

APPENDIX H **Police Vetting**

*The following information is adapted from the New Zealand Police website  
[www.police.govt.nz/service/vetting/guidelines.html](http://www.police.govt.nz/service/vetting/guidelines.html)*

**Purpose of Police vetting:**

Carried out for approved organisations, vetting is about protecting the more vulnerable members of society (children, older people and those with special needs). It aims to minimise the likelihood that they are put at risk by individuals who have displayed behaviour that could be detrimental to others' safety and wellbeing.

**What is Police vetting?**

Conducted by the Police Licensing & Vetting Service Centre, vetting uses two computer-based checks to search for information about an individual:

1. The Law Enforcement System (formerly called 'Wanganui Computer') provides a list of criminal and driving records. Minor traffic infringements are not included in results e.g. parking tickets; and
2. A search of other information held by police, including behaviour of a violent or sexual nature that might not, for whatever reason, have resulted in a conviction.

**IMPORTANT:** A Police vet is *not* a complete background check and should be used as part of an Organisation's own robust recruiting and screening process. It is a 'paper' check only and does not involve the Police visiting the person being vetted.

**The vetting process:**

Umbrella Organisations (e.g. dioceses, trusts, etc...) must:

1. Register as a user of the Police Vetting Service ('PVS') by writing to:

The Manager  
Licensing & Vetting Service Centre  
Office of the Police Commissioner  
PO Box 3017  
WELLINGTON

The letter should advise that the Organisation is involved in Youth and Young Adult Ministry and that registration with the PVS is required to allow them to undertake vetting of persons applying to lead and work in that ministry.

2. Use the official 'Consent to Disclosure' form to obtain Police vets:

- Once an organisation has been approved to receive vetting services, the PVS will send the appropriate documents along with clear instructions on using them.
- Applicants/potential leaders need to be made aware of the vetting process and **must** give their consent on the correct official form before vetting can occur.
- Completed consent forms should be sent to the Licensing & Vetting Service Centre for processing (see address above).

3. The PVS will process each request by:

- Marking it with a date stamp to indicate that both computer checks have been carried out, the date of processing (PVS are required to process within 20 working days), and the operator who completed the check;
- Attaching a print out of any criminal and/or driving records; and

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- Returning vetting applications to the designated person within the requesting Organisation for their decision regarding employment.

### Possible vetting results:

1. No convictions or Police record of any kind are found - Police vet is clear; or
2. Convictions and/or a Police record of a non-sexual and non-violent nature exist - Police will supply a copy of the criminal history; or
3. Convictions and/or a Police record of a violent and/or sexual nature exist, particularly involving children or young people. The Police may mark the result with a red stamp with the comment: *'Police recommend this person does not have unsupervised access to children, young people, or more vulnerable members of society.'* No other information will be supplied unless specifically requested in writing.

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### Assessing Police vetting results:

An individual's suitability remains the decision of the employer. Employers may need to consider the following when assessing the results of vetting:

- The nature of the offence and relevance to employment.
- Length of time since the crime or behaviour took place.
- Age and maturity now as compared to when the crime was committed.
- Seriousness of the crime e.g. length of sentence, use of a weapon, the circumstances at the time of violent behaviour, etc....
- Pattern of crime e.g. a short spate may indicate a 'phase' but a regular pattern may indicate continuing inappropriate behaviour.
- The proximity of the person undergoing vetting to the vulnerable person/s, e.g. are they likely to have unsupervised access to these vulnerable people?

### Recording and storing vetting information:

- Information supplied by Police **must** be destroyed once it is no longer useful for employment purposes. Burning or shredding the information ensures secure destruction.
- Details of police vetting are not to be disclosed to any staff, other than the individual tasked with handling this information and the subject of the vet.
- Applicants should be given the opportunity to view any criminal and/or driving records provided by Police and, in the interest of natural justice, have the opportunity to correct this if necessary. Corrections may be sought by writing to the PVS.
- Vetting is subject to the Privacy Act 1993 (*see Page 6*) and the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004.

