

Garda Vetting Policy

Padel Federation of Ireland (PFI)

1. Policy Statement

The Padel Federation of Ireland ("PFI") is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare, safety, and wellbeing of all children and vulnerable persons participating in padel activities under its jurisdiction. The Federation recognises that Garda Vetting forms an essential part of safe recruitment and safeguarding practices.

This Garda Vetting Policy outlines the procedures and standards applied by the Padel Federation of Ireland in accordance with Irish legislation, Sport Ireland safeguarding requirements, and best practice guidance for National Governing Bodies of Sport.

The Federation is committed to ensuring that no individual is permitted to undertake relevant work or activities with children or vulnerable persons unless appropriate Garda Vetting procedures have been completed in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016.

2. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all persons carrying out relevant work or activities on behalf of the Padel Federation of Ireland, including but not limited to:

Coaches

Assistant coaches

Volunteers

Committee members

Children's Officers

Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs)

Team managers

Referees and officials

Camp staff

Contractors

Employees

Tutors and trainers

Any individual working regularly with children or vulnerable persons within padel activities

This policy applies across:

National squads

Affiliated clubs

Competitions and tournaments

Training camps

Development programmes

Educational activities

Events organised directly or indirectly by the Federation

3. Legislative Framework

This policy is guided by:

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016

Children First Act 2015

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)

Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance and Ethics Policies

Applicable Data Protection legislation including the GDPR and Data Protection Acts

Relevant safeguarding standards adopted by Sport Ireland and National Governing Bodies of Sport.

4. Definition of Relevant Work

Under Irish legislation, Garda Vetting is mandatory for any person carrying out "relevant work or activities" with children or vulnerable persons.

Relevant work includes activities involving:

Coaching or training children

Supervising children

Providing recreational or sporting activities

Working directly with vulnerable persons

Regular access to children during sporting activities

Transporting children on behalf of the organisation

Overnight trips or residential activities

Sporting and recreational activities involving children are specifically identified within the legislation as relevant work.

5. Roles Requiring Garda Vetting

The following roles within the Padel Federation of Ireland require Garda Vetting prior to commencement:

Coaches and assistant coaches

Volunteers working with juniors

National team staff

Junior programme coordinators

Camp leaders

Children's Officers

Safeguarding personnel

Tournament staff supervising minors

Individuals with regular unsupervised access to children or vulnerable persons

The Federation reserves the right to require vetting for any additional role where safeguarding considerations apply.

6. Recruitment and Safe Recruitment Procedures

Garda Vetting forms only one element of the Federation's Safe Recruitment procedures. The Padel Federation of Ireland also requires:

Application and screening procedures

Verification of identity

Reference checks where appropriate

Safeguarding training

Code of Conduct acceptance

Role-specific qualifications or certifications

Appropriate supervision and monitoring

The Federation recognises that safeguarding is broader than Garda Vetting alone and must include ongoing education, supervision, and safe practices throughout the organisation.

7. Garda Vetting Process

7.1 Initial Application

Individuals requiring Garda Vetting must:

Complete the relevant vetting documentation

Provide proof of identity and address

Supply accurate and complete personal information

Declare all previous names and addresses

Incomplete or inaccurate applications may delay processing.

7.2 E-Vetting

The Padel Federation of Ireland may utilise the National Vetting Bureau's E-Vetting system where available.

Applicants will receive a secure online link from the National Vetting Bureau to complete the process electronically.

Applicants are responsible for:

Completing the online application accurately

Responding within the timeframe provided

Providing any additional documentation requested

7.3 Identity Verification

Identity verification must be completed before an application is submitted.

Applicants must provide valid documentation which may include:

Passport

Driving licence

Public Services Card

Utility bill

Bank statement

Official government correspondence

The Federation reserves the right to request additional identification where necessary.

8. Vetting Disclosures and Criminal Record Assessment

The National Vetting Bureau may disclose details of criminal records and/or specified information to the Federation as part of the Garda Vetting process.

The Padel Federation of Ireland acknowledges that the existence of a criminal record does not automatically exclude an individual from involvement within the organisation. Each disclosure shall be assessed fairly, proportionately, and on a case-by-case basis.

When assessing disclosures, the Federation may consider:

The nature and seriousness of the offence

The relevance of the offence to the role being undertaken

The age of the individual at the time of the offence

The time elapsed since the offence occurred

Whether there is a pattern of offending behaviour

Evidence of rehabilitation

The safety and welfare of children and vulnerable persons

The legal obligations of the Federation

The protection and welfare of children and vulnerable persons shall always be the Federation's primary consideration.

8.1 Risk Assessment Procedure

Where a Garda Vetting disclosure identifies criminal convictions or specified information, the following procedure may apply:

Confidential Review The disclosure will be reviewed confidentially by authorised safeguarding personnel within the Federation.

Opportunity to Respond The applicant may be invited to provide additional context, clarification, or supporting information regarding the disclosure.

Risk Assessment A formal risk assessment may be conducted to determine whether the individual is suitable for the specific role. The assessment will consider:

The responsibilities of the role

Level of contact with children or vulnerable persons

Supervision arrangements

Frequency and nature of interaction

Reputational and safeguarding risks

Decision-Making Process The Federation may:

Approve the appointment

Approve the appointment with conditions or supervision

Restrict certain activities or responsibilities

Determine that the individual is unsuitable for the role

Confidentiality All information relating to disclosures shall be handled sensitively, confidentially, and in accordance with data protection legislation.

8.2 Relevant Convictions

Certain offences may be considered incompatible with roles involving children or vulnerable persons, including but not limited to:

Offences against children

Sexual offences

Serious violent offences

Exploitation or abuse-related offences

Serious safeguarding-related concerns

The Federation reserves the right to refuse or terminate appointments where safeguarding risks are identified.

8.3 Appeals Process

An applicant who is adversely affected by a decision relating to Garda Vetting may submit an appeal in writing within 14 days of notification.

Appeals shall be reviewed by an independent or designated panel appointed by the Federation where possible.

The outcome of the appeal shall be communicated in writing and shall be considered final within the Federation's internal procedures.

9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The Padel Federation of Ireland is committed to handling all Garda Vetting information confidentially and in accordance with GDPR and Irish Data Protection legislation.

The Federation will:

Process vetting information lawfully and securely

Restrict access to authorised personnel only

Store information securely

Retain records only as long as necessary

Dispose of records securely

Vetting disclosures will only be used for the purposes for which they were obtained.

10. Re-Vetting

The Padel Federation of Ireland requires periodic re-vetting of relevant personnel.

As best practice, Garda Vetting should be renewed every three years or sooner where deemed necessary by the Federation.

Additional vetting may also be required:

Following a break in service

When changing roles

Where safeguarding concerns arise

Where legally required

11. Individuals Aged 16-17

Individuals aged 16 or 17 engaging in relevant roles may also require vetting procedures in accordance with National Vetting Bureau requirements.

Parental or guardian consent must be obtained for applicants under 18 years of age.

12. Refusal or Failure to Complete Vetting

Any individual who:

Refuses to complete Garda Vetting

Fails to provide required documentation

Provides false or misleading information

Does not comply with safeguarding procedures

may be deemed unsuitable for roles involving children or vulnerable persons.

The Federation reserves the right to withdraw offers of appointment or suspend involvement pending completion of the vetting process.

13. Safeguarding Responsibilities

All individuals working within padel have a shared responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable persons.

In addition to Garda Vetting, all personnel are expected to:

Adhere to the PFI Safeguarding Policy

Complete safeguarding training where required

Follow Codes of Conduct

Report safeguarding concerns appropriately

Maintain professional boundaries

Promote a safe and inclusive environment

14. Designated Safeguarding Contacts

The Padel Federation of Ireland shall appoint:

A National Children's Officer

A Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

Club Children's Officers where applicable

These individuals shall oversee safeguarding compliance, including Garda Vetting procedures.

15. Non-Transferability of Vetting

Garda Vetting disclosures are organisation-specific and cannot automatically be transferred between organisations.

Individuals may therefore be required to undergo new vetting processes when working with different organisations or governing bodies.

16. Complaints and Appeals

Individuals may raise concerns regarding:

The vetting process

Decisions arising from disclosures

Data protection matters

Procedural fairness

Appeals should be submitted in writing to the Federation's Designated Liaison Person or designated safeguarding representative.

17. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed regularly and updated:

In line with legislative changes

Following Sport Ireland guidance updates

Following safeguarding reviews

At least every two years

18. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

PFI Safeguarding Policy

Code of Conduct

Recruitment Policy

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

Data Protection Policy

Risk Assessment and Safeguarding Statement

19. Contact Information

For Garda Vetting or safeguarding queries, please contact:

Padel Federation of Ireland (PFI) Safeguarding & Vetting Department Email:

vetting@padelfederation.ie Website: www.padelfederation.ie