

Garda Vetting POLICY
Engineer's Ireland STEPS Programme

Policy prepared by:	Roseanne O'Leary Garda Vetting Officer
Policy approved by:	Dee Kehoe CPD Director
Policy implemented by:	Dee Kehoe, Caríosa Kelly & Damien Owens Garda Vetting Committee
Responsibility for ensuring review:	Roseanne O'Leary Garda Vetting Officer
Approval date:	18th August 2016
Revision date:	01 st July 2017

1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 The Engineers Ireland's STEPS Programme is committed to the protection and welfare of children. As part of this commitment the Engineers Ireland's STEPS Programme will comply with relevant legislation. Garda Vetting is but one part of the overall recommended STEPS recruitment and selection procedures for both employees and volunteers, and will conduct Garda Vetting, where appropriate, as part of this process.

2.0 Policy Statement:

- 2.1 The Garda Vetting Policy relates to STEPS role as a provider of services for employees and volunteers working with children.

3.0 Purpose:

- 3.1 The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance on Garda Vetting procedures within the Engineers Ireland's STEPS programme.
- 3.2 To ensure best practices in recruitment and selection procedures whereby eligibility to work or volunteer is contingent upon the successful completion of appropriate Garda vetting checks through The National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána.

4.0 Scope:

- 4.1 This policy applies to Engineers Ireland's STEPS programme employees and volunteers that act in a coaching or mentoring role with the same children on an on-going basis as defined in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016. Responsibility for ensuring this policy is effectively implemented rests with the "Garda Vetting Officer" (GVO) within Engineers Ireland. All other Engineers Ireland's STEPS Programme employees and volunteers are expected to facilitate and support the implementation of this policy.

5.0 Engineers Ireland's STEPS Programme and Vetting:

- 5.1 Garda Vetting is the process by which a form is submitted to The National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána asking them to check if a person has any convictions and/or prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, recorded against their name.
- 5.2 Vetting applications will only be accepted from organisations that have been recognised by The National Vetting Bureau (NVB) of the Garda Síochána to fulfil such functions. STEPS will liaise with Dublin City Volunteer Centre who will act as the Registered Organisation for Garda Vetting for Engineers Ireland.

6.0 The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016:

- 6.1 The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 is a vetting legislation for the Republic of Ireland which came into effect on 29 April 2016, makes it mandatory for people working with children or vulnerable adults to be vetted by the National Vetting Bureau.
- 6.2 The legislation makes it a **legal requirement to vet** those involved in 'any work or activity which is carried out by a person, where a **necessary and regular part** of that work requires the participation of the person in relevant work or activities.' An organisation or person who contravenes this legal requirement shall be guilty of an offence.
- 6.3 The legislation states who is subject to vetting. It states that those who "could build a relationship of trust with young person or vulnerable person" is doing relevant work and must be vetted. These services include, but are not limited to:
- Childcare Services
 - Schools
 - Hospitals and health services
 - Residential services or accommodation for children or vulnerable persons
 - Treatment, therapy or counselling services for children or vulnerable persons
 - Provision of leisure or physical activities to children or vulnerable persons (unless this is incidental to the provision of services to a mixed group including adults)
 - Promotion of religious beliefs.
- 6.4 The Act does not apply to any work or activity undertaken in the course of a family relationship or to persons who assist occasionally and on a voluntary basis in certain activities or events be they school, sport or community

related. This recognises the occasional but necessary involvement or assistance of parents or other persons. However, the Act will apply where such involvement includes coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of the children or vulnerable persons.

- 6.5 The Engineers Ireland's STEPS team has reviewed the above legislation and has made a decision to vet volunteers involved in coaching or mentoring children on a continual basis and those who come into contact with children through a STEPS activity more than eight times per annum.

7.0 Garda Vetting Requirements

- 7.1 Any employee or volunteer who may have unsupervised access to children must undergo Garda Vetting as part of their recruitment process.
- 7.2 All volunteers volunteering on behalf of STEPS more than eight times per annum will require Garda Vetting e.g. Volunteer engineers visiting local schools or attending career events to talk to students more than eight times per annum.
- 7.3 Volunteers visiting schools, attending career events to talk to students such as Higher Options and BT Young Scientist will not need to be vetted as the legislation does not apply to persons who assist occasionally and on a voluntary basis. Very occasional interaction with schools should not necessitate the need for Garda vetting.
- 7.4 The Engineers Ireland STEPS Programme reserve the right to vet volunteers at any time during the course of their involvement with STEPS.

8.0 Garda Vetting Process

- 8.1 An applicant due for assessment, i.e. STEPS volunteers volunteering more than eight times per annum etc. will receive a Vetting Application Form from the STEPS team Garda Vetting Officer. This form must be completed in full by the applicant and forwarded by post to the Garda Vetting Officer along with certified copies of the applicant's ID totalling 100 points using the Engineers Ireland's STEPS Programme 100 point identifier check.
- 8.2 Employees and volunteers are encouraged to disclose all prosecutions and convictions to the Garda Vetting Officer. Not all disclosures will exclude employees and Volunteers from participating in the work of STEPS.
- 8.3 All vetting applications for employment/volunteer roles with Engineers Ireland's STEPS Programme shall initially be processed by the Garda Vetting

Officer before referral to the Liaison Person who is trained by the Garda Vetting Unit in the management of Vetting applications and disclosures. Engineers Ireland has appointed Dublin City Volunteer Centre to act as Liaison Person on its behalf.

8.4 Engineers Ireland has nominated Roseanne O’Leary to act as the “Garda Vetting Officer” (GVO) The responsibilities of the GVO include:

- Assessing when Garda vetting is necessary for each employment position / volunteer role i.e. the role involves “relevant work” with children or vulnerable persons as specified in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Acts) 2012 to 2016.
- Ensuring that candidates for employment positions / volunteer roles are provided with the correct Garda vetting forms and that the forms are completed accurately and in full, prior to submitting them to the Liaison Officer.
- Verifying the identity of the person submitting the vetting application by checking relevant ID.
- Ensuring all personal information in relation to vetting is kept confidentially and in compliance with Data Protection legislation and best practice.

8.5 The Garda Vetting Officer will send all forms by secure post to the Liaison Person in Dublin City Volunteer Centre for processing. The Volunteer centre will then submit all forms to the National Vetting Bureau.

8.6 Engineers Ireland has nominated Dee Kehoe, Caríosa Kelly and Damien Owens from the Senior Management Team of Engineers Ireland to make up the “Garda Vetting Committee”. The responsibilities of the Committee includes:

- Ensuring organisational compliance with the Garda Vetting policy
- Assisting the Garda Vetting Officer to make decisions on the suitability of the candidates following the disclosure of convictions and or specified information via the Garda vetting process.

8.7 Engineers Ireland will not accept historical vetting information from employment/volunteer candidates or from their previous employers/volunteer managers. Each employee/volunteer involved in STEPS activity more than eight times per annum must be vetted via the vetting process, even if already vetted elsewhere.

9.0 Vetting Disclosures Process

- 9.1 On return from the National Vetting Bureau the forms will be processed by the nominated Liaison Person who will inform Engineers Ireland Garda Vetting Officer in writing of the results. The Liaison Person will pass on a copy of the person's disclosure to the Garda Vetting Officer for their consideration, and this document will be held confidentially within the organisation. Any information acquired from the NVB that was not previously disclosed may raise questions about the employee / volunteer's suitability to work with minors.
- 9.2 Where a vetting disclosure made to a relevant organisation contains criminal records information or specified information in respect of a person who is the subject of the application for vetting disclosure, Engineers Ireland, as soon as practicable, will make available a copy of the vetting disclosure to the person concerned.
- 9.3 Engineers Ireland will consider each vetting disclosure returned with convictions individually and take into account all the information disclosed to it by the Bureau when assessing the suitability of the person who is the subject of the disclosure to do relevant work or activities.
- 9.4 Engineers Ireland will always treat the applicant with respect, dignity and complete confidentiality. In most instances it is convictions and/or prosecutions of a most serious nature and particularly against children/minors that may deem a person unsuitable to work with children in STEPS. All prosecutions or convictions of a sexual nature will exclude any person from being employed or volunteering with STEPS.
- 9.5 When a decision has been made, the employee or volunteer will be informed in writing. A record of this letter, including date sent will be kept. A record of any replies received and any follow-up will also be kept.

10.0 Confidentiality:

- 10.1 Any information garnered by this process will be handled in the strictest confidence. All information in the vetting process will be stored securely in a confidential manner. Engineers Ireland complies fully with good practice regarding the secure storage, handling and use of the Vetting Bureau disclosures and personal vetting information as per Data Protection Policy and legal obligations under Data Protection Legislation.

11.0 Appeals Process:

- 11.1 While the focus is on protecting the children, there are also safeguards and due processes for those being vetted, including the right to appeal.

11.2 Applicants who deny any convictions returned by the Vetting Bureau will be provided with details on how to write a letter of appeal to amend their records at the Vetting Bureau.

12.0 Policy Review:

12.1 This policy will be reviewed in the third quarter of each year or as necessary to comply with any relevant legislative changes.