Secure Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information SOP

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Responsible Owner:
Deputy Chief Executive

Summary of Contents
This SOP sets out procedures for the use of information provided to SERC by AccessNI for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes.

Review Information (Responsible Owner):
First Created: January 2013

Last Reviewed: August 2025

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Change Type at last Review:
No/~~Minor/Significant~~ (delete as appropriate)

Approval/Noting By:
CMT: 24 November 2025

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SO116:12/13

Date of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations Screening (Section 75):

Date of Last Accessibility Screening:
February 2024

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1.0 Change History

Changes to this SOP are documented in Appendix 1 of this document. When reading electronic copies of this document, you can click here to view the change history.

2.0 Background

South Eastern Regional College (SERC) complies fully with the Access NI Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. The College undertakes to treat all applicants for positions or work placements fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

SERC is committed to equality of opportunity, following practices and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. The College ensures that no applicant, student or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.

SERC will request an Access NI Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Basic, Standard or Enhanced Disclosure or Enhanced Disclosure against barred lists is required for the position in question. Where an Access NI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post, position or work placement, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment/enrolment stage that the position/placement will be subject to a Disclosure and that SERC will request the individual being offered the position/placement to undergo an appropriate Access NI Disclosure check.

SERC agrees to abide by the following conditions in relation to all Disclosure information as described in Access NI Code of Practice.

3.0 Scope

This SOP applies to all staff and work placement students.

4.0 Procedure

SERC will ensure that:

- Disclosure information is not passed to persons who are not authorised to receive it under section 124 of Part V of the Police Act;
- Disclosure information is available only to those in the College who need to have access in the course of their duties;
- Disclosures or a record of Disclosure information are not retained for longer than is required for the particular purpose. This will be no longer than 90 days after the date on which relevant decisions have been taken; or after the date on which any dispute about the accuracy of the Disclosure information has been resolved. This period will only be exceeded in very exceptional circumstances which justify retention for a longer period;

- All sensitive and personal Disclosure information is stored when not in use in a locked and non-portable container in a secure environment;
- It co-operates with AccessNI to undertake assurance checks as to the proper use and safekeeping of Disclosure information; and
- It reports to AccessNI any suspected malpractice in relation to this policy or any suspected offence concerning the handling or storage of Disclosure information.

5.0 Communication Plan

This procedure will be placed on the SERC Intranet and will be available to all staff and students.

6.0 Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually, or when the need for change has been identified.

Appendix 1: Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Detail
1.0	February 2024	Transferred to new Accessibility Template
1.1	October 2024	Changed to reflect new structure
		Updated to reflect recommendations from Access NI Audit Updated to reflect communication channels
1.2	November 2024	Cover sheet updated and review changed to annually
1.3	August 2025	Reviewed and no changes necessary