



CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE FOR COMHALTAS BRANCHES.

Comhaltas follows Child Protection/Safeguarding protocols as outlined under the “Children First National Guidance 2017” Act:

The "Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children" published in 2017 provides essential guidelines for safeguarding children and outlines the responsibilities of professionals and organizations in child protection.

Comhaltas Branches must respond as follows:

- o Provide a Child Protection Policy, formally adopted and filed.
- o Carry out a Risk Assessment for the branch classes/activities.
- o Appoint a DLP (Designated Liaison Person) to act on behalf of the branch members.
- o Carry out an audit of teachers/supervisors/administrators on their vetting status.
- o All personnel must hold a current Vetting Disclosure/Comhaltas Certificate **prior** to providing a relevant service.
- o Vetting Disclosure/Comhaltas Cert are active for a three-year period from the date of issue and may be renewed after that period.
- o Vetting is also available for persons between the ages of 16 and 18 but must submit NVB1 and NVB3 (parent/guardian consent form)

The Comhaltas Child Protection Policy and Risk Assessment document are available on www.comhaltas.ie – go to Comhaltas Hub – Policies and Resources.

VETTING PROCESS:

The Garda National Vetting Bureau (GNVB) has recently advised all organisations to follow NEW guidance in relation to vetting.

Arising from this, Comhaltas is requesting all branch secretaries/DLPs to assist with the vetting application process.

Vetting applicants must submit the following documents for validation:

- o A completed NVB1 and NVB3 (if between 16 and 18 years)
- o A photo ID – copy of a current driving licence or current passport.
- o Proof of address dated within the last six months – utility bill etc.

NOTE:

- o All proof of identity documents and proof of address documents **must be seen in person and verified** prior to the application being forwarded **by post** to the Comhaltas Vetting Liaison Person: (Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, Cullina, An Cheapach Mhór, Co. Luimnigh V94 WK2V).
- o The NEW version of NVB1 application form, now also available on www.comhaltas.ie replaces previous versions and is required for all vetting applications.
- o Guidelines for completing NVB1 and Identity Document Validation Form are attached to the NVB1 form.
- o Comhaltas will provide training for these new vetting protocols through a series of planned online sessions on zoom.

FREQUENTLY ANSWERED QUESTIONS RE VETTING:

What is the purpose of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to 2016?

The Act will provide a legislative basis for the mandatory vetting of persons who wish to undertake certain work or activities relating to children or vulnerable persons or to provide certain services to children or vulnerable persons.

Who will require to be vetted?

Any person who is carrying out work or activity, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable adults. A relevant organisation shall not permit any person to undertake relevant work or activities on behalf of the organisation unless the organisation receives a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person. A person who contravenes this section shall be guilty of an offence.

Are persons who carry out work or activity on an occasional basis required to be vetted?

The Act shall not apply to persons who assist on an occasional basis and for no commercial consideration. This would include persons who assist on an occasional basis at a school, sports or community event or activity other than where such assistance includes the coaching, mentoring, counselling, teaching or training of children or vulnerable persons.

Where parents volunteer on an occasional basis should they be vetted?

The Act shall not apply where a person gives assistance on an occasional basis at a school, sports or community event or activity. Each relevant organisation will need to assess the positions involved in accordance with the Act.

How is the identity of the Applicant validated by the Relevant Organisation?

Relevant organisations should satisfy themselves as to the identity of those applying for positions. International best practice recommends a minimum of two forms of identification should be produced, one of which should be photographic identification. These can include Passport, Driving Licence, and National Identity Card. Other forms of identification should be produced for the purpose of the verification of current address and may include recent utility bill (gas, telephone and electricity), Bank/Building Society/Credit Union statement and birth certificate. In the absence of this documentation, an applicant has the option of swearing an Affidavit /Affirmation before a Commissioner of Oaths to verify their identity. Please note there may be separate requirements by a Commissioner of Oaths in this regard.

What is Relevant Work or Activities?

Any work or activities, 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 or vulnerable persons. Details of relevant work or activities are outlined in part 1 and 2 of Schedule 1 of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

Can a person be employed pending vetting?

No. A relevant organisation shall not permit any person to undertake relevant work or activities on behalf of the organisation unless the organisation receives a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person. A person who contravenes this section shall be guilty of an offence.

What details are disclosed as a result of vetting?

A vetting disclosure shall include particulars of the criminal record (if any) relating to the person, and a statement of the specified information (if any) relating to the person or a statement that there is no criminal record or specified information, in relation to the person.

Does the applicant receive a copy of the disclosure?

The relevant organisation in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau Act shall, as soon as practicable, make available a copy of the vetting disclosure to the applicant.