



# south dublin county volunteer centre

## external garda vetting policy

### Statement of policy

South Dublin County Volunteer Centre, as part of its service to support and promote volunteering, will act as an authorised signatory for garda vetting for organisations within South Dublin County who do not have access to an authorised signatory within their own organisation.

### Procedures

#### 1. **Garda Vetting Service to Not for Profit organisations**

- 1.1. South Dublin County Volunteer Centre will provide a service for voluntary organisations to acquire Garda Vetting. This service will only be provided to not-for-profit organisations and is not available to individuals to acquire garda vetting.
- 1.2. SDCVC will only provide this service for organisations that do NOT have access to an authorised signatory through their own organisation.
- 1.3. Organisations who have access to an authorised signatory must go through their own parent body to access vetting for their staff and volunteers.
- 1.4. On an initial meeting with each group, SDCVC reserves the right to explore organisational structures with each organisation in order to ascertain whether they may have access within their own structures to an authorised signatory.
- 1.5. All organisations requiring volunteer vetting must first be registered with SDCVC.
- 1.6. A nominal administrative fee is charged for this service. This is decided by the board of the volunteer centre annually.

#### 2. **Data Protection**

- 2.1. SDCVC uses the Garda Central Vetting Unit (GCVU) Vetting Service to obtain information, which enables the assessment of an applicant's suitability for volunteering.
- 2.2. SDCVC complies fully with the GCVU code of practice regarding the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of GCVU disclosures, disclosure information and with its legal obligations under the Data Protection Act.
- 2.3. Copies of the SDCVC Data protection policy are available on request.
- 2.4. Copies of the SDCVC Access Request policy are available on request.

#### 3. **Storage and Access**

- 3.1. Completed Garda Vetting Application Forms will be stored separately in lockable storage with access limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.
- 3.2. SDCVC will always retain completed Garda Vetting forms on file in the SDCVC office.
- 3.3. If there is a disclosure on any of the forms returned from the Garda Vetting Unit, the volunteer centre will pass the details of this disclosure on to the Garda Vetting officer in the local not for profit. SDCVC will keep the original disclosure on file for a period of 6 months.
- 3.4. A record will be maintained of all those to whom disclosed information has been revealed as it is prohibited to pass disclosed information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.
- 3.5. Where a volunteer has provided us with their personal data, they have a right to be given a copy of their personal data in accordance with section 4 of the Data Protection Acts subject to certain exceptions. The conditions on and procedures for making a request are outlined in the South Dublin County Volunteer Centre Access Request Policy, which is available upon written request.



#### **4. Garda Vetting officer**

- 4.1. There must be one named person within the voluntary organisation to whom SDCVC will pass on relevant material on potential volunteers.
- 4.2. For the purposes of record keeping, this person will be named as the “garda vetting officer”
- 4.3. The garda vetting officer must be available to meet with potential volunteers along with SDCVC should any issues arise with the volunteers vetting form.
- 4.4. The garda vetting officer within the organisation must agree to participate in individual training and support sessions with SDCVC. The level of support and training needed will be determined by the volunteer centre authorised signatory on initial meetings with the garda vetting officer.
- 4.5. It is the responsibility of the garda vetting officer to furnish their volunteers with Garda vetting forms (available from the volunteer centre) and to ensure that these forms are returned to SDCVC.
- 4.6. A checklist form (available from the volunteer centre), indicating the number of forms and other relevant data must be returned with the Garda Vetting forms.

#### **5. General procedures**

- 5.1. Vetting forms will NEVER be returned directly to the volunteer centre by the volunteer but will be gathered by the garda vetting officer and returned in batches of 5 or greater (where practical) to the volunteer centre.
- 5.2. Whereas SDCVC will hold on file the volunteers vetting details in a confidential manner in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, it will always remain the responsibility of the local organisation to decide whether a volunteer is suitable to volunteer with their organisation.
- 5.3. All organisations must have a confidentiality policy in place internally to ensure that all information gathered in the vetting process is used in a correct and appropriate manner.

#### **6. Retention**

- 6.1. Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, GCVU disclosed information will not be stored for longer than is necessary. It is the policy of SDCVC to retain this information for a period of 2 years, by which time local organisations should be considering re-vetting their volunteers. This also allows for consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints.
- 6.2. If, in exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep such information for longer than 2 years, consideration will be given to the Data Protection rights of the individual.
- 6.3. Once the retention period has elapsed, SDCVC will ensure that any GCVU disclosed information is destroyed and while awaiting destruction, the information will be kept securely.

#### **7. Discontinuation of Services**

- 7.1. The volunteer centre will reserve the right to discontinue this service for any organisation that the volunteer centre deems not to have abided by agreed good practice procedures including data protection legislation.

#### **8. Feedback**

- 8.1. Constructive feedback on this Policy is always welcome. It must be given to the South Dublin County Volunteer Centre Manager who will ensure that the Management Committee considers it.