetting Bureau or AccessNI.

The process includes:

1. completion of required membership and vetting documentation;
2. verification of identity at Group level;
3. issuance of an email invitation to complete the vetting application;
4. submission of the application by the applicant; and
5. review and recording of the vetting disclosure by the Vetting Team.

Proof of Identity

Applicants must complete a proof of identity process before a vetting application can be submitted.

The proof of identity process must be conducted in person and must be verified and signed by the Group Leader or an authorised delegate.

Records relating to identity verification must be retained in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and Scouting Ireland record retention procedures.

Vetting Disclosures and Risk Assessment

Where a vetting disclosure indicates potential concerns, the Head of Safeguarding will / or will delegate to an appropriately qualified or experienced personnel review the disclosure and may undertake a formal risk assessment.

Decisions are made in line with safeguarding principles, proportionality and the relevance of the disclosure to the role.

Vetting Disclosure/Trace Thresholds

1. No Relevant Risk Identified

Examples may include minor non-violent offences such as parking or speeding offences with no pattern of behaviour.

Outcome:

The vetting application proceeds.

2. Low-Level or Historical Offences

Older or isolated minor offences where there is clear evidence of rehabilitation and no repeat behaviour.

Outcome:

The application proceeds with the rationale recorded.

3. Pattern of Concerning Behaviour

Repeated offences or patterns of behaviour indicating disregard for rules or boundaries, even where individual offences may be minor.

Outcome:

A risk/ suitability assessment is required before a decision is made.

4. Relevant Non-Serious Offences

Offences involving dishonesty, substance misuse or boundary concerns that may have relevance to the role.

Outcome:

The matter is managed through a case-by-case / suitability assessment process.

5. Serious Safeguarding Risk

Offences involving violence, abuse, neglect, coercion or harm to children or vulnerable persons.

Outcome:

The individual will normally be considered unsuitable for regulated roles.

6. Automatic Disqualification

Individuals who are included on a barred list or are legally prohibited from working with children or vulnerable persons.

Outcome:

Immediate exclusion from the role.

Risk & Suitability Assessment Principles

When assessing vetting disclosures, Scouting Ireland will consider:

- the relevance of the offence to the role;
- the seriousness of the offence;
- frequency or pattern of behaviour;
- time elapsed since the offence;
- evidence of rehabilitation; and

- overall safeguarding risk.

All decisions will be proportionate, consistent, appropriately documented and maintained securely for the membership duration and a further period, in line with GDPR policy.

Renewal of Vetting

Vetting must be renewed every three years.

Applications for renewal may be submitted up to 90 days before the expiry date.

Members are required to notify Scouting Ireland of any change in circumstances relevant to safeguarding.

Failure to maintain valid and current vetting may result in:

- a requirement to “stay away” from Scouting activities;
- suspension without prejudice; or
- removal from role or membership.

Compliance

Compliance with this policy is the responsibility of both:

- the individual member; and
- the Group Leader/ Group Council / Trustees.

The Safeguarding Department and the Volunteer & Group Support Department (through Provincial Support Officers) will support by way of reminders regarding vetting requirements and expiry dates.

Stay Away Requirement Due to Non-compliance

Members who are not compliant with vetting requirements are required to stay away from all Scouting activities until compliance is fully restored.

The Individual, Group Leaders, County Commissioners, Provincial Commissioners and Events Teams have a duty to ensure a ‘stay away’ is in place for such members.

Following regular reviews of the compliance lists the Safeguarding Department will issue ‘stay away’ emails where a member is non-compliant –the Group Leader will be included in these emails.

Ending of Membership Due to Non-Compliance

Scouting Ireland reserves the right to terminate membership where a member remains non-compliant and has failed to apply for vetting following three “stay away” email notifications.

Process Following Expiry of Vetting:

1. First email issued to the individual member to include Group Leader requesting the member to 'stay away' from all Scouting activities, in line with the 'Stay Away' Policy.
2. Second email issued as a reminder of the 'stay away' notice, the Group Leader is also notified.
3. Third and final email reminder of the 'stay away' notice issued, the Group Leader is also notified.
4. A Case Management Team of four staff will review members who have been issued with the third 'stay away' and consider circumstances, exceptional circumstances and contact received from the individual member and Group Leader.

The Case Management Team will be made up of at least two Senior Management Team Members including:

- Head of Safeguarding and;
- Head of Volunteer & Group Support.
- At least two further staff members

The Case Management Team will make a determination if the individual membership will be removed from Scouting Ireland.

5. If the individual wishes to rejoin Scouting Ireland, they must reapply through the Group Leader.
6. In exceptional circumstances, a member may be reactivated, a decision on this will be made by the Case Management Team on an individual basis with presenting information.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All vetting information is treated as strictly confidential and processed in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Access to vetting disclosures is restricted to authorised personnel within the Safeguarding and Vetting Team.

Records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with Scouting Ireland data retention procedures and legal requirements.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued compliance with legislation, safeguarding standards and best practice.

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