



Gymnastics

NEW ZEALAND

GUIDE TO POLICE VETTING



Introduction

Police vetting has been around for a long time, however its importance was highlighted by the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (the VCA) which came into force on 1 July 2015 and includes safety checking regulations for people working with children.

The regulations require all paid people who work with children for government-funded organisations to be safety checked, and to have these safety checks updated every three years. This also applies to unpaid people working with children as part of an educational or vocational training course.

The regulation applies to all clubs who deliver in schools or within the club to school groups. It also applies to clubs who receive OSCAR funding.

While not a legal requirement at present if your club is not delivering to school or OSCAR groups, it is strongly recommended that all clubs carry out safety checking of all staff and volunteers who are coaching children in your club.

As of 2018, this will be a GNZ requirement for affiliated clubs and this is likely to be something that funders increasingly look for in the future.

The term 'safety checking' is now used and involves more than just checking criminal histories. It involves a careful process of information gathering and assessment that includes confirming identity, interviews, checking referees, and considering risk.

Police vetting is an important part of the safety checking process. This document focuses specifically on police vetting and takes you through the process of setting up as an Approved Agency and carrying out a police vet with staff and volunteers.

To get a thorough understanding of safety checking, what it involves, why it is important, and how to go about it please read '[Safer Recruitment, Safer Children](#)' [HERE](#) on the Child Matters website.

1. What is Police Vetting?

The NZ Police Vetting Service provides criminal history checks and other relevant information on potential and current employees or volunteers to Approved Agencies that provide care to children, older people and vulnerable members of society in New Zealand. The Vetting Service also provides criminal history checks for overseas visas and work permits.

Police vetting forms an important part of the safety checking process – click [HERE](#) for more information on safety checking.

2. Who should be Police Vetted and when?

Anyone who is working in a school or early childhood setting or with early childhood and school aged children must be police vetted. Under the Vulnerable Children's Act (VCA) 2014 Police Vetting of these individuals will become mandatory by 2018 – please see more information below under “When do you Police Vet new/ existing staff? Or at <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/vulnerable-children-act-2014-requirements-for-schools-and-kura/>

While not a legal requirement, it is highly recommended that clubs police vet all coaches (both paid and voluntary) regardless of whether they are working with schools.

- **What is the minimum age a person can be vetted?**

The NZ Police will only accept vetting requests for individuals aged ten years old or above.

- **How much does police vetting cost?**

NZ Police commenced charging for vetting results on 1 July 2017.

If your club is submitting 20 or less police vet request per year they are free. For 20 or more police vet requests the cost is \$8.50 + GST per request.

clubs that are registered charities are exempt from any charges.

For information on costs and whether they apply to your club read the [Police Vetting Cost Recovery Guide](#).

- **When do you Police Vet new / existing staff?**

You can complete the police vetting process at any time online, please keep in mind the below dates due current legislation.

Core workers:

As of 1 July 2015 - New staff starting a job or contract in an early childhood or school setting or with children of these ages must be safety checked before they start work.

By 1 July 2018 - Existing staff working in an early childhood or school setting or with children of these ages (i.e. those currently employed or contracted) must have been safety checked.

Non-core workers:

By 1 July 2016 – Safety checking of all new non-core workers before they are appointed to the role

By 1 July 2019 – safety checking of all existing non-core workers

- **What is the difference between a core worker and non-core worker?**

Core workers are either in sole charge or have primary responsibility or authority over the child or children in their care. Schools and kura are now unable to employ a core worker who has a specified criminal conviction unless they hold a Core Worker Exemption (CWE).

Non-core workers have regular but limited child contact and are never alone with children.

3. What are the implication of not Police Vetting?

Legal Conviction and Fines

Under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 there are legal fines and convictions which can be applied to organisations not abiding by the act.

If an organisation does not abide by the following they are committing an offence and are liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000.

To be compliant as an organisation you must:

- Ensure that Police Vetting is completed for every children's worker who is employed or engaged by the organisation (see dates outlined in 'When do you Police Vet?' above) and who it intends will still be employed or engaged by the organisation on that date.
- **New staff/volunteers:** Organisations must not employ or engage a person as a children's worker without ensuring that a Police Vetting of the person is completed before the employment or engagement commences.
- **Existing children's workers:** Organisation must, on or before the applicable date set out as below (outlined in 'When do you Police Vet?');
 - (a) in the case of a core worker, the date that is 3 years after the date on which this Part comes into force:
 - (b) in the case of a non-core worker, the date that is 4 years after the date on which this Part comes into force.
- **Periodic safety checks of children's workers:** A specified organisation must ensure that each children's worker whom it employs or engages is Police Vetted within 3 years after the date of the latest Police Vetting of the person.

This information has been taken from:

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0040/latest/whole.html#DLM5501709>

For further details please refer to this website.

4. Becoming an Approved Agency

In order to carry out police checks on staff and volunteers, Clubs must become an Approved Agency with the NZ Police.

The following steps outline the process for becoming an approved agency:

Step 1: Register the club with RealMe

The NZ Police use the NZ Government RealMe authentication system to authenticate agencies wishing to access the vetting system. Before the Club can be registered, an individual from the Club needs to set up a RealMe account on the RealMe website (if they do not already have one).

You **must** set up your own individual account (*Not a club account*). *More than one RealMe account can be added to the police vetting account*).

If you need more information please visit the RealMe website at - [RealMe website FAQs](#).

Step 2: Register your agency

Once you have access to a personal RealMe account you can then register your agency [HERE](#).

Police vetting is only available to approved agencies, not for individual or personal use. To become registered an agency must provide a service that fits the purpose of the Police vetting service.

During this registration you will be asked to electronically sign the [Approved Agency Agreement](#).

Approval criteria

New Zealand Police has the discretion to approve, or otherwise reject, access to the Police Vetting Service for any agency that does not meet the required standards and criteria as outlined below. Accessing the Vetting Service is only to be done when expressed consent is given in the form of a signed consent form by the individual.

New Zealand agencies

In order to be considered for approval to access the Police Vetting Service (on the basis of an individual's consent), **New Zealand agencies** should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The agency has functions which involve community safety and security – for example, the care, protection, education or training of vulnerable members of society such as children, young persons, elderly, disabled, and animals.
- The agency has a legislative or other obligation to obtain a Police vet – for example, 'fit and proper person' checking for registration or licensing of teachers, taxi drivers, security guards, etc.; educational facilities for trainees in nursing, social work, etc.
- The agency seeks a Police vet for NZ immigration or foreign consular/visa purposes.

You should receive a response from a vetting officer within 3-5 working days regarding the outcome of your request for approval.

A notification email will be sent once agency approval has been granted. Each user will receive a unique Police ID and Activation Key enabling access to the service.

Please Note: During this step you **may identify any additional users** who will also require access to the vetting service. If you would like access to be added/ removed once registration is complete, send details of the request to queryme@police.govt.nz.

Step 3: Access to Vetting services

Once your agency is authorised and notification has been received, simply login to submit vetting requests. Entering your RealMe details will direct you to the service.

Upon first login, users will be required to enter their unique Police ID and Activation Key - these details are saved by your RealMe account for future service use.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our vetting team:

Email: queryme@police.govt.nz

Phone: (04) 470 7079

Once your organisation is an approved agency please follow the below steps to complete police vetting for each staff member.

5. The Police Vetting Process

Approved agencies are able to enter individual applications directly through the Police vetting online service. The online data entry form is set up in such a way that only correct data is accepted. The data required for this process will have been captured on the employees/ volunteers New Zealand Police Vetting Service (NZPVS) Request and Consent Form.

Employers are expected to make sure the person being vetted is aware of the vetting process and should direct them to the police website for more information.

Completing a satisfactory Police Check should be used as a condition of employment e.g. along with reference checks.

Step 1: Vetting Request and Consent form for Approved Agencies

The employee or volunteer being vetted needs to complete page 3 and 4 of the Police Vetting form, including their signature and the date. Forms can be accessed through this link;

<http://www.police.govt.nz/advice/businesses-and-organisations/vetting/forms-and-guides>

Step 2: Verify applicant's details

The Approved Agency submitting a vetting request must make sure that the details provided by the applicant are correct. It is mandatory for the agency to verify the identity of the person being vetted against a number of different documents, including at least one form of primary ID e.g. Drivers Licence, 18+ Card, or Student/ employee ID Card. At least one form of ID must be photographic.

For further details on checking ID, Police recommend agencies view the New Zealand governments "Evidence of Identity Standards", Developed by the Department of Internal Affairs - http://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Resource-material-Evidence-of-Identity-Standard-Index

Step 3: Log in to Vetting Website

Log in to the Police Vetting website using your RealMe username and password. If you are logging in for the first time, you will be asked to enter the Police ID and Access code given to you during the registration process.

Step 4: Completing the form

Page 1: The approved Agency will complete the first page of the online form:

- Purpose of the vetting check (e.g. employee, contractor, volunteer)
- Description of the role (e.g. caregiver, cleaner, taxi-driver)
- Contact with Vulnerable group (e.g. children/youth, vulnerable adults)

Please note on page one of the form you will be asked the following question; Is this request mandatory under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 (VCA)? Depending on the role in the organisation different boxes will need to be ticked please see each role explained below:

VCA Core Worker: Core children's workers work alone with children, or have primary responsibility for, or control over, them. Examples of roles that may meet this definition are doctors, teachers, nurses, paediatricians, youth counsellors and social workers.

VCA Non – Core Worker: Non-core children's workers are workers who have regular or overnight contact with children, without a parent or guardian being present. Examples of roles that may meet this definition are: non-teaching school workers, general hospital workers and many social and health workers.

Page 2: The Approved Agency will complete the second page of the form:

The Approved Agency's authorised representative will sign and date the consent form to confirm that the information on the form is completed correctly.

Step 5: Enter Applicants Details

Click "New Application" and enter all the information from the consent form (page 3 and 4) into the required fields.

Vetting Criteria Sheet

- If an applicant role predominantly involves the care and protection of a child, or youth (aged 16 or under) then they must be vetted under the **Exception to Clean Slate** vetting criteria.
- If an applicant's role predominantly involved the delivery of education, to children or youth's then they must be vetted under the **Exception to Clean Slate** vetting criteria.
- Indicate whether the vetting request is mandatory under the VCA or is an optional Police Vet.
- If the request is mandatory under the VCA, indicate whether the request is for core or non-core worker.

Please note the NZ Police vetting Service cannot provide any guidance whether requests are subject to the VCA.

Step 6: Submit the Application

Click "Submit"

After the information has been entered and acknowledged, the vetting application data will be fed into the QueryME Police Vetting system and processing will begin.

6. What happens after you have submitted a vetting application?

A record of your vetting request will display on your agencies homepage on the external website upon logging in via RealMe.

Once your request has been processed, an email will be sent to your main contact's address letting you know that there are no results to release or it will direct you to the website to download a PDF containing the results.

Any results will be available to download from the website for two months following their release.

An agency is expected to discuss the vetting results with the person vetted. This provides them with an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the information, and/or to explain aspects if necessary.

How long does it take to get the results?

The Police vetting service level agreement states the return policy is 20 working days. Refer to the Approved Agency Agreement.

What does a Police Vet bring up?

Information released by Police about the person being vetted may include:

- Conviction history
- Driving demerit points or suspension of licence
- Family violence information
- Any interaction with Police, including as a victim

- Information about violent or sexual behaviour that did not result in a conviction. Minimal information about the behaviour may be released or an electronic 'red stamp' may be placed on the request. Electronic 'red stamps' recommend that vetted individuals do not have unsupervised access to children, older people or other vulnerable members of society. A 'red stamp' is issued if disclosing information would breach a Court order or be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law.

7. Handling vetting information

Communication to an agency by Police will only be sent to the designated contact email address provided by the requesting agency, as part of the registration process.

The personal data collected for vetting applications has a Government security classification 'In Confidence'. The agency must establish security procedures to protect the confidential information and any Police material they hold.

Information supplied by Police must be securely destroyed, or deleted if stored electronically, once it is no longer required for employment purposes. If the information needs to be kept for any audit purpose, the person being vetted must be made aware of this **before** consenting to the vetting application.

Potential employees or volunteers must be given the chance to see any personal information provided by Police and to correct this if necessary. A correction may be sought by contacting the [Police Vetting Service](#).