

Notice to Parishes re Vetting

This notice provides guidance to parishes on who should be vetted. The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, which came into effect last April, has introduced some uncertainty and confusion. We ask for your patience as we work out how best to proceed.

Up to April 2016, Garda vetting was a matter of policy. The policy of the Archdiocese of Dublin was to vet all those who work for or on behalf of parishes and diocesan agencies. This policy was clear. The legislation, which we are now required to follow, is not quite so straightforward.

The legislation requires vetting of those who engage in ‘relevant work or activities’. Included in this is “any work or activity as a priest or minister or any other person engaged in the advancement of any religious beliefs to children or vulnerable persons unless such work is incidental to the advancement of religious beliefs to persons who are not children or vulnerable persons”.

We use the term ‘public ministry’ to refer to all those activities that people engage in in a public forum that identifies them as acting on behalf of the parish or the diocese. This extends from the priest saying mass, to the members of the choir and the person who takes up the collection at the offertory. All of these people are ministering to the whole congregation, including children and vulnerable persons. They need to be vetted. They comprise the majority of those working in our parishes and diocese.

There are a small number of people whose ministry is not public. Members of finance committees, for example, usually meet when others are not around and the members would not normally need to be vetted. However, it is not the case that certain roles do not require to be vetted. For example, flower arrangers generally decorate the altar when others are not around and do not need to be vetted. If, however, some young people wished to join in making the church look beautiful and worked alongside the adult flower arrangers, the arrangers would need to be vetted.

In summary, all those engaged in public ministry must be vetted. For those whose ministry is not public, a decision needs to be made whether their work nonetheless brings them into contact with children or vulnerable persons. If it does, then they should also be vetted. If the contact is not planned, such as a situation where children wander into the church when something is happening, that contact is incidental and does not lead to a requirement for vetting. As in every situation where judgment is applied inconsistencies will arise. However, by working together in a spirit of openness and trust we will gradually bring greater clarity to this issue.

Please read the information on how to apply for vetting carefully. We are receiving a large number of applications that cannot be processed because they have not been completed properly. The information on how to apply for vetting and access to the vetting invitation form is available on: [www.csps.dublindiocese.ie](http://csps.dublindiocese.ie/category/garda-vetting/)

If you have any further queries please feel free to contact us on 8360314 or cps@dublindiocese.ie