

## Garda Vetting Procedures

*If you are working with children, you need to apply for Garda Vetting in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.*

### Frequently Asked Questions

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#### **Q1. Why did the Garda Vetting procedure change?**

Safeguarding children and ensuring their safety in all settings is our top priority. The new Garda Vetting process has been streamlined to provide continued support to those working in the sector to remain compliant and enable Tusla to offer enhanced safeguarding supports.

By creating a more efficient and effective system, the updated process will continue to support legal compliance requirements for early learning and care services, school-age childcare services and childminders, while improving safeguarding measures and operational efficiencies for all involved.

The European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), established in 2012, enables the secure exchange of criminal records across all EU member states. Each country has a designated Central Authority for Criminal Records, in Ireland, this is the Garda National Vetting Bureau.

As part of EU Directive 2011/93, EU countries are now required to carry out enhanced police checks for sexual offences when processing vetting applications. These changes are being rolled out across the EU.

In coming weeks all Garda Vetting applications must satisfy the terms of this Directive.

#### **Q2. Which sector does this change to Garda Vetting application process apply to?**

The revised Garda Vetting application process is specifically applicable to the Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School-Aged Childcare (SAC) sector, including childminders.

#### **Q3. Are there any changes for other organisations in relation to Garda Vetting requirements - for example Family Resource Centres (FRCs) or Educational Training Boards (ETB)?**

There are no changes for other organisations, these organisations will process Garda Vetting as normal through their relevant provider.

However, in the instance an organisation is responsible for processing Garda Vetting for the registered provider of an Early Learning and Care or School-Age Childcare service, the registered provider will be required to process their vetting applications through Tusla.

*Ref Q9. On how to access Tusla process.*

#### **Q4. Do I need to reapply now for Garda vetting based on these changes?**

No, the change is to the process of where you apply for Garda vetting either for a new employee or when you are required to renew your vetting. There is no need to reapply for Garda vetting if your current vetting is still valid (dated within the last three years). If your Garda Vetting is dated within the last three years, it remains valid, unless there has been a change in your employment status.

#### **Q5. What are the new changes?**

A new Garda Vetting procedure is being introduced to support compliance and efficiencies for all e-vetting applicants.

- **Barnardos** will cease all vetting services as of 31st January.
- **Early Childhood Ireland (ECI)** will provide vetting for all early learning and care and school-age childcare employees. You will not need to be a member of Early Childhood Ireland to access vetting from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025. You will, however, need to register with Early Childhood Ireland as a Garda Vetting User to access vetting services, which will be possible from 1st February 2025.
- **Tusla** will provide vetting for registered providers, chairpersons of boards of management (if they are the registered provider) and childminders.

#### **Q6. If an Early Learning and Care (ELC) or School Age Childcare (SAC) service uses the National Forum for Family Resource Centres (FRC) to apply for Garda Vetting can this continue?**

Employees or volunteers working within registered Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare settings can continue to use the National Forum for Family Resource Centres.

However, the Registered Provider of the setting will need to be Garda vetted through Tusla if appointed or their vetting renewal is after 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

*Ref Q9. On how to access Tusla process.*

#### **Q7. When is the new Garda Vetting process being implemented?**

The new Garda Vetting procedure will come into effect from Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

#### **Q8. Are there any new eligibility criteria or Garda Vetting processes for applying?**

There are no changes to the eligibility criteria. There may be some changes to the Garda Vetting application process dependant on which organisation you submit your Garda Vetting applications to for processing. Further information will issue on the application processes for both organisations.

From 1<sup>st</sup> February, Garda Vetting applications can now be submitted online through Early Childhood Ireland or Tusla.

The new process will eliminate postal delays, reduce costs associated with postage and allow for streamlined processing and tracking of applications, ensuring greater efficiency for applicants.

#### **Q9. Which organisation do I submit my Garda Vetting applications to for processing now?**

Please select your current provider below for information on your new process:

##### **Barnardos**

If you currently process your Garda Vetting applications through Barnardos, the changes are as follows:

- For **registered providers, chairpersons of boards of management (if they are the registered provider), and childminders**, Tusla will be the relevant organisation for Garda Vetting.
- For **employees** of early learning and care and school-age childcare services, **Early Childhood Ireland** will be the relevant organisation for Garda Vetting.

**For services with employees, employers will need to:**

- Apply to the National Vetting Bureau for a new Garda National Vetting Bureau Affiliate number (GNVB number) stating Early Childhood Ireland is their relevant organisation – this process can take 6 to 10 weeks.
- Refer to Q14. For how to apply for Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) Affiliate registration number.
- Register with Early Childhood Ireland as a Garda Vetting User – this option will be available on their website from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025.

##### **Early Childhood Ireland**

If you are already processing your Garda Vetting applications through Early Childhood Ireland the change is as follows:

- For **registered providers, and chairpersons of boards of management (if they are the registered provider)**, Tusla will be the relevant organisation for Garda Vetting.
- For **employees of early learning and care and school-age childcare services – no change**, the process remains the same, and **no action** is required.

##### **Tusla**

From 1 February 2025, Tusla will provide Garda Vetting for **registered providers, chairpersons of boards of management (if they are the registered provider) and childminders**. Information on the process to access Garda Vetting through Tusla will be issued in the coming weeks.

Those accessing vetting through Tusla do not need a Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) Affiliate registration number for this purpose.

#### **Q10. How long does vetting take under the new process?**

Currently, the Garda National Vetting Bureau's processing times are 8 to 10 working days (from when the applicant completes the link).

If an applicant has lived outside of the Republic of Ireland/Northern Ireland for 6+ consecutive months or more in an EU country or the UK, their Garda Vetting application will now take longer.

- Up to 10 additional working days for EU countries
- Up to 20 additional working days for the UK

These changes to the Garda Vetting process are being introduced to align with evolving best practices and legal requirements. These changes aim to enhance the efficiency and strength of Child Safeguarding procedures.

Police Clearance Certificates are still required. The enhanced police checks are for sexual offences only and therefore these changes do not replace the existing requirement for Police Clearance Certificates from each country they lived in during that time.

Please note that approximately 20% of applications may require more than 10 working days to process. This is due to the need for additional checks in some cases.

#### **Q11. How will the new process manage vetting renewals for those already vetted?**

Those who have been vetted previously through Barnardos will now need to apply for a new Garda Affiliate Registration Number if their new provider is Early Childhood Ireland. Those accessing vetting through Tusla do not need a Garda Affiliate Registration Number for this purpose.

*Refer to Q9. for how to apply.*

The process for Garda Vetting renewals is the same process as for new Garda Vetting applications.

#### **Q12. What is the expected timeline for those transitioning to the new vetting process?**

For employees of early learning and care and school-age childcare services - if currently Garda vetting with Barnardos as the relevant organisation – it is anticipated that it may take the Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) from 6 to 10 weeks to process requests for change in Affiliate registration number.

*Refer to Q14. for how to apply for Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) Affiliate registration number.*

### **Q13. Is there a cost?**

From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025, there is no cost for processing Garda vetting applications through either Early Childhood Ireland or Tusla. Garda vetting will be provided free of charge for ELC services, SAC services and childminders.

### **Q14. How do I apply for a new Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) Affiliate Registration Number?**

If you currently use Barnardos for vetting of employees, you will need to email [gnvb.registration@garda.ie](mailto:gnvb.registration@garda.ie) to request a new GNVB affiliate registration number and outline the following information:

- Name and business address of your organisation
- Contact person within the organisation
- Outline the nature of your business e.g., whether you are a school-age childcare service and/or early learning and care service provider

Once you have submitted your email the GNVB will send you an application form to complete and return to them. Upon receipt of your form, they will issue your GNVB Affiliate Registration Number by post and email.

Once you have received your **Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) Affiliate Registration Number** you will need to go to the Early Childhood Ireland website: [www.earlychildhoodireland.ie](http://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie) and follow the instructions for access to the online vetting system and to submit Garda Vetting applications for your employees.

### **Q15. How does the new process handle vetting for individuals who require vetting for the first time?**

If you are an employee, your employer will initiate the process of the vetting application. If you are being vetted by Tusla as a register provider further information will issue.

### **Q16. I have returned from abroad, and I am looking to get Garda vetting completed. Will this change affect me also?**

If you have lived outside of Ireland for a period longer than 6 consecutive months, it is mandatory that you provide clearance for each country you resided in, in so far as is practicable.

If an applicant has lived outside of the Republic of Ireland/Northern Ireland for 6+ consecutive months or more in an EU country or the UK, their Garda Vetting application will now take longer.

- Up to 10 additional working days for EU countries
- Up to 20 additional working days for the UK

These changes to the Garda Vetting process are being introduced to align with evolving best practices and legal requirements. These changes aim to enhance the efficiency and strength of Child Safeguarding procedures.

Police Clearance Certificates are still required. The enhanced police checks are for sexual offences only and therefore these changes do not replace the existing requirement for Police Clearance Certificates.

Once the relevant documents have been received you will need to refer to the steps referenced in Q.9 subject to your position.

If you are an employee, your employer will initiate the process of the vetting application.

**Q17. Will there be any changes to how long Garda Vetting is valid for?**

There is no change. Garda vetting validation will remain three years if the applicant has not had a change in employment.

**Q18. What is ECRIS?**

The [European Criminal Records Information System \(ECRIS\)](#), established in 2012, enables the secure exchange of criminal records across all EU member states. Each country has a designated Central Authority for Criminal Records, in Ireland, this is the Garda National Vetting Bureau.

As part of EU Directive 2011/93, EU countries are now required to carry out enhanced police checks for sexual offences when processing vetting applications. These changes are being rolled out across the EU.