



Working with Children Check

Information kit



Government of South Australia
Department of Human Services

Disclaimer

The material in this information kit is a general guide only.

It is not legal advice. It does not supersede the responsibility of any organisation or individual to make sure they adhere to the new screening laws.

The information in the kit may change without notice.

Changes to screening

South Australia has introduced stronger, more effective, and transparent screening laws for people working or volunteering with children.

The new laws mean that everyone working or volunteering with children must have a Working with Children Check.

The changes were recommended as part of South Australian and federal royal commissions, to help keep children safe in our communities.

Introduced on 1 July 2019, the new Working with Children Check (WWCC) replaces the previous system, where people could have either a Department of Human Services (DHS) child-related employment screening, or a National Police Certificate assessed by their employer/volunteer-involving organisation.

Key changes include:

- WWCCs replace all other types of child-related employment screening checks.
- people can apply for their own WWCC, to help them be job-ready.
- organisations can no longer use National Police Certificates for people working or volunteering with children. Only the South Australian Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit can do a WWCC.

- a WWCC is valid for five years and is portable across organisations and roles in South Australia.

There are transitional arrangements in place to make it easier for people to move to the new scheme.

- All current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening clearances are recognised as WWCCs under the law, until they expire.
- Certain industries have staggered entry times to the new scheme, to help them transition smoothly.
- If you have previously relied on a National Police Certificate assessed by your employer to work or volunteer with children, you must get a Working with Children Check by 1 July 2020.

About this kit

This kit is for South Australian government agencies, industry sectors, peak bodies and organisations that have members, employees or volunteers that work with children.

The first section of the kit includes detailed information about the new WWCC, to help you understand what your organisation, employees and volunteers need to do to meet requirements of the new screening laws, and to help you answer their questions.

The second section of the kit includes a variety of communication tools you can share with your workers, volunteers or stakeholders. Tools include:

- key messages
- newsletter/website editorial
- social media graphics and suggested content
- infographic.

Download the communications tools

You can [download](#) the visual communications tools in this kit.



If you would like any of the tools tailored for your audience, e.g. using specific images, please email wwcc@sa.gov.au.

Community education

Throughout 2019, the DHS Screening Unit undertook an extensive education campaign with the community and industry groups. It targeted specific sectors that needed to move to the new check, to help them transition smoothly. This included an advertising campaign and various information sessions.

In the first half of 2020, the focus of communication and engagement activities is to ensure those people who have previously used a National Police Certificate assessed by their organisation get a WWCC by 1 July 2020.

Keep up to date

 Visit screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

Follow us on social media – we're on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at:

   /HumanServicesSA

Contact the DHS Screening Unit

Business hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Telephone: 1300 321 592

WWCC email: wwcc@sa.gov.au

General enquiries email:
DHSscreeningunit@sa.gov.au

The DHS Screening Unit website (screening.sa.gov.au) includes information about:

- who needs a WWCC
- how to apply for a WWCC
- the WWCC screening process
- information assessed as part of WWCC
- checking progress of an application
- legislation and policies.

Questions and answers

The information in this section aims to give you some background detail about the changes, and help you answer any questions your staff or volunteers may ask. If you have any questions that aren't answered here, please email us at wwcc@sa.gov.au

In this section

- The law
- About WWCCs
- Who needs a WWCC?
- WWCC application process
- Organisations
- Volunteers
- National Disability Insurance Scheme

The law

What is the law?

People working or volunteering with children in South Australia must, by law, have a valid WWCC.

Why make a different check for working or volunteering with children?

The WWCC was introduced to help keep children safe in our communities. The change is part of the Government of South Australia's response to recommendations in the [Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) and the South Australian [Child Protection Systems Royal Commission](#) (also known as the Nyland Report).

What legislation directs the new screening laws?

The requirement to have a WWCC is covered by the following legislation:

- [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016](#) (the Prohibited Persons Act)
- [Children's Protection Law Reform \(Transitional Arrangements and Related Amendments\) Act 2017](#) (the Transition Act)
- [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Regulations 2019](#)

What are the transition arrangements?

- People who have a current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening will be able to keep using it until it expires. They can apply for a WWCC up to six months before their current screening expires.
- People who have a National Police Certificate assessed by their organisation and use it to work or volunteer with children have until 1 July 2020 to get a WWCC.
- Emergency services workers (such as SAMFS, SASES, SACFS and SAAS) have until 1 July 2022 to get a WWCC.
- People who have a professional registration and work with children but **don't** have a current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening must get a WWCC before they renew their current professional registration.
- People who have a professional registration and work with children but **do** have a current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening, can keep using it until expires. Then apply for a WWCC.

This includes:

- teachers
- health practitioners
- passenger transport services workers
- approved foster parents or people licenced as a foster carer agency.

Transition periods by role type

Workers or volunteers with a current, valid child-related DHS/DCSI employment screening

Can be used until it expires, then they must get a WWCC.

Workers or volunteers with a National Police Certificate assessed by their organisation

Must get a WWCC by 1 July 2020.

Emergency services workers (e.g. MFS, SES, CFS, SAAS) who have regular contact with children

Must get a WWCC by 1 July 2022.

Registered teachers

Will be notified to get a WWCC before their current teacher registration expires.

Transition period will roll over three years (e.g. January 2020, January 2021, January 2022).

Registered health practitioners providing services to children

Foster parents who have a child-related employment screening

Foster carers must get a WWCC before their current period of approval as an approved carer expires or their child-related employment screening expires.

People who are licenced as a foster care agency and have a child-related employment screening

People licenced as a foster care agency must get a WWCC before the current period of their licence as a foster care agency expires or their child-related employment screening expires.

People with a licence to maintain a children's residential facility and have a child-related employment screening

People with a licence to maintain a children's residential facility must get a WWCC before the current period of their licence expires or their child-related employment screening expires.

Persons employed in a training centre and have a child-related employment screening

People employed in training centres must get a WWCC before their child-related employment screening expires.

Passenger transport services workers

Passenger transport workers who work with children must get a WWCC before their current transport accreditation or their child-related employment screening expires.

What is illegal when it comes to working with children?

Some work-types that didn't require checks to work with children under the old laws may now need a Working with Children Check.

It is an offence to:

- work or volunteer in a child-related role without a Working with Children Check
- work or volunteer in a child-related role if a person is 'prohibited from working with children'
- employ a person or volunteer for a child-related role who doesn't have a valid Working with Children Check, or is prohibited from working with children.

Offences carry fines of up to \$120,000 and/or prison sentence.

About WWCCs

What are the main differences between existing child-related employment screening and a WWCC?

- People can apply for their own WWCC, to help them be job-ready. Previously, child-related employment screening applications had to be started by an organisation.
- A WWCC is valid for five years, whereas a child-related employment screening was valid for three years.

- Organisations can no longer do background screening checks of workers and volunteers. Only the (DHS) Screening Unit can do a WWCC.
- It is a criminal offence to work or volunteer with children without a WWCC. It is also an offence to employ a person or volunteer who doesn't have a WWCC or is prohibited from working with children.

How long is a WWCC valid?

A WWCC is valid for five years (up from three).

What if someone gets a WWCC and then commits an offence?

The DHS Screening Unit continuously monitors information that may affect a person's WWCC status. The system helps reduce the risk of harm to children.

The DHS Screening Unit receives information from a range of databases, which is automatically searched for any new information relevant to a person's WWCC status. This includes South Australian criminal history and child protection information.

If the new information means a person poses a risk to children, their status will change to **prohibited from working or volunteering with children**. The DHS Screening Unit will advise the person and organisation(s) that has verified the person works or volunteers with them, in writing.

Who needs a WWCC?

Who must have a WWCC?

People need a WWCC if they are in a 'prescribed position'. This includes:

- in paid or volunteering roles where it is reasonably foreseeable that they will work with children

Who does not need a WWCC?

A person does not need a WWCC if they:

- a member of SA Police or the Australian Federal Police
- employ or supervise children in a workplace, unless the work is child-related (e.g. managing a fast food restaurant that employs people under 18)
- work in the same capacity as a child (e.g. working at a checkout in a supermarket that also hires people under 18 in the same type of role)
- don't reasonably believe they will work with children for more than seven days (consecutive or not) in a calendar year*
*The seven day exclusion does not apply if the person is involved with an overnight activity (e.g. school camp), or has close contact with children with disability.
- are a parent or guardian volunteering with their own child (e.g. at school) and do not have close personal contact with other children, or participate in an organised overnight event (e.g. a school camp)
- live interstate, have a current child-related check from their home state, and are working at an organised event in South Australia lasting no more than 10 consecutive days
- are under the age of 14.

Does the person (e.g. the employee or volunteer) have a current check?

- If the person has a **current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening**, they can keep using it until it expires. They can apply for a WWCC up to six months before their current screening expires.
- If the person has previously relied on a **National Police Certificate** assessed by their employer to work or volunteer with children, they must get a Working with Children Check by 1 July 2020.
- People who have a professional registration and work with children but **don't** have a current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening must get a WWCC before they renew their current professional registration.
- People who have a professional registration and work with children but **do** have a current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening, can keep using it until expires. Then apply for a WWCC. This includes:
 - teachers
 - health practitioners
 - passenger transport services workers
 - approved foster parents or people licenced as a foster carer agency.

How can someone find out if they have a current check?

DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening clearances are valid for three years. If a person has previously had a screening clearance, they will have received a letter notifying them of the outcome. If they do not have a copy of the letter, an organisation can check if a clearance is still valid via the DHS Screening Unit portal at screening.sa.gov.au.

A National Police Certificate assessed by an organisation is a point-in-time check of someone's criminal history; as such, it does not have a set end date. If a person is currently relying on a **National Police Certificate** for this work, they must get a WWCC by 1 July 2020.

Do teachers need a WWCC?

Under the Prohibited Persons Act, teachers are no longer exempt from worker screening and will be required to have a WWCC.

Teachers must get a WWCC before they renew their teacher registration. They can use their current child-related employment clearance until it expires. Then they need a WWCC. The WWCC for teachers is in addition to a National Police Certificate assessed by the Teacher Registration Board.

Do all health professionals need a WWCC?

Anyone who works with children in a health service for children needs a WWCC.

WWCC application process

How does someone get a WWCC?

People can apply online for a WWCC at screening.sa.gov.au

How long does it take to get a WWCC?

The Screening Unit has implemented a variety of measures to improve timely finalisation of applications since the introduction of the WWCC and process most applications within a month. However, some applications can take longer if there is a lot of background information to assess or the information is complex.

Processing can take longer if:

- the person has relevant criminal history
- other agencies (e.g. police, other government departments) or individual applicants take a long time to provide information to the DHS Screening Unit.

To avoid delays:

- don't leave an application until the last minute – if applying for a WWCC allow at least six weeks for processing
- ensure the information provided in the application is accurate and complete
- encourage applicants to check email regularly, in case the DHS Screening Unit needs more information about the application.

What information is assessed for a WWCC?

The DHS Screening Unit assesses national criminal history, South Australian child protection information, and disciplinary and misconduct information.

Are there any offences that mean someone will automatically be prohibited from working or volunteering with children?

People who have been prohibited from working with children in another state or territory or have been convicted of a 'prescribed offence' where the victim is a child will be automatically prohibited from working with children. A prescribed offence may include murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, incest or rape.

What does a WWCC cost?

The state government determines the cost of government services, including screening, each financial year. During 2019-20, a working with children check is \$113.30 per person, or \$62.15 students.

If a WWCC is only for volunteer work, it will continue to be free, just like other types of screening checks for volunteers.

All current screening fees are published on the DHS Screening Unit website, screening.sa.gov.au

Who pays for a WWCC?

People will need to pay for their own WWCC, unless the organisation they're working for chooses to pay for it. People are encouraged to confirm with their organisation who is paying before submitting an application, as there are no refunds.

Payments can be made online via credit card or pre-paid credit card. Organisations that have an account with the DHS Screening Unit can pay via invoice.

How can someone check the status of a WWCC?

From 1 July 2019, when a person applies for a WWCC, they will be assigned a unique identification number as part of the application process. They can use this number to search the DHS Screening Unit database in future, or provide this number to organisations who want to search the DHS Screening Unit database.

There is no letter, card or certificate associated with a WWCC.

The DHS Screening Unit will notify people when their WWCC is reaching its five-year expiry date and they need to renew it.

Organisations

Are organisations obliged to do anything under the law?

- Before engaging a person, organisations must ensure the potential employee or volunteer has a valid WWCC. They must also provide certain information, such as their contact details, to the DHS Screening Unit.
- Where an organisation continues to engage a person, they must ensure their WWCC remains current at all times.
- Organisations must notify the DHS Screening Unit of certain information about a person, e.g. if the organisation becomes aware of criminal charges relating to an employee or volunteer, or if a person is prohibited from working with children in another state or territory. They can report this information by logging into the DHS Screening Unit online portal.
- Organisations need to verify their employees or volunteers with a

WWCC via the DHS Screening Unit online portal. Multiple organisations can link to a person. If the person's WWCC status changes, organisations that have verified the person will be notified.

Offences will apply where organisations fail to meet these obligations.

Does the DHS Screening Unit send reminders to organisations?

If an organisation has verified their link to a person via the DHS Screening Unit portal, they will be notified when the person is reaching the five-year expiry date of their WWCC.

Volunteers

Do volunteers have to pay for WWCCs?

If a WWCC is only being used for volunteering purposes, the volunteer will receive it for free.

A volunteer screening cannot be used for paid employment or work placements. If a person also needs a WWCC for paid employment (e.g. they work with children for more than seven days in a calendar year), they will need to pay for a WWCC.

Will volunteer-involving organisations still be able to access VOAN after 1 July 2019?

From 1 July 2019, volunteer-involving organisations will still be able to access free National Police Certificates through SA Police.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Will disability/NDIS worker screening be recognised as a WWCC?

When NDIS worker screening starts, people wanting to work with children with disability will need a WWCC **as well as** an NDIS worker screening.

This meets national requirements of NDIS worker checks that all jurisdictions are implementing.

There are some differences in the information assessed for the two checks. Specifically, NDIS Commission information is currently only available for risk assessments of NDIS worker checks.

The DHS Screening Unit will streamline application processes for people who need both checks.

Communication tools



You can [download](#) the visual communications toolkit.

If you would like any of the tools tailored for your audience, e.g. using specific images, please email wwcc@sa.gov.au



Key messages

Please use these key messages consistently across your communication materials and channels when you're helping staff and volunteers who work with children to understand changes to screening laws.

- South Australia has introduced stronger, transparent and more effective screening laws for people working or volunteering with children.
- People working or volunteering with children in South Australia must, by law, have a valid WWCC.
- Under the new law, people who have a current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening will be able to keep using it until it expires. People can apply for a working with children check up to six months before their child-related employment screening expires.
- People who have a National Police Certificate assessed by their organisation and use it to work or volunteer with children, have until 1 July 2020 to get a Working with Children Check.
- Certain industries will have staggered entry times to the new scheme, to help them transition smoothly.
- A working with children check is valid for five years and is portable across roles and organisations in South Australia.
- Working with children checks replace all other types of child-related employment screening checks.
- Working with children checks are free for people who are only using them for volunteering work.
- People can apply for their own working with children check, to help them be job-ready.
- Organisations can no longer do background screening checks for employees and volunteers who work with children.
- The South Australian Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit is the only service that can do a working with children check.
- A working with children check is an assessment of a person's prior behaviour. It doesn't determine a person's suitability to work with children – organisations still need to decide if a potential employee or volunteer is a good fit for the role.
- People who apply for a working with children check will be given a unique identification number that organisations can use to find out their check status. There is no letter, card or certificate associated with a working with children check.
- The working with children check is being introduced to help keep children safe in our communities. The change is part of the Government of South Australia's response to recommendations in the [Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) and the South Australian [Child Protection Systems Royal Commission](#) (also known as the Nyland Report).

Newsletter/website editorial

You can publish this editorial through internal communications, newsletters and other communications with your staff, workers, members and volunteers.

Deadline for NPC transition period nearing

Stronger, more effective and transparent screening laws for people working or volunteering with children were introduced on 1 July 2019 in South Australia.

The laws were recommended as part of the federal and South Australian royal commissions, to help keep children safe in our communities.

The laws mean that everyone working or volunteering with children must have a Working with Children Check (WWCC).

A 12-month transition period was given to most people affected by the new laws – such as those with a National Police Certificate assessed by their employer – to allow them to enter the new WWCC scheme smoothly. This transition period is now ending for those who rely on a National Police Certificate to work with children. They must get a WWCC by 1 July 2020.

Other transitional periods are still in place to make it easier for people to move into the new scheme, such as emergency services workers.

For more information, visit the DHS Screening Unit website screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc.

Social media graphics and content

The Department of Human Services is promoting Working with Children Checks via /HumanServicesSA on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

You can share these posts or, if you prefer, spread the word through your own social media channels using the following graphics and messages.

Facebook and Twitter graphics



Do you work or volunteer with children?

You can **no longer** use a National Police Certificate for this work and must get a Working with Children Check by 1 July 2020

Apply now
screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

Government of South Australia
Department of Human Services



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Government of South Australia
Department of Human Services

Messages

Long form – Facebook and Twitter

- Everyone who works or volunteers with children must have a Working with Children Check. It's about helping to keep children safe in our communities.

Find out more about the new Working with Children Check and when to apply at screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

- Do you need a Working with Children Check?

Everyone who works or volunteers with children must have a Working with Children Check. It's about helping to keep children safe in our communities.

Find out more about the new Working with Children Check and when to apply at screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

- Even if you've had a police check, you'll need a new check if you want to work or volunteer with children in SA.

Everyone who works or volunteers with children must have a working with children check. It's about helping to keep children safe in our communities. You can use a National Police Certificate assessed by your organisation until 1 July 2020, but you'll need the new check before that time.

Find out how to get the new working with children check and when to apply at screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

- What do sports coaches, bus drivers, party entertainers, ministers of religion and emergency workers have in common? Hint: it's got nothing to do with distinctive outfits.

Everyone who works or volunteers with children must, by law have a valid check. It's about helping to keep children safe in our communities.

Find out more about the Working with Children Check and when to apply at screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

Twitter

- Everyone working or volunteering with children, must have a Working with Children Check. Check screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc
- Are you working or volunteering with children?
Check whether you need the Working with Children Check. screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc
- Everyone working or volunteering with children, must, by law, have a working with children check. Check screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

- If you have a child-related employment check, you can use it until it expires. Then you need a working with children check. Find out more: screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc
- If you're volunteering or working with kids, Working with Children Checks apply. Find out how to get the check and when to apply at screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc
- If you use a National Police Certificate assessed by your organisation to work or volunteer with children, you must get a Working with Children Check by 1 July 2020. Apply now. screening.sa.gov.au/wwcc

Infographic

You can print this infographic as A3 or A4 poster, or share it digitally across your communication channels.

Working with Children Checks



People who work or volunteer with children in South Australia need a Working with Children Check



Children's residential or protection services



Religious organisations



Child minding services



Clubs and associations



Education and training



Party entertainers



Health and allied services



Emergency services



Transport services



Coaching and tuition

What sort of check do you have?



I have a current DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening

You can keep using it until it expires; then you must get a Working with Children Check



I have a current National Police Certificate assessed by my organisation

Under the new law, you can use it until 1 July 2020; then you must get a Working with Children Check



I have a current professional registration

Teachers, health service, and transport service workers who work with children must get a Working with Children Check before they renew their current professional registration



I don't have a current check

Under the law, you can't work or volunteer with children unless you have a valid check. You must get a Working with Children Check.

What's the difference?

DHS child-related employment screening
(Before 1 July 2019)



Valid for 3 years



Organisation starts the application

Working with Children Check
(After 1 July 2019)



Valid for 5 years



Do your own application

National Police Certificate
(After 1 July 2020)



Not valid for working or volunteering with children

The law



Screening Unit

The Department of Human Services Screening Unit is the **only** service that can conduct Working with Children Checks in South Australia



It is illegal to:

- Work or volunteer with children without a valid Working with Children Check
- Employ a person or volunteer who doesn't have a Working with Children Check, or is prohibited from working with children

Get ready



Don't leave it to the last minute – allow at least six weeks to process your application
If you are renewing a current DHS screening, you can submit a new application up to six months before your current one expires



Talk to your employer about getting a Working with Children Check or apply for a check directly.

Go to: www.screening.sa.gov.au



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