



Citywise Education Garda Vetting Policy

Citywise Education	Approval date Aug 2023	Revision Number: 004
Responsibility for approval of policy	Board of Directors in conjunction with CEO	
Responsibility for implementation	CEO	
Responsibility for ensuring review	Board of Directors	

Policy Statement

Citywise Education is committed to the protection and welfare of all members and volunteers. As part of this commitment Citywise Education will comply with relevant legislation and recommended best practice in recruitment and selection procedures for both employees and volunteers, and will conduct Garda Vetting, where appropriate, as part of this process.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance on Garda Vetting procedures within Citywise Education.

Scope

This policy applies to Citywise Education employees and volunteers who will carry out “relevant work” with children and/or vulnerable adults as defined in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012. (See Appendix) Responsibility for ensuring this policy is effectively implemented rests with the CEO. All other staff members and volunteers in Citywise Education are expected to facilitate and support the implementation of this policy.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Garda National Vetting Bureau (NVB) – is the national unit of the Garda Síochána which conducts vetting of applicants to ascertain whether applicants have prior convictions and / or prosecutions.

Garda Vetting: This is the process by which the NVB discloses details regarding “all prosecutions, successful or not, pending or completed, and/or convictions” in respect of an individual and with that individual’s consent to their prospective employer and/or the organisations with which they wish to work or volunteer.

Authorised Signatory/Liaison Person – is the person who is nominated to apply for and receive vetting disclosures on behalf of Citywise Education. The Authorised Signatory will be known as the “Liaison Person” following the commencement of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012 to 2016.

Natural Justice - There are essentially two sections to the Rules of Natural Justice, the first being derived from the Latin maximum "audi alteram partem" (let the other side be heard). This is the duty to allow persons affected by a decision to have a reasonable opportunity of presenting their case. The second part of the Rules of Natural Justice is derived from the Latin maxim "nema

judex in causa sua" (no one can be the judge in his own cause). This gives rise to a duty to act fairly, to listen to arguments, and to reach a decision in a manner that is untainted by bias (NUI, Galway).

Child – a person under the age of 18 years.

Vulnerable Adult – a person, other than a child who – Is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia, Has an intellectual disability Is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or Has a physical disability, which is of such a nature or degree as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or, that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

Principles

Garda Vetting is just one of a number of elements that Citywise Education implements to ensure the protection and safety of the children and/or vulnerable adults in Citywise Education's care. Appropriate recruitment screening (including interviews, reference checking), child protection and health and safety procedures, etc. will be implemented along with Garda Vetting.

An individual will not work / volunteer unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults in Citywise Education until their Garda vetting has been completed and the results conveyed to the organisation's Garda Vetting Officer by the Authorised Signatory / Liaison Person.

Having a criminal record will not automatically exclude an individual from employment/volunteering unless they relate to the offences outline in Section 10. Decisions on whether to involve an individual with prior criminal convictions will take into account:

- the nature of the conviction and its relevance to the job;
- the length of time since the offence took place;
- the risk to the service users, employees and organisation;
- training which may have occurred since the time of the individual's offence

Citywise Education will employ a Natural Justice framework in dealing with any disclosures of convictions.

Vetting Applications Process

All vetting applications for employment/volunteer roles with Citywise Education shall be processed by an Authorised Signatory/Liaison Person who is trained by the Garda Vetting Unit in the management of Vetting applications and disclosures. Citywise Education has appointed South Dublin County Volunteer Centre to act as Authorised Signatory / Liaison Person on its behalf.

Citywise Education will nominate one staff member / Board Member / management Committee member 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 adults as specified in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Bill) 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 Authorised Signatory.

- Verifying the identity of the person submitting the vetting application by checking relevant ID (e.g. passport, driving licence)
- Ensuring all personal information in relation to vetting is kept confidentially and in compliance with Data Protection legislation and best practice
- That Citywise Education staff / volunteers are aware of the organisation's Garda Vetting Policy.

Citywise Education will nominate 2 representatives from the staff and/or Board 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 candidates following the disclosure of convictions via the Garda vetting process.

If the individual being vetted is over the age of 16 and under the age of 18, they are required to have a completed parent / guardian consent form which must be submitted along with their vetting application form.

Citywise Education will not accept historical vetting information from employment / volunteer candidates or from their previous employers / volunteer managers. Each new employee / volunteer must be vetted via the Citywise Education vetting process, even if engaging an individual already vetted elsewhere. Citywise Education will require all of its existing staff/volunteers to be re-vetted at regular intervals of five years.

Vetting Disclosures Process

On return from the National Vetting Bureau the forms will be processed by the nominated AS / Liaison Person who will inform Citywise Education Garda Vetting Officer by letter / email of the results.

The Authorised Signatory / Liaison Person will pass on a copy of any possible or probable convictions to the Garda Vetting Officer for their consideration, and this document will be held confidentially.

Where there are no convictions, an offer of a position of employment/voluntary role will be issued to the candidate in line with Citywise Education's other screening/recruitment procedures.

Where serious convictions are disclosed, (for e.g. those outlined in the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016) a letter will be sent to the person asking them to attend a meeting with the organisation's Vetting Committee. This letter must not disclose the information on the returned Garda Vetting form. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the applicant (employee / volunteer) access to the information returned by the NVB and to give them an opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding the conviction.

A written record of this meeting will be kept and the time, date and duration of the meeting recorded. At this meeting, Citywise Education will ensure that: Everyone, no matter what their history, is given fair and equal treatment and the right to state their case. Cognisance is of Repeat Offending, Restorative Justice and Rehabilitation of Offenders. A disclosure of conviction will not automatically preclude the applicant from obtaining the position in question. Cognisance is taken of the applicant's self-disclosure or non-disclosure of a conviction at the

time of the application and of their experience (work record etc.) and rehabilitation subsequent to any conviction disclosed.

Where multiple convictions are evident but may be as the result of a particular lifestyle, e.g., drug addiction, then the change in lifestyle must be taken into consideration.

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

Applicants are informed that in the case of uncertainties their form will be returned to the NVB seeking clarification.

The applicants name and date of birth are clarified at the start of the meeting as mistakes may be made by the NVB where names and addresses are similar.

Citywise Education will consider each Garda Vetting form returned with convictions individually and will always treat the applicant with respect, dignity and complete confidentiality.

Citywise Education recognises that there are three potential outcomes of the review meeting:

In line with this policy and taking all things into consideration including interview, current history and references, the applicant may be offered the position.

The applicants Garda Vetting form is returned to the NVB for further clarification. In which case a second review meeting may be held.

The applicant is deemed unsuitable for the position on offer by nature of their history of offences.

In each case a written explanation of the outcome will be sent to the applicant by letter. A record of this letter, including date sent must be kept. A record of any replies received, and any follow-up must also be kept.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information in the vetting process will be held in a manner consistent with Citywise Education's confidentiality policy. Citywise Education also complies fully with good practice regarding the secure storage, handling and use of the NVB disclosures and personal vetting information as per our Data Protection Policy and our legal obligations under Data Protection Legislation.

Circumstances for the Withdrawal of the offer to Work / Volunteer.

Citywise Education considers the following as reasonable grounds to withdraw an offer or opportunity of employment / volunteer role to an individual:

- The individual has been charged with, or convicted of a sexual offence;
- The individual has been charged with, or has a conviction for, an offence that relates to the ill treatment of a child, or a vulnerable adult;
- The individual has been charged with, or has a conviction for, the ownership, production or distribution of child pornography.

Citywise Education considers the following list of offences to be relevant, and each case will be considered in a case-by-case basis:

- Offences against the person, e.g. assault, harassment, coercion;
- Breaches in trust, e.g. fraud, theft, larceny;
- Offences against property e.g. arson, armed robbery;
- Domestic Violence;
- Offences against the state.

Citywise Education is conscious of not initiating policies that prohibit needlessly against rehabilitated individuals. Such cases will be objectively determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

Appeal Process

While the focus is on protecting children and vulnerable adults, there are also safeguards and due processes for those being vetted, including the right to appeal. Appeals should be made in writing to the authorised signatory within 14 days of issue of the decision.

Appendix to Garda Vetting Policy

Excerpt from Schedule 1, Part 1 and Part 2 from the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012.

Relevant work or activities relating to children

1. Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children in -

- (a) an establishment which provides pre-school services within the meaning of Part VII of the Child Care Act 1991,
- (b) a school or centre of education, both within the meaning of the Education Act 1998,
- (c) any hospital or health care centre which receives, treats or otherwise provides services to children,
- (d) a designated centre within the meaning of section 2 of the Health Act 2007, in so far as it relates to an institution at which residential services are provided in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991,
- (e) a special care unit provided and maintained in accordance with section 23K of the Child Care Act 1991,
- (f) a children detention school within the meaning of section 3 of the Children Act 2001.

2. Any work or activity which consists of the provision of home tuition by a person pursuant to the Scheme administered and funded by the Department of Education and known as the Home Tuition Scheme.

3. Any work or activity which consists of treatment, therapy or counselling provided to a child by a person in the course of that work or activity.

4. Any work or activity which consists of care or supervision of children unless the care or supervision is merely incidental to the care or supervision of persons who are not children.

5. Any work or activity which consists of the provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities (whether or not for commercial or any other consideration) to children unless the provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities is merely incidental to the provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to persons who are not children.

6. Any work or activity which consists of the provision of advice, guidance, developmental, or counselling services, (including by means of electronic interactive communications) to children unless the provision of the advice, guidance, developmental or counselling service is merely incidental to the provision of those services to persons who are not children.

7. Any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of any religious beliefs.

8. Work as a driver of a public service vehicle which is being used only for the purpose of conveying children.

9. The provision by a person, whether or not for commercial or other consideration, of accommodation for a child in his or her own home.

10. Any research work or activities (howsoever described) carried out in a university, institute of technology or other establishment at which third level education is provided where a necessary and regular part of the research work or activity involves contact with or access to children.

11. Any application by a person to carry on or manage a designated centre within the meaning of section 2 of the Health Act 2007.

12. Any application by a person for a declaration of eligibility and suitability within the meaning of section 3 of the Adoption Act 2010.

13. Any assessment of a person's suitability to act as a foster carer by or under section 39 of the Child Care Act 1991.

14. Any assessment by or under section 41 of the Child Care Act 1991 of a person's suitability to act as a carer of a child in respect of whom he or she is a relative.

15. Any work or activity which is carried on by a person, a necessary and regular part of which requires the person to have access to, or contact with, children pursuant to the following enactments:

- (a) Medical Practitioners Act 2007;
- (b) Nurses Act 1985;
- (c) Nurses and Midwives Act 2011;
- (d) Dentists Act 1985;
- (e) Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005;
- (f) Pharmacy Act 2007;
- (g) Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council Order 2000 (S.I.No. 109 of 2000);
- (h) Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (Establishment) Order 2000 (Amendment) Order 2004 (S.I. No. 575 of 2004).

PART 2

Relevant work or activities relating to vulnerable persons

1. Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, vulnerable persons in:

- (a) a school or centre of education, both within the meaning of the Education Act 1998, unless, in the case of a centre of education, the work or activity is merely incidental to work or activities undertaken in relation to persons who are not vulnerable persons,
- (b) any hospital or care centre which receives, treats or otherwise which provides services to vulnerable persons,
- (c) a designated centre within the meaning of section 2 of the Health Act 2007, in so far as it relates to an institution at which residential services are provided to vulnerable persons,
- (d) an approved centre within the meaning of Part 5 of the Mental Health Act 2001,
- (e) any organisation or facility which provides educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities (whether or not for commercial or any other consideration) for vulnerable persons,
- (f) in any organisation or facility which provides welfare, advice, guidance, developmental, or counselling services for vulnerable persons.

2. Any work or activity which consists of treatment, therapy or counselling provided to a vulnerable person by a person in the course of that work or activity.

3. Any work or activity which consists of the care (including the provision of health and personal social services and essential domestic services) of vulnerable persons unless the care is merely incidental to the care of persons who are not vulnerable persons.

4. Any work or activity which consists of the provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities (whether or not for commercial or any other consideration) to vulnerable persons unless the provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities is merely incidental to the provision of educational, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to persons who are not vulnerable persons.

5. Any work or activity which consists of the provision of advice, guidance, developmental, or counselling services, (including by means of electronic interactive communications) to vulnerable persons unless the provision of the advice, guidance, developmental or counselling service is merely incidental to the provision of those services to persons who are not vulnerable persons.

6. Work as a driver of a public service vehicle which is being used only for the purpose of conveying vulnerable persons.

7. Any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of any religious beliefs.

8. The provision by a person, whether or not for commercial or other consideration, of accommodation for a vulnerable person in his or her own home.

9. Any research work or activities (howsoever described) carried out in a university, institute of technology or other establishment at which third level education is provided where a necessary and regular part of the research work or activity involves contact with or access to vulnerable persons.


10. Any assessment of a person's suitability to act as a care representative under section 21 of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme Act 2009.

11. Any application by a person to carry on or manage a designated 10 centre both within the meaning of section 2 of the Health Act 2007.

12. Any work or activity which is carried on by a person, a necessary and regular part of which requires the person to have access to, or contact with, vulnerable persons pursuant to the following enactments:

- (a) Medical Practitioners Act 2007;
- (b) Nurses Act 1985;
- (c) Nurses and Midwives Act 2011;
- (d) Dentists Act 1985;
- (e) Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005;
- (f) Pharmacy Act 2007;
- (g) Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (Establishment) Order 2000 (S.I. No. 109 of 2000);
- (h) Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (Establishment) Order 2000 (Amendment) Order 2004 (S.I. No. 575 of 2004).

Adopted by the Board of Directors of Citywise Education

Signature 1  Signature 2 

Date 14/09/23