# APCP Garda Vetting Policy & Procedure

## 1. Policy Statement

Garda Vetting is a fundamental component of APCP's safeguarding framework, ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals engaging with APCP Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

As a *Relevant Organisation* under Irish law, APCP requires all accredited and pre-accredited member**s** to complete Garda Vetting as part of the membership and accreditation process.

**Note:** Garda Vetting is a **mandatory requirement**. Failure to comply will result in **revocation of membership**.

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## 2. Garda Vetting Procedure

### Application Process

1. **Submitting the Form**
    - Complete and submit a **Vetting Invitation Form (NVB1)** to APCP.
    - Provide **valid identification**, verified in person by one of the following:
        - Member's Supervisor
        - Legal Professional (e.g., solicitor, peace commissioner)
        - General Practitioner (GP)
        - APCP Office in Limerick (by appointment)
    - NVB1 must be **ink-signed** and **posted** to APCP Vetting, PO Box [Insert].
    - Include the **Verification of Documents Form**, completed by the verifier.
    - **Errors or omissions** will require a new application.
2. **Verification and Data Entry**
    - Once identity is confirmed, APCP enters the applicant's details into the online Garda Vetting system.
3. **Applicant Receives Online Link**
    - An email from the Gardaí with a **secure link** is sent to the applicant.
    - The link is valid for **30 days**.
4. **Disclosure and Notification**
    - APCP receives the vetting **disclosure** from the NVB.
    - Applicants are **notified** of the outcome and may request a copy.

### 3. Who Must Be Vetted?

Garda Vetting is required for:

- **Pre-accredited and accredited APCP members**
- **Other personnel** as deemed appropriate by APCP

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### 4. Re-Vetting

- Required **every three years** for all members.
- Also required if a member's **status lapses** and they seek to rejoin.
- APCP may request vetting **at any time**.
- Members must **report new or pending convictions** immediately.
- APCP may conduct **random vetting checks**.
- Applicants with declined vetting may **reapply after 12 months**.

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### 5. International Vetting

Applicants who have lived outside Ireland or Northern Ireland for **six months or more** must:

- Provide **Police Clearance Certificates** from each country of residence.
- Include **certified translations** if not in English.
- **Applicants bear all associated costs**.

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### 6. Communication Protocol

- Vetting Liaison Officer must **verify identity** before discussing vetting.
- **No third-party disclosures** allowed.
- **Phone disclosures** must be documented/recorded.

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**7. Garda Vetting Administration Team**

| Role | Name |
|---|---|
| Liaison Persons | Christine Garry, Toni Knowles |
| Vetting Clerk | Dearbhla Hackett |

**Responsibilities:**

- Manage applications and communication
- Ensure confidentiality
- Liaise with the Garda Vetting Bureau

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**8. Suitability Assessment Process**

If a concern arises:

- The Vetting Team will assess:
    - Nature and seriousness of the issue
    - Applicant's personal background
    - Relevance to their role

**Process may include:**

- Additional documentation or written statements
- A review meeting
- Decision based on available records if no meeting occurs

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**9. Grounds for Rejection or Deferral**

Applications may be declined or delayed for:

- Incomplete or incorrect forms
- Delays in ID submission
- Missed deadlines
- Concerning disclosures
- Pending serious charges

**Automatic suspension applies to:**

- Serious criminal charges

- Inclusion on official registers

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**10. Appeals Process**

Applicants may appeal to the **APCP Garda Vetting Appeal Panel** (3 members, including one external).

**Appeal Guidelines:**

- Submit a **written appeal** (max. 500 words) within **21 days**
- The appeal panel's decision is **final**

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**11. Disputing Vetting Information**

1. **Submit Written Dispute** to the Liaison Person
2. **Referral to NVB** for further review
3. **Applicant Error** – submit a new application alongside the original
4. **Further Dispute** – NVB may request additional checks (e.g., fingerprinting)
5. **Final Decision** – made by APCP's Garda Vetting Decision Maker or Committee

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**12. Communication of Results**

- Outcome communicated to applicant and relevant APCP personnel
- If unsuitable:
    - Applicant may be **declined, removed, or have membership revoked**

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**13. Withdrawal and Suspension**

- Applicants may **withdraw** at any stage
- APCP may **suspend members** during ongoing suitability reviews

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**14. Data Protection**

All data is managed in strict accordance with data protection laws:

- Fair and lawful processing
- Use limited to specific purposes
- Secure data storage
- Accurate and up-to-date records

- Data retained only as long as necessary
- Applicants may request a copy of their vetting disclosure

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**15. Disclaimer**

APCP reserves the right to **amend or withdraw this policy at any time** without prior notice.

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