

Carers Register Fact Sheet 2

Information for carers and household members: What data is recorded?

October 2015

About the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG)

The OCG is an independent, statutory authority committed to delivering better outcomes for children and young people in supported and statutory out-of-home care (OOHC). The OCG is a regulator - not a provider of care services.

The OCG accredits and monitors the performance of agencies that arrange statutory and supported OOHC and adoption services. The OCG administers the Carers Register, a database of persons authorised to provide or who apply to provide statutory or supported OOHC in NSW. Household members are also recorded on this database.

The OCG registers and monitors agencies that provide, arrange or supervise voluntary OOHC.

The Carers Register

The Carers Register is a secure, restricted access system designed to improve the authorisation process by supporting better information sharing between designated agencies.

It does not replace the detailed systems and processes used by designated agencies to assess carer applicants and their household members, and to authorise suitable individuals as authorised carers.

Whose information is recorded on the Carers Register?

The Carers Register holds information about:

- carer applicants (individuals who apply to a designated agency to become authorised carers)
- authorised carers (individuals authorised by a designated agency to provide statutory or supported OOHC, including those dually authorised as foster carers and adoptive parents)
- household members (adults, young people and children regularly living in a carer's home or residing in a dwelling that adjoins the home, e.g. a caravan or granny flat).

Children and young people in statutory, supported or voluntary OOHC are **not** recorded on the Carers Register. However, if they continue to reside in a carer's home after they turn 18 years of age, they will require a current NSW Working With Children Check clearance.

What information is held on the Carers Register?

The Carers Register records identification information about carer applicants and authorised carers, and their household members including their names, previous names, gender, date of birth, and whether they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Recorded household information includes the residential address, a list of all persons living in the home and the outcome of a home inspection. Associations between carers and household members are recorded, including movements into (and out of) carer households.

Carers and household members are also asked whether they have had any association with any other designated agency in NSW or any other Australian state or territory.

A carer's application and authorisation history, including application refusals and any cancellation or suspension of authorisation is recorded on the Carers Register.

For more information, see the Carers Register fact sheet: Probity and suitability checks for carers and household members.

Outcome of compulsory probity and suitability checks

The Carers Register records the outcomes of carer applicant and household member checks and assessments and does not permit a carer to be fully authorised until the designated agency certifies that all required checks and assessments have been satisfactorily completed.

The Carers Register does not hold details of each probity and suitability check, only the outcome (eg satisfactory or unsatisfactory).

However, designated agencies maintain records of all details and these may be shared with other designated agencies during an 'other designated agency check'.

A designated agency is required to contact other designated agencies regarding a carer applicant or household member who is known to a current or has had a previous association with the other designated agency. The purpose of this check is to ensure information relevant to the assessment of carer applicants is shared between designated agencies.

Reportable allegation information

The Carers Register shows when a reportable allegation is currently being investigated by an agency, or when the Office of the Children's Guardian has provided a direction to the agency that the allegation should not be finalised on the Register. In addition, a permanent record of reportable allegations is maintained where a designated agency determines that there may be ongoing risks that relate to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child in out-of-home care.

The Carers Register records the date and status of the allegation date but does not record the details of the allegation. Information relating to finalised reportable allegations (and some current reportable allegations), may be shared with other agencies as part of the 'other designated agency check'.

Recording carer and carer applicant information

Designated agencies are required to inform authorised carers and their household members; and carer applicants and their household members that by law, their information must be entered into the Carers Register.

Consent is not required from authorised carers and their household members for their information to be entered into the Carers Register, but designated agencies must inform them of what information will be recorded.

Carer applicants and household members are not obliged to give consent but their application for authorisation will not proceed without it.

Who has access to Carers Register information?

A designated agency only has access to Carers Register information about its own carers and household members but is able to access any Carers Register history of an individual who applies to the agency for authorisation as a carer or becomes a household member (of a carer applicant or authorised carer).

The OCG and Department of Communities and Justice have access to Carers Register information. The NSW Ombudsman, law enforcement, investigative, and child protection bodies in other jurisdictions may be provided with information held in the Carers Register.

Carer applicants, authorised and former carers, and their household members can access information about themselves held on the Carers Register including information held about their children. There is a requirement to consult the Office of the Children's Guardian before information concerning unfinalised investigations into reportable allegations and some reportable conduct matters is disclosed.

Who enters and updates information in the Carers Register?

The designated agency that authorises a carer is responsible for entering carer application and authorisation information on to the Carers Register. The OCG will maintain the Carers Register in accordance with the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* and the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012.

More information

Information about the Carers Register is available from the OCG's website at www.ocg.nsw.gov.au. If you have a question, please email carers-register@ocg.nsw.gov.au

For information about the OCG's other regulatory responsibilities, including the Working With Children Check, Child Safe Organisations, Reportable Conduct Scheme, Statutory and Voluntary Out-of-Home Care, and Adoption, please visit www.ocg.nsw.gov.au

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