

Child Safe Recruitment and the Working with Children Check

A handbook for
child-related organisations



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Child safe recruitment, supervision and training

A high-angle photograph of a child's hands and arms reaching for a red LEGO brick held by an adult's hand. The child is wearing a yellow shirt and blue jeans. The background is a solid blue surface. In the bottom left corner, there is a large white letter 'A'.

A



Overview

This handbook explains how an employer can make sure they select and support the most suitable staff to work with children and young people.

Part A looks at the child safe recruitment process. It explores how the Child Safe Standards can support employers to find, supervise and train staff. Part B looks at their obligations to ensure their staff have a Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance. This means they will be meeting their legal obligations under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*.

Organisations should have a child-focused recruitment policy with procedures in place to help ensure that adults working with children align with the organisation's intention to be child safe.

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) recognises it may be easier for organisations that pay their staff to find, supervise and train them. It can be difficult to implement a recruitment practice for community groups reliant on volunteers. This handbook will help all organisations understand what they can do to ensure people who volunteer with children are supported as much as possible to create a child safe environment.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this handbook is for guidance purposes only. Please always refer to the appropriate legislation to ensure you are meeting your child safe legal requirements and Fair Work obligations in NSW.

Glossary

APP number	If the Children's Guardian is still processing an application, a worker or volunteer will be issued with an APP number. The <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</i> allows a worker or volunteer to work with children while their application is processed, provided they have a current APP number. Like the WWC number, the APP number must be verified to ensure the employer receives up-to-date information about whether the staff member continues to be permitted to work with children.
Automatic bar	An automatic determination that a worker is not permitted to work with children because they have convictions or pending charges for offences listed in Schedule 2 of the <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</i> . It is an offence for them to be in a child-related role.
Decision bar	A worker subject to risk assessment may have their WWCC application refused, or their WWCC clearance cancelled, if the Children's Guardian determines they pose a risk to the safety of children. We can only inform you of this if you have verified them using the OCG's online portal. If a person is barred it means they cannot legally work in a child-related position.
Clearance	The Children's Guardian must grant a WWCC clearance unless they are satisfied the worker poses a risk to children or has Schedule 2 records. When a worker is granted a WWCC clearance, they will be given a WWC number that you need to verify. A clearance lasts for five years unless cancelled or surrendered.
Contractor	See 'Worker'.
Employee	See 'Worker'.
Employer portal	The OCG's database where employers can verify either a worker or volunteer's APP or WWC number.
Employer registration	A unique, password protected registration number employers use to verify the WWC and APP numbers of their workers. Once verified, the worker is linked to that employer, which then allows the OCG to inform the employer if the worker is cleared or barred from child-related work.
Interim bar	If the Children's Guardian is of the opinion a worker poses a likely risk to the safety of children if they engage in child-related work, an interim bar will be imposed while a risk assessment takes place. This is a temporary bar to prevent the worker from engaging in child-related work until a risk assessment has been completed. It is an offence for them to be in a child-related role while subject to an interim bar.

National criminal history check	A complete background police check, which includes all criminal proceedings regardless of court outcomes.
Renewal	If a worker has a WWCC clearance, it will last five years. Towards the end of this period the worker must reapply for a clearance if they intend to continue working with children. Once the new clearance is obtained a new WWC number will be issued and this must be verified by their employer(s).
Risk assessment	The process where the OCG assesses an applicant's or clearance holder's relevant records to determine whether they should be permitted to work with, or continue working with, children. The process can take some time while relevant records are obtained. A staff member can work with children while they are being risk assessed unless the OCG has imposed an interim bar. This is why it is important to verify.
Staff	In this handbook staff refers to both paid and unpaid workers.
Subcontractor	See 'Worker'.
Verification	The process where employers (including parents engaging one-on-one services for their children such as tutors or trainers) are able to check the status of WWC or APP numbers online. It also links the worker to the employer so the OCG can contact the employer if the status of the worker's WWCC clearance changes.
Volunteer	See 'Worker'.
Worker	In this handbook a worker is considered to be a person in a child-related role who is engaged as a volunteer, paid employee, contractor or subcontractor.
Working with Children Check (WWCC)	An OCG assessment of relevant information to determine whether a person is permitted, or not permitted, to be in child-related work.
Workplace records	Records that relate to misconduct with or in the presence of a child or children while in the workplace. (The behaviours may or may not have escalated to criminal charges.) This includes, but is not limited to, reportable conduct notifications and findings reported to the OCG as required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
WWC number	A number issued to a worker who has received a clearance to work with children. The details on the WWCC need to match with the person's identity documents. The WWC number lasts five years and must be verified by the employer. Why this is important is discussed later in this handbook.



Human resources and the Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards are designed to change organisational culture and embed child safety in everyday thinking and practice.

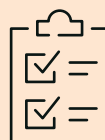
An important part of a child safe culture is hiring and keeping workers who prioritise child safety. It's a culture that also recognises the risks to child safety, and to the organisation more broadly, of hiring workers who don't share child safe values.

By engaging workers who share a vision where child safety is prioritised, and by enhancing the skills of their existing staff, organisations can create, maintain and improve their child safe environments. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards can guide them to achieve both of these objectives. Organisations should ensure their child safe practices are guided by all 10 Child Safe Standards.

For the purposes of this handbook two standards are particularly relevant.



Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported



Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training



We thought we could rely on the Working with Children Check to ensure our kids were safe... however, the more we learned, the more we realised there is so much more to keeping children safe than the Check.

– stakeholder feedback

The table below describes how each Standard is relevant to recruiting and training adults who work with children.

Child Safe Standard	Application to managing staff
 <p>Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture</p>	<p>How managing staff applies to the Standard</p> <p>Leaders create an organisation that values children and attracts workers whose values align with the organisation's intention to keep children safe. Good leaders should recognise the cost and implications of hiring the wrong people, and should comply in particular with Standards 5 and 7 when it comes to recruitment and the ongoing support of staff. A robust recruitment process that encourages suitable people, rather than unsuitable people, to work with them can help. Leaders should also recognise the value of ensuring their workforce is highly skilled and up-to-date with contemporary best practice child safe procedures so children can continue to thrive and be kept safe from harm and abuse.</p> <p>If it's not applied</p> <p>When leaders don't champion a child safe approach to recruitment and fail to supervise and train their staff, they risk engaging adults who may want to harm children, or who lack the skills to behave appropriately around them. In these environments, children are not safe.</p> <p>If it's applied</p> <p>Where leaders support the recruitment of safe and suitable adults to work with children, they engage suitable staff. Then, with continual governance, supervision and training, they ensure staff know what is required of them and understand what consequences will apply if they fail to meet the expectations of their engagement.</p>
 <p>Standard 2: Children participate in decisions that affect them and are taken seriously</p>	<p>How managing staff applies to this Standard</p> <p>Staff should demonstrate they understand the importance of children's empowerment and participation. Children and young people should be given information about children's rights and ongoing opportunities to provide feedback on the adults who work with them. For example, on what qualities they like to see in educators, youth leaders and coaches.</p> <p>If it's not applied</p> <p>If children feel less confident to report situations where they feel worried, sad or upset they are less safe.</p> <p>If it's applied</p> <p>Children are more empowered when they know they can participate, and are actively encouraged to participate, in the decisions that affect them. They are more likely to speak up if they feel unsafe and, if their opinions are sought, are also able to contribute to creating safer environments. In these situations, they are less likely to be harmed and better able to speak up about it if it does happen.</p>
 <p>Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved</p>	<p>How managing staff applies to the Standard</p> <p>Families know their children best and are more likely to recognise any changes that may indicate their children are being harmed. Staff should empower and support family and community members to report any concerns they have, as well as encourage them to contribute to creating safer environments for children.</p> <p>If it's not applied</p> <p>When staff fail to understand the importance of family and community involvement in organisations, communication between families and organisations regarding child safety concerns may not occur or may not occur in an optimal way. Where this communication doesn't occur, children are at greater risk of harm or abuse.</p> <p>If it's applied</p> <p>When information can flow between families, community members and organisations, a culture of reporting is supported. In addition, the people who know the children the most can share feedback for continual improvement of the organisation's child safe systems and processes. Where staff are trained and supported to encourage community involvement, children are safer.</p>



Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

How managing staff applies to the Standard

Children and young people are more likely to feel their needs and wants are understood when leaders champion the importance of equity and diversity. Staff should encourage children and young people to participate to the best of their ability and ensure they feel valued. Staff should be trained to understand the importance of supporting equity and diversity. Where possible, the organisation should ensure the workforce reflects the diversity of the children it provides services to.

If it's not applied

Staff need to know there are many reasons that may make some children more vulnerable to abuse, including, but not limited to, age, intellectual ability, physical ability and cultural background. Children are even more vulnerable if they're prevented from playing an active role in the organisation because staff lack the skills and ability to implement culturally safe and inclusive practices. Children are at risk if staff are unaware of these factors.

If it's applied

Staff should support and understand the importance of providing equitable opportunities for children. In these situations they are more likely to encourage changes to the environment so all children feel able to participate. Children are also likely to take a proactive role in providing input and communicating their needs.



Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported

How managing staff applies to the Standard

A robust recruitment process should be designed to assess the suitability of all adults working with children. The recruitment process should include suitable screening and reference checks, and continual oversight of the new recruits once they commence work.

If it's not applied

Failing to prioritise child safety when recruiting new staff can mean the organisation engages unsuitable workers who may not have the skills and experience required to work with children safely or who have a history of unacceptable behaviour. Children are less safe in these places.

If it's applied

Applying child safe practices to recruitment can mean some unsuitable applicants 'self-select' out of the process because they feel their inability to work safely with children is more likely to be exposed. Conducting suitable screening and reference checks as well as ongoing training and supervision minimises opportunities for harm to occur. Children are safer in environments where this occurs.



Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

How managing staff applies to the Standard

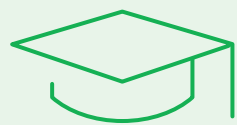
Suitable and supported staff who recognise and prioritise child safety are more likely to report abuse. Staff are supported when they are given accessible complaint handling information on what and how to report. Staff who adopt a child-focused response to complaints of abuse will listen to, and respond to, all cohorts of children, including children with physical or intellectual disabilities, from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, who are in detention, who have trauma backgrounds, who have low self-esteem or who are otherwise vulnerable.

If it's not applied

When staff do not understand what they should do to prioritise the safety of children they send a message that children are not valued or respected. This can lead to abuse becoming more prevalent because someone likely to harm children will then believe their actions will not be noticed or, if noticed, not be recognised as harm. This places children at greater risk.

If it's applied

Where staff understand what is involved in their role in keeping children safe, they proactively work to create, maintain and improve child safe environments. They make sure there are robust reporting processes in place that are accessible to all the children in their care. They understand what to do if they witness or suspect a concern. Children are safer in these environments.



Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

How managing staff applies to the Standard

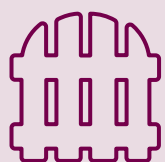
Adults who work with children and young people should be provided with information and training on how to recognise abuse and the behaviours that precede it. An induction process is important as it ensures they do have the knowledge. It helps new employees to understand their expected behaviours and learn the values of the organisation. Ongoing supervision and professional development opportunities should ensure all staff members continue to align themselves with the organisation's culture of keeping children safe.

If it's not applied

Staff who are not supported to work safely with children are less likely to recognise or respond to harm and abuse. They may not understand or prioritise how to keep children safe or know what they should do if they believe a child is at risk. They may even harm children themselves. In these environments children are at greater risk.

If it's applied

When staff are supported to understand the importance of child safety, they work to create child safe environments. They stay up-to-date with contemporary child safe best practice and are more likely to recognise and respond to incidents of harm or abuse. They understand and align their behaviours with the organisation's culture, values and policies, and follow its child safe code of conduct. Children and young people are therefore safer.



Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

How managing staff applies to the Standard

Understanding the risks of harm to children in physical and online environments is a key component of keeping them safe. Adults, children and young people should be provided with information about how to stay safe in physical and online environments. Organisations should have a risk management strategy and supporting child safe policies and codes of conduct that guide acceptable behaviour.

If it's not applied

Staff who fail to recognise the safe and unsafe spaces where adults interact with children (in both physical and online environments) may leave children exposed to an increased risk of harm. When adults are unable to identify areas of risk or are not empowered to act when they identify a risk, children are less safe.

If it's applied

Staff are aware of the risks to children in physical and online environments and work to implement protective strategies that give them more oversight of children. Staff are provided with training to understand the rules around online engagement between adults and children. They also understand the need for child safe policies, codes of conduct and procedures that reduce risk. In these environments, children are safer.



Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

How managing staff applies to the Standard

The Child Safe Standards provide a framework that organisations can apply so they are child safe. The Standards are principle-based and outcome-focused. This means that organisations can be flexible in the way they implement them, and the way they're applied may look different in other settings and organisations. Staff should be given opportunities to understand how the Standards work to keep children safe and be offered structured guidance in how to apply them. This Standard ensures an organisation's child safe policies and practices, including its recruitment policy, are continuously improved with regular reviews and updates.

If it's not applied

Organisations that do not support or train their staff to understand and apply the Standards are less likely to have a robust child safe framework. Where systems and policies do not exist to support staff to apply the Child Safe Standards, children are less safe.

If it's applied

In a child safe organisation all staff take responsibility for the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. Supporting staff to understand how the Child Safe Standards work to keep children safe means they are more likely to accept accountability for the safety of children. Staff may also feel more empowered to engage in policy review and improvement processes, further ensuring children are safer.

Child Safe Standard Application to managing staff



Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

How managing staff applies to the Standard

Staff need to understand the importance of having effective child safe policies and procedures in place to create, maintain and improve child safe environments. They need access to training for this to occur, including support while learning on the job as well as structured educational opportunities that embed the organisation's child safe practices. They need to be able to easily locate and refer to the organisation's policies and procedures.

If it's not applied

If staff do not understand the importance of child safe policies, how to access them, or why or how they should be applied, children are less safe.

If it's applied

Where staff are trained and supported to understand and follow child safe policies, the rights of children are prioritised. Training may include the development of child safe policies and risk management strategies. In places where staff understand how and why policies and procedures should be applied, children are safer.



Reflective questions

- How do the leaders in your organisation model child safe behaviour?
- How does your organisation's recruitment processes demonstrate a focus on child safety?
- How do children and young people participate in your organisation when it comes to staff selection?
- How does your organisation's workforce reflect the diversity within the community?
- What policies exist to support the recruitment of suitable staff?
- What training is provided to staff to support your organisation's child safety obligations?
- How does your organisation make staff aware of their internal and external reporting obligations, including reportable conduct?



Hiring the right people

Who are the 'right' people?

People who want to work with children must show they understand that the safety of children is the organisation's priority. Applicants should also demonstrate they maintain professional boundaries to children, parents and other staff.

Many community volunteer positions can be difficult to fill. Often the person who puts up their hand first is given the position. Organisations should, however, always apply the Child Safe Standards, regardless of whether a prospective staff member is in a paid or volunteer role.

While some organisations would cease to exist without unpaid labour, this doesn't mean those people shouldn't be subject to at least *some* child safe recruitment processes. All people who work with children should be able to demonstrate they have the skills, experience and beliefs that align with the organisation's child safe values. They should understand what child safe behaviours look like. Volunteering to work with children is a privilege, not a right.

Recruitment is an important part of a child safe organisation. Getting recruitment right can result in:

- a child safe learning environment where preventing children being harmed and abused is prioritised
- reduced staff turnover (which also reduces operating costs)
- less time spent managing underperforming staff.

Failing to recruit well can mean:

- organisations might not get the best candidate applying for, or obtaining, the role
- organisations hire the wrong person because the staff who hired them liked them and didn't select them because they demonstrated child safe skills, values and behaviours (this is known as the 'halo effect' where anything that indicates a person isn't right for the job is ignored because they seem 'nice')
- the best candidate rejects the job because the recruitment processes reflected poorly on the actual child safe objectives of the organisation.

Effective recruitment with a structured process increases your chances of finding appropriate staff who understand what it means to be child safe. The process includes the following.

<p>Before you begin</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a role description (including a child safe perspective as well as a practical one) • Decide on the selection criteria (including child safe skills and knowledge as well as practical ones) • Where possible, select a recruitment panel whose members have an understanding of child sexual abuse in organisations
<p>Formalities</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary (if not a volunteer position) • Hours • Leave • Benefits • Minimum training requirements, including around what it means to be a child safe organisation
<p>Advertising</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft job ad • Consider whether to use an employment agency • Promote on social media • Use your professional networks • Promote your organisation as being child safe to allow for self-selection
<p>Review applicants</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review written job applications • Short list for interview • Consider which candidates appear to prioritise child safety and how they would maintain professional boundaries with children, parents and other staff
<p>Interviews</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct interviews • Ensure you have questions on child safety • Ensure qualifications are valid • Consider psychometric assessments or skill demonstrations
<p>Checks</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference checks with previous child-related employers (ask about the candidate's attitude to child safety and how they maintained professional boundaries with children, parents and other staff) • Background screening checks (such as a verified Working with Children Check and police check)
<p>Selection</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision on successful candidate(s) • Offer of a position • Confirmation in writing/signed contract
<p>Induction</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin induction process • Ensure induction emphasises child safety



Having a child safe recruitment policy will support organisations to make the right hiring decisions so they select the most appropriate people to work with children. A robust recruitment process includes a number of steps to ensure the most appropriate people are hired.

Once an organisation engages a person, there are other things it should do to ensure their suitability to work with children – these are discussed in ‘After employment is offered’ on page 26 of this handbook.

Things to consider when recruiting:

- role descriptions meet business and child safety requirements
- candidates are assessed against consistent selection criteria at every stage
- the recruitment process complies with all relevant laws*
- the recruitment process is consistent and transparent
- privacy and confidentiality considerations are met.

Child safe organisations will have a child safe recruitment policy based on principles such as:

- respect for diversity
- ethical decision-making
- selection according to merit
- equal treatment for all
- procedural fairness.

Adherence to such a policy will not only help ensure job applicants are treated fairly but will also greatly increase an organisation’s chances of hiring and retaining the best possible people to work with children.

*These include federal and state laws, and regulations regarding employment and awards in general, as well as ones pertaining to child safety such as the *Children’s Guardian Act 2019* and the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*.



Steps to successful recruitment

Role descriptions

Developing a role description provides an opportunity to think about what the person in the role actually does.

- What will the successful applicant be required to do?
- What are the tasks involved?
- Will the position be full- or part-time?
- When will the work be done?
- Are weekends required?
- What salary will attract the best candidates?
- Are there any other benefits?
- Who will the person in the role report to?
- Who, if anyone, will report to the person in this position?
- What child safe and technical skills are required to work in the role?
- Does the position require formal qualifications?
- What are the mandatory requirements for the role? (Does the applicant need a WWCC, national police check, driver's licence or other qualifications?)
- How can the applicant show their child safe values prioritise child safety?
- How much experience will they need for this role?






Hiring managers may want to discuss the role with people who will interact with the successful candidate. What do they think the new person needs to bring to the role?

In a child-related role the description should make it clear that child safety is a priority. By making it clear how children are valued and how the successful applicant will be expected to uphold that commitment, organisations demonstrate their commitment to being child safe.

The role description is a critical document for every position. A good role description:

- describes the skills and competencies needed for it
- defines where the role fits within the organisation, including who the successful candidate will need to report to
- establishes an organisation's culture and approach to keeping children and young people safe
- is used as the basis for the employment contract
- is a valuable performance management tool
- should mention how child safety is a critical element of the role.

Good role descriptions should include more than expected duties. They should position the role within the overall child safe ambitions of the organisation. They should include the following.

Description of organisation 	<p>The organisation should describe how it values children and upholds their rights. Organisations that do this position themselves as the employer of choice for people who prioritise the safety of children and it will often deter unsuitable and unqualified applicants. Organisations should ask themselves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What impressions would potential candidates have of them as an employer?• What makes the organisation special?• What does it do well?• What is it known for?
Primary purpose of role 	<p>This is where the organisation should describe the selection criteria such as the skills, values and attributes the person should have. What traits, characteristics and behaviours will the successful candidate be expected to demonstrate? The description should include how the role contributes to the organisation's objectives.</p>
Objectives of role 	<p>Lists at least three (no more than 10) objectives of the role. It describes the intended end results or outcomes the worker is expected to meet.</p>
Duties of role 	<p>Lists the day-to-day duties the person in the role will carry out.</p>
Accountability 	<p>This section provides details on who the worker reports to. It names the positions that are responsible for the worker, including their immediate coordinator, supervisor or manager, as well as who may report to the role.</p>

Self-selection

A job ad is often the first interaction a person has with an organisation and is an opportunity to start attracting the right workers. It should encourage potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the advertised role. It should deter the wrong workers.

Essentially, role advertisements should discourage applicants who may be a risk of harm to children from engaging with an organisation on the understanding the environment is one where it is harder to offend against children and where there is an increased chance they will be caught. This is known as self-selection.

Writing job ads

Before writing a job ad it is helpful to ask:

- Would I apply for this job?
- Would it appeal to me?
- Is this an organisation I would want to work for?
- Is the advert too 'wordy' or too detailed?
- Is it too short and, if so, what's missing?
- Does it look professional (are there any spelling errors)?
- Does it contain any unlawful or discriminatory terms such as referring to age, gender or marital status?
- Does it ask the applicant to respond to particular questions?

Effective job advertisements are appealing, well written and demonstrate that child safety is a priority.

Poor job advertisement

Little Platypus Child Care – Immediate start

A position has become available in our baby room for anyone who likes to work with babies. Experience preferred but not essential. Give it a go!

Contrast the job advertisement above with the one below

Little Platypus Child Care – Early Childhood Educator

Little Platypus is a place where children grow and learn in a healthy and happy environment.

Our staff are committed to prioritising the safety and protection of children. We are an established provider of long day care in the Sydney area for over 10 years.

We are looking for a full-time, experienced early childhood educator to join a very dedicated and highly skilled team.

To be successful in this role you will need:

- to demonstrate experience working with children
- an understanding of contemporary child safe practices
- a Working with Children Check
- relevant qualifications
- current first aid, anaphylaxis and asthma certificates, or be willing to obtain them.

Little Platypus promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children. Applicants are encouraged to elaborate on any experience they may have working with children with disability. You will be required to provide a minimum of two professional referees. Visit our website for further details of the role description or contact Marie Jones on (09) 9123 4567.



When advertising a child-related role the following should be considered:

- where the role will be advertised
 - newspaper (local/national)
 - trade papers/magazines
 - local council/ local noticeboards
 - social media
- whether you'll use a recruitment agency
- if you'll use your own networks
- if you'll ask others in your organisation to use their networks
- how you'll use your organisation's website
- whether you'll advertise in colleges and universities.



A job ad is often the first interaction a person has with an organisation and is an opportunity to start attracting the right people.

Written applications

Make sure there is sufficient time to properly assess written applications. If not, there is the potential to bring in the wrong people for interviews.

Interview panels must apply the same assessment process to every applicant, even if they're a part of the organisation's current network or have been referred to it. Remember the 'halo effect'. Assessment criteria should be set to ensure the person has met them in their application prior to being selected for an interview.

Parts of the written application

Cover letter

The candidate will use this to describe their suitability for the role and may include how they align with an organisation's vision, values and culture. A well written cover letter will demonstrate a level of motivation and interest in the role. The applicant should demonstrate they have a professional and safe approach to working with children, parents and other staff members.

Suitability for position

This is where applicants describe their experience against the selection criteria (which have been identified from the role description). It is more formal than the cover letter. It will address, point by point, each of the criteria that has been identified as being necessary to work in the role successfully. Applicants should address each one using their previous formal child-related experiences (whether paid or volunteer) to demonstrate how they feel they are suitable. If they don't have direct experience, they may use other aspects of their work history or examples from their personal or family life.

Curriculum vitae or resume

A good curriculum vitae (CV) should list the applicant's previous experience, skills and abilities.

- Look at CVs in detail. Don't just skim read. Is the experience relevant? (If there appear to be breaks in employment these should be explored during the interview.)
- Does the applicant move jobs frequently in a way that is not normal for the sector?
- Is it presented professionally? Some applicants use professional CV writers so look for the content. Don't necessarily be impressed by the applicant's skills in creating an impressive document if that's not a requirement for the role.

While the advertisement is an organisation's opportunity to market itself as being child safe, the CV is the applicant's first opportunity to market themselves to the organisation. Hiring panels should consider:

- the impressions they have formed of this person from their CV
- whether it appears the person has the required skills, experience and values
- whether the application was well written and, if not, whether the role requires excellent writing skills
- which candidates stand out and why.

If no candidate seems suitable for an interview, organisations should readvertise the position. The interview process can be time consuming and expensive. Only after organisations have considered all applications should they select the best candidates and arrange interviews.

Interview process

When interviewing candidates for child-related positions a panel of two or three people is preferable to one-on-one interviews. This allows for different points of view to be raised in the selection process as well as allowing greater consistency and fairness.

A formal interview gives employers the opportunity to explore an applicant's background, work history, skills and values to evaluate their suitability to work with children.

Effective interviews are structured and should be well prepared. Interviewers should decide which questions will be asked prior to the interview. They should decide which interviewers are going to ask which question.

Interviewers should have a sound understanding of the risk of sexual misconduct in organisations and keep this in mind when assessing the suitability of candidates.

Pre-interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review each candidate's application for the role and their work history, which should be listed on their CV• Attempt to establish their experience in working with children• Review the role description and create behavioural and scenario-based questions (see the interview template on page 46 for examples):<ul style="list-style-type: none">– ensure you include some that explore their attitude towards children• Arrange interviews allowing enough time for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a quick review of the application– the interview– post-interview discussion among the interviewers• Decide who will lead the interview• Decide who will ask each question• Ensure the interview room is clean and a good reflection of your organisation, and have water for the candidates
Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish how the interview will be run with the candidate:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– let them know who will be asking questions– give an expected time frame in which to answer each question– let them know there will be time for informal questions at the end, including their own• Give them a couple of minutes to introduce themselves in a general sense (this often helps alleviate any nervousness they may feel)• At the conclusion of the interview explain the next steps:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– time frame for a decision– the need for reference checks – ensure the names and contact details of the referees they nominated in their written application are still valid– thank them for attending
Post-interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the candidate's answers with the other interviewers and make notes on their strengths and weaknesses• Compare what they said at the interview with what they said in their written application<ul style="list-style-type: none">– are there any glaring omissions or discrepancies?• Decide on a shortlist of preferred candidates• Contact referees• Decide on a preferred candidate• Make job offer• Sign contract

During the interview process, it is important that employers ask questions which reveal the applicants' attitudes towards child-related work.

In general, questions should cover the following:

- motivation to work with children
- work history
- the child safe skills they bring to the role
- the experience they have in making sure children are in a safe environment
- how they intend to motivate and involve children
- how they would manage difficult situations
- how they feel they respond to direction and supervision, including when related to child safety (they should indicate they understand that the safety of the child is paramount).

Interview questions

Good questions will get you good answers. Your role as an interviewer is to obtain all the information you need from your short-listed candidates.

It is important to ask both behavioural and scenario-based questions. These allow employers to gain a deeper insight into the applicant's experience and attitudes. These questions should demonstrate the applicant's industry-based knowledge and expertise as well as what they've learned from their past experiences.

The OCG has developed an interview template (see page 46). It can be customised to an organisation's specific requirements.

Remember, there are different kinds of questions, including the following.

Closed questions	Usually answered 'yes' or 'no'. Appropriate for when you want to check information. For example, 'Do you have a degree in child care?'
Open questions	Allow for longer and more revealing answers. 'Why did you want to apply for this role?' or 'What makes Little Platypus a place where you'd like to work?'
Situational questions	Attempt to reveal problem-solving skills and industry-based knowledge or expertise. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe a time where you handled a complaint or allegation involving a child's safety and welfare.• Describe a time when you disagreed with your supervisor.• Describe a time you made a poor professional decision.
Behavioural questions	Attempt to reveal future behaviour. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What have you done in the past, or what would you do now, if a child disclosed abuse to you?• What have you done in the past, or what would you do now, if you witnessed a child hitting another child?• What have you done in the past, or what would you do now, if you did not feel supported by your supervisor in a child safety matter?
Leading questions	These questions indicate to the candidate the answer you're expecting. They can be useful when you've seen something in a CV that the applicant hasn't talked about and you either want them to explore further or support them to give the best account of themselves. For example, 'You worked at Little Koala for five years, didn't you?' They are not useful if they don't allow the candidate to express themselves fully.
Multiple questions	Avoid these as they're often confusing. 'What experience do you have with protective behaviours, do you think children should learn them and, if so, which one is the best to learn?'



Illegal questions

Remember not to ask any discriminatory or illegal questions. This is, questions that would require people to reveal specific personal or health information, including around gender, marital status, age and family responsibilities. Sometimes it can be difficult to avoid these topics as they may form part of a general conversation or be mentioned in an answer to a question like 'tell me about yourself' – but where possible avoid questions of this nature.



Don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions to ensure consistency with the responses of other applicants to the same question.

Questions checklist

- Ask things that cannot be learned from the CV or cover letter.
- Ask for specific information so you can evaluate whether the applicant is suitable for the position.
- Invite the applicant to share opinions and ideas to get a better understanding of who they are.
- Allow the applicant to demonstrate their child safe knowledge, skills or practical experiences.
- Allow the applicant to reveal information about their work style, child safe values and beliefs, and about how they prefer to function in the workplace.
- Give the candidate an opportunity to ask questions of the panel.



Applicant's work history

Employers have the right to (and should) question an applicant's work history. This includes exploring any inconsistencies

- such as working in a management role and then a lower role or unexplained gaps in employment
- as these may indicate the applicant is concealing something such as disciplinary action as a result of inappropriate behaviour. Where possible, overseas work in child-related roles should also be explored.

While it's acceptable for people to take a career break, clarifying the reasons for the break in employment (such as for travel or maternity leave) is essential, in case it's for a reason that indicates the person may not be safe to work with children.

Reference checking process

Reference checks allow employers to gain a deeper understanding of the applicant's work history, experience and suitability for the position they're applying for. They allow information provided in the application letter, and addressed in the selection criteria and interview, to be verified.

It is recommended all child-related workers provide at least two referees from people who have directly supervised or managed them in child-related work. Character references may be acceptable if the applicant has never worked before or has just left school, but they should not be from family members or be given as much weight as professional references.

Referees should be asked:

- whether or not the applicant has been the subject of a disciplinary action or has engaged in any concerning or unacceptable behaviour
- how they know the applicant
- what skills and characteristics the applicant is likely to bring to the position
- the applicant's strengths and weaknesses
- the applicant's response to supervision and direction
- whether the employer would employ the applicant again.

A good way to verify that referees are genuine, particularly if an applicant has provided a pre-written reference, is to look up the organisation's general contact information, call and interview the person listed as the referee. Pre-written references do not need to be accepted. Direct contact with the referee, whether in writing or on the phone, is preferable as it allows relevant information to be obtained.

The OCG has developed a referee interview template (see page 50 of this handbook) that your organisation can customise to suit its needs.



Screening checks

In NSW all workers in child-related work, whether paid or unpaid, must hold a WWCC clearance or a current application for a WWCC clearance (unless they are subject to an exemption*). More information on the WWCC is in Part B of this handbook.

While a WWCC considers a person's suitability to work with children based on known prior history, employers may also consider asking the applicant for a broader national criminal history check to assess their suitability more generally. This will alert them to any offences that may indicate they aren't a 'fit and proper person' to take the role. For example, a history of fraud, theft, low level violence or driving offences are considered by the WWCC to assess pattern of behaviour (if any present) but they may not result in a bar. Organisations may want to reconsider these offences, however, if the position requires the applicant to fulfill duties that involve them handling finances or providing transport services.

NDIS Worker Check (NDISWC)

Certain workers delivering support or services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are required to have a worker screening clearance, including adults who work with children with disability. In NSW this is called the NDIS Worker Check (NDISWC). If organisations are considering employing an applicant to work with children with disability, they may need to ask the applicant to obtain an NDISWC as well as a WWCC. [More information is available on the Service NSW website.](#)



Reflective questions

- Do you have job descriptions of all the roles in your organisation, and are these reviewed and updated regularly?
- What is your process for creating child safe job advertisements?
- How do you select interview panels for recruitment?
- What is your process for contacting referees?

*Unless there is an exception to the exemption. This is explained in Part B of this handbook.



After employment is offered

Once employment is offered, employers should monitor their staff to ensure the people they've hired are safe and suitable to work with children.

Organisations should include in their child safe recruitment policy their induction and training processes, including how workers are supported and supervised, such as:

- probationary periods
- induction programs
- monitoring and supervision
- professional development and external training
- ongoing mentoring and support.



Workers are a valuable asset so making sure they are highly skilled in their day-to-day work with children, and challenged to reflect and continuously improve child safe practices, is vital.

Probationary periods

A probationary period allows both the employer and worker to see whether the role is a good fit for them.

Staff members should be told the date their probationary period will end and the possible outcomes. Probationary periods should include the option of dismissal from the position, or the ability to resign without repercussions, should a decision be made that the worker, or the role, is not suitable.

Induction programs

An induction program that includes information on the organisation's commitment to being child safe will assist new employees better understand their role in helping to provide a supportive environment for children that keeps them safe from harm and abuse.

Supporting new staff

What	How
<p>What do workers need to know about the organisation?</p> <p>How the organisation prioritises child safety</p> <p>Organisational structure – who works in which role</p> <p>Policies and procedures</p> <p>Who the key stakeholders are (including children with disability and those from diverse backgrounds)</p> <p>Tips:</p> <p>Consider having an annual or biennial ‘re-induction’ session for all employees to reinforce and remind them of the importance of demonstrating child safe values.</p> <p>Find opportunities for less formal training as well such as ‘toolbox talks’ or ‘tips and tricks’.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise a tour of the organisation • Organise a visit to any other settings the organisation operates in • Arrange a meeting with the head of the organisation, where child safety and how the organisation prioritises it is addressed • Arrange meetings with other relevant staff and managers • Give staff an induction handbook • Ensure child safety is featured in all discussions and meetings <p>Provide the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational chart • Statement of Commitment to Child Safety (or your service or organisation’s statement of values that shows a commitment to child safety) • Child Safe Code of Conduct • Child Safe Reporting Policy (and a reporting obligations and processes cheat sheet if available) • All other policies and procedures • Contact details of child safe contact officers or anyone in your organisation who, as part of their role, has oversight of child safety
<p>What do new workers need to know about their department or team?</p> <p>Explain to new staff members the context in which they will be working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain team structure and give role descriptions of other team members • Discuss expectations of team meetings • Provide stakeholder lists or conduct handovers if new staff are replacing existing ones – consider letting the new staff member shadow the existing one if possible • Invite new staff to informal social gatherings if the organisation has them – these can be very good for team building
<p>What do workers need to know about their role?</p> <p>Describe the support new staff members will be offered on how to perform their role, including information on probationary periods, induction and training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a starter pack with employment contract, role description and payroll details • Organise computer login • Discuss hours, overtime, leave application and payroll processes – ensure all relevant paperwork is completed • Discuss role description in detail, current priorities and performance expectations, including prioritising child safety – set clear expectations of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour • Organise training on specific policies and procedures required for the role (including child safe policies and procedures) • Organise work shadowing if necessary (where the new employee watches how an existing employee works until they are confident to perform their duties alone) – it may also involve a formal handover
<p>How will new workers get help and feedback when needed?</p> <p>Acknowledge positive behaviour</p> <p>Coach new staff on how to improve</p> <p>Have easy systems and processes so they feel welcome to ask for help</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a buddy • Have weekly meetings between the manager and the new worker • Book in two probationary reviews at six and 12 weeks – review their work to prepare and provide feedback on how their work aligns with the organisation’s values (you may also obtain feedback from other stakeholders, including the children the organisation engages with)

Monitoring and supervising workers

When workers are properly supervised and monitored organisations put themselves in a position to efficiently and effectively identify, prevent and respond to unacceptable, harmful or offending behaviour as it occurs. Supervising workers and monitoring their work with children also ensures workers know they are responsible and accountable for their actions.

Confidential records should be kept which include the worker's responses to supervision, their strengths and any perceived weaknesses, time frames for formal evaluations (such as one-on-one interviews with managers), their response to opportunities for promotion and any workplace complaints made against them.

Professional development

Ongoing professional development ensures workers are up-to-date with the latest and most effective techniques and work practices for their role. Some of the benefits for workers include:

- the opportunity to reflect on their work practices and incorporate new and effective strategies
- the appropriate education to complete higher level tasks and provide higher quality services with less need for supervision
- further motivation to do a good job because they feel valued by their peers, manager and the organisation as a whole.

Providing workers with in-house education and training on the key messages and procedures in policy documents is integral to ensuring policies are easy to understand and relevant to the day-to-day experiences of workers. On the job training, ongoing support and guidance by peers and supervisors are just as useful and important as external training.

Organisations should consider offering regular education and training in:

- identifying, assessing and minimising risks, including how to identify and respond to harm and abuse
- organisational policies, procedures and codes of conduct
- complaint handling, in particular handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm
- reporting obligations.

Organisations should encourage staff to undertake external training as necessary. This may be:

- compulsory training from a registered training organisation (RTO) as required by industry standards or legislation
- training to enhance their career prospects – and the overall level of skills in the organisation – through TAFE, private college or university study.

Ongoing mentoring and support

Education sessions, either formal or informal, are only effective if the skills learnt, or information given, is applied to day-to-day practices and reinforced with ongoing support and guidance.

Ways to provide ongoing mentoring, support and advice include:

- holding regular team meetings where the safety of children is a standard agenda item
- encouraging workers to ask questions, voice concerns or give feedback about the organisation's child safe practices
- ensuring senior role descriptions include a responsibility for providing staff with ongoing support and guidance about child safe practices
- conducting regular performance appraisals and collecting feedback from workers on their strengths and weaknesses
- assigning less experienced workers a mentor, and scheduling regular meetings between workers and their mentors
- encouraging workers to develop internal child safe initiatives and contribute, where appropriate, to child safe initiatives on a local, state or even national level.

The Working with Children Check

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a child's hand playing a piano. The hand is positioned over the white keys, with fingers curved as if pressing them. The piano's black and white keys are visible, and the background is softly out of focus, showing a wooden surface and a blue and white striped fabric.

B



The Working with Children Check (WWCC) involves a national criminal history check* and a review of reportable conduct findings or other forms of workplace misconduct.

A clearance to work with children can be used across a wide range of child-related environments. The WWCC is an important tool in an organisation's recruitment practices.[†] It has limits, though, because it can only detect people who have been reported previously or are known to authorities. It does not detect those who haven't been caught or are yet to offend. A reliance on the WWCC in the absence of any other child safe practices can be harmful to children's safety because it ignores other risk management options.

Part B of this handbook describes how HR management involves a holistic and integrated child safe approach that includes the WWCC along with ensuring *all* Child Safe Standards are embedded into the organisation's day-to-day practices. In other words, child safe organisations use the WWCC but also implement a range of other strategies guided by the Child Safe Standards.

*The OCG looks for things that may indicate a person is a risk of harm to children. A broader national criminal history check will also look for things like a history of fraud, theft, low level violence or driving offences.

[†]Some organisations engage people under 18 to work with other young people. While they don't require a WWCC, they should still be supported and supervised to ensure they support the organisation's intention to be child safe.

WWCC employer and employee obligations

Legal responsibilities

Employers have a legal responsibility to ensure workers who work with children, and are 18 years old and over, have a WWCC or a current application. They must verify each worker's Working with Children (WWC) or application (APP) number.* Except in some cases, workers can work with children with a verified APP number. Once they get their WWC number, it will also need to be verified. There are penalties for having workers in child-related roles who are not legally permitted to work with children. Employers can also be penalised for not verifying their workers' WWC or APP numbers.

Definition of employer

[Section 5 of the Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012 defines an employer as:](#)

- (a) a person who, in the course of business, arranges for the placement of a person in employment with others, or
- (b) a person who engages a person under a contract to perform work, or
- (c) a person who engages a worker to perform work as a volunteer for the person under an agreement (whether written or unwritten).

Employers not only have a legal responsibility to verify the WWC number of all child-related workers in the organisation, but they also need to verify the worker has the correct class of clearance (paid for employees or free for volunteers). The letter at the end of the WWC number indicates the class of clearance. E indicates it is an **E**mployed paid class and V a **V**olunteer unpaid class. For example, WWC9234567E or WWC9234567V. (APP numbers do not indicate the class of clearance.)

Record keeping

[Section 9A of the Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012 also requires employers to create and retain records of all workers' Check clearances.](#)

This includes their full name, date of birth, WWC or APP number, and the expiry date of each clearance.

To assist organisations maintain the correct records the OCG has developed a template that tables the information that needs to be kept. This is available on page 58 of this handbook and can also be downloaded from the OCG website. Organisations can choose how to maintain these records (whether electronically or on paper) but they need to have them available for auditing and monitoring purposes if required. Organisations can be penalised for failing to create and retain these records.

Employers will verify their workers in the OCG's employer portal, where they will learn whether a worker is legally allowed to work with children or not. To gain access to the portal, the employer must first register as an employer (see 'Definition of employer' in the left-hand column). The organisation self-manages this registration, and updating the information is the responsibility of the employer.

Before registering, it is important to establish which workers are in child-related work as there is no requirement for them to hold a WWC number if they are not.

When workers who do not need a Check are asked to have one it puts increased pressure on the WWCC processing system. Only child-related workers need a WWCC.

*Verifying means confirming online the worker has a valid Working with Children Check. How to do this is explained later in the handbook.

What is child-related work?

[Section 6 of the Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012](#) and [Part 2 of the Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Regulation 2013](#) describe child-related work.

What follows is an overview to assist organisations determine if a worker is required to obtain a WWCC or APP number before commencing work. If they are still unsure if a particular role is child-related they should refer to our website or seek legal advice.

First, organisations should determine if their work or sector is defined by the Act as being a child-related setting.

Child-related settings		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child development and family welfare services• Child protection• Children’s health services• Clubs or other bodies providing services for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability services• Early education and child care• Education• Entertainment for children• Youth centres• Out-of-home care facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Justice centres• Religious services• Residential services• Transport services for children• Schools

If the organisation engages with children and has legal obligations under the Act, it must then establish which role (or roles) within it are considered child-related. Not all roles in a child-related organisation are child-related. For example, workers who do not have direct face-to-face contact with children would not require a WWCC, including cooks and administrators (who do not have access to confidential children’s records*).

- A worker is engaged in child-related work for the purposes of the WWCC if the worker:
- has direct contact with children in one of the child-related settings above (direct contact means physical or face-to-face contact that is a usual part of the work; it can also mean direct contact that occurs online or over the phone)
 - works in a child-related role specified in the legislation that may or may not always involve direct contact (this includes the heads of child safe organisations as well as counsellors and people providing education services online such as tutors).

Note: Only the entity considered the ‘employer’ can legally verify the WWCC. Where sub-contractual arrangements exist, the contractor should ensure the subcontractor has verified the WWCC of all staff in child-related roles. Relationships between entities, contractors and subcontractors are nuanced. If clarification regarding verification is needed, [please contact us](#).

*An employer would need to put in an application to the OCG to have the work deemed ‘child-related’. If it’s approved, an employer can, in writing, ask the worker to get the check.

Non child-related work

Under [Part 2 of the Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Regulation 2013](#) there are defined roles that are not considered child related, which means they do not require a Working with Children Check. They include the following.

- **Section 6 (4)** Work as a student in the course of a student clinical placement in a hospital or other health service.
- **Section 7 (3)** Work as a referee, umpire, linesperson or otherwise as a sporting official or a groundsperson if the work does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods without other adults being present.
- **Section 8 (2)** Work in providing respite care or other support services if the work does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods without other adults being present.
- **Section 11 (3)** Providing food or equipment at or for a sporting, cultural or other entertainment venue or providing a venue.

Exemptions

The Act exempts certain workers from requiring a WWCC who would ordinarily fall within the definition of child-related work. The exemptions are listed in [Part 4 of the Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Regulation 2013](#).

The exemptions are listed below as a general overview. For further clarification please refer to the legislation.

- A person under the age of 18
- A parent or close relative who volunteers:
 - in an activity of which their child usually participates or is a member of
 - in an activity in their child's school, education and care service or other educational institution unless:
 - the work involves personal care services to children with disabilities involving intimate contact with children e.g. toilet or bathroom services; or
 - the parent volunteer provides mentoring services as part of a formal mentoring program
- A police officer (in their role as a police officer)
- An ancillary worker who provides administrative, clerical or maintenance services – if the work does not include contact with children for extended periods

- Work that is not more than a total of five working days in a calendar year, if the work involves minimal direct contact with children or the worker is supervised when children are present
- A worker visiting NSW for a one-off event such as a jamboree, sporting or religious tour and the work is less than 30 days in any calendar year
- A visiting speaker, adjudicator, performer, assessor or similar visitor at a school or other child-related setting
- A health practitioner:
 - in a private practice (where the work does not ordinarily involve the treatment children without one or more adults present)
 - who is working and visiting NSW and the work does not exceed 5 days in any 3 month period
 - who holds a clearance interstate (or is exempt from holding a clearance in their home state) and who works in NSW for less than 30 days in any calendar year
- Work that is carried out in an informal or domestic arrangement
- The co-worker or supervisor of a child worker (i.e. a person under the age of 18 who is employed)
- A home care worker as defined by the *Aged Care Act 1997* where the clients are not primarily children
- A worker whose work involves direct contact only with children who are a close relative of the worker, other than a worker who carries out the work in the capacity of an authorised carer
- The birth parents of a child who are in the household of an authorised carer.

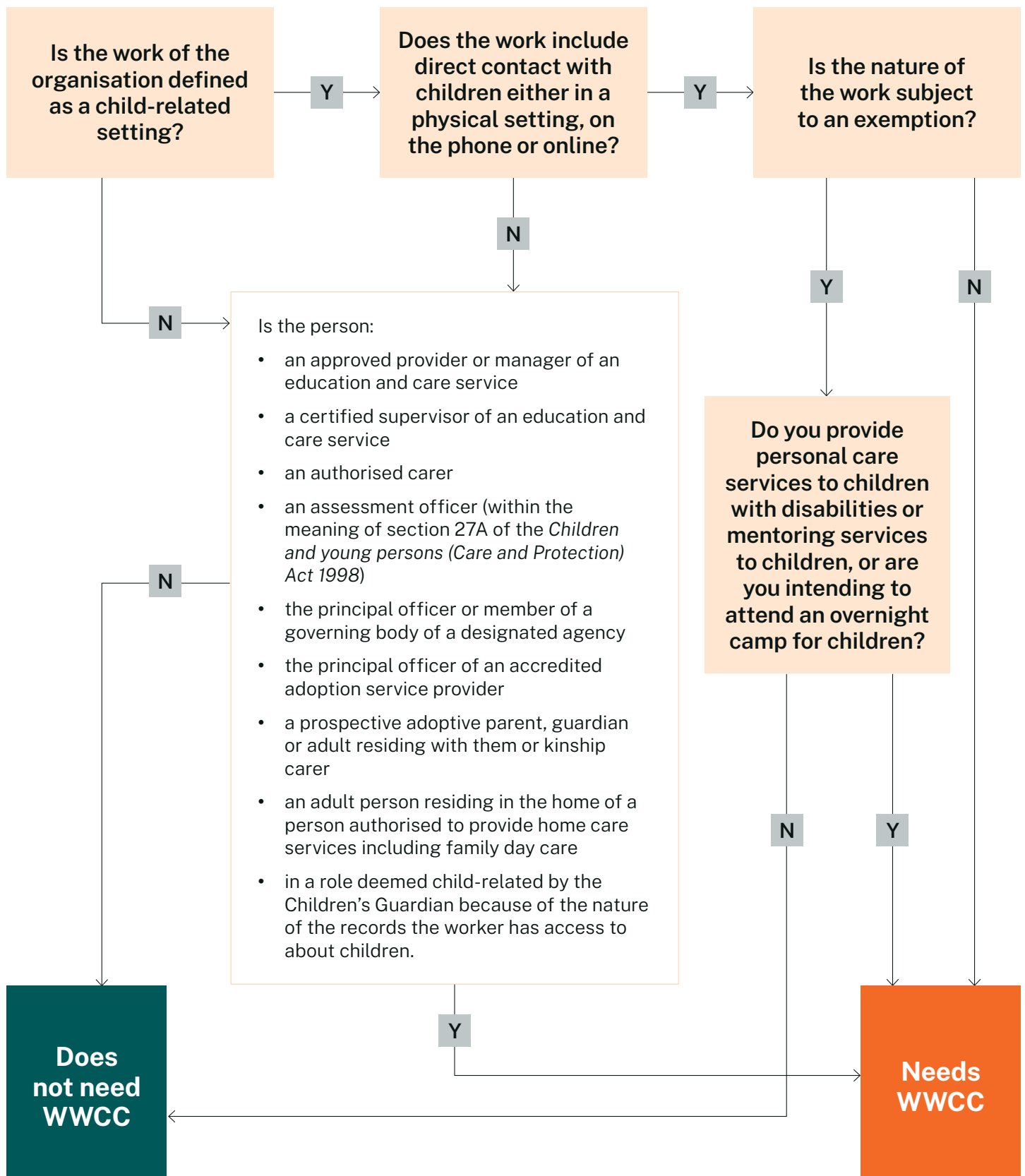
Please refer to the Regulation for further clarification of all exemptions.

Exceptions

The following are exceptions to the exemptions (which mean the person must hold a valid WWCC):

- providing personal care services to children with disabilities (that is, services that involve intimate contact with children such as assistance with toileting, bathing or dressing)
- mentoring services as part of a formal mentoring program provided by a government or non-government agency
- attending an overnight camp for children.

WWCC requirement flow chart



Note: If organisations require workers to apply for a WWCC when they are not in child-related work, the value of the Check is diminished and may contribute to community complacency. The WWCC is not intended to be used in situations where it is not legislatively required.

WWCC responsibilities

Worker (paid or unpaid)	Employer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worker applies for the check online and discloses all names or aliases Receives an application number that starts with APP (this number is not active until the next step is completed) Provides proof of identity (and payment if required) to Service NSW Someone with an active APP number is legally allowed to be in a child-related role despite organisations perhaps having their own policies that do not allow this Provides WWC number to employer once it is received Renews WWCC when they receive their reminder three months from expiry - information should be kept up to date so the OCG knows where to send the reminder to If barred from working with children (including automatic bar, decision bar or interim bar) the worker cannot be in child-related work – see page 42 and the Glossary on page 6 for more information on bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the online employer portal*, the employer creates an account (known as employer registration) The registration process requires the employer to nominate two contact people to receive information about barred workers When employer registration is complete, the employer will receive a registration number that they can then use to verify the APP or WWC numbers of every worker, paid or unpaid, in child-related work, to ensure they can legally work in a child-related role (some organisations do not allow APP holders to be in child-related work, including the NSW Department of Education and NSW Health) Keeps records of the WWCC status of all its child-related workers and monitors expiry to ensure WWC numbers remain valid Ensures any barred person does not start or continue to work in a child-related role

It is the responsibility of the worker to obtain a WWC or APP number. A WWCC clearance lasts five years. After this time it will expire and the employee will need to renew it if they want to continue in child-related work.

Penalties apply to adults in child-related work who do not hold a current APP or WWC number. Penalties also apply to employers who engage adults without a current APP or WWC number in child-related work, or they fail to verify the WWCC status of their adult workers.[†]

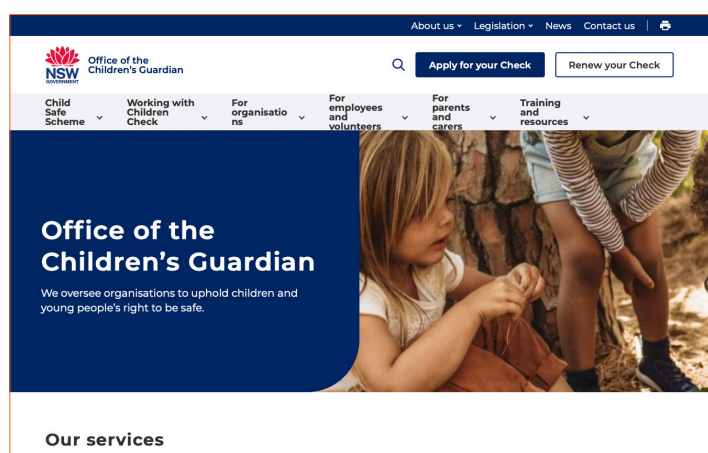
*Employers should use the employer portal. Parents and carers verifying tutors and other people working one-on-one with children should use the parent's portal. (See page 39 for more information.)

[†]Employers are obligated to ensure their staff have a Working with Children Check clearance and they're liable for penalties if they fail to comply. Employees are required to hold a relevant WWCC clearance. As these obligations apply to employers/employees separately, and liability applies separately, an employer cannot meet an employee's legal obligations under the Act.

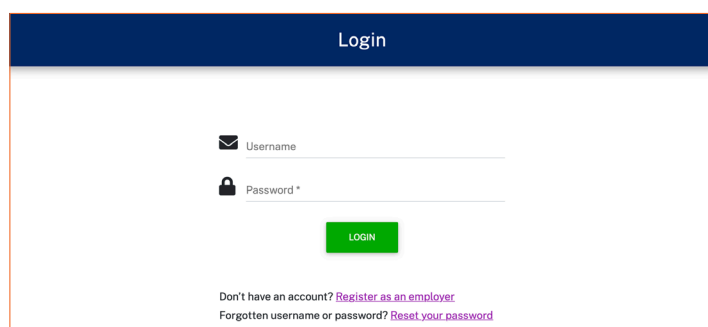
Employer registration and verification

How to register as an employer

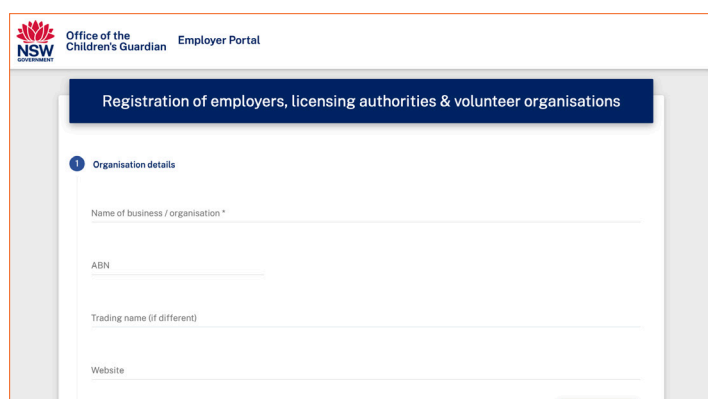
The following steps explain how to register as an employer. Registering as an employer allows nominated personnel in the organisation to access the register of clearances.



Step 1: From the OCG homepage, click 'Working with Children Check' then scroll down to 'Employer login and verify', or head straight to the login page where you can [register as an employer](#).



Step 2: Under the login details, click 'Register as an employer' to open up the online registration form.



Step 3: Complete the registration form, which will ask for:

- organisation details
- username and password
- the names and contact details of two people in the organisation authorised to speak to the OCG about WWCC matters
- service profile.

An organisation's details are the responsibility of the organisation to maintain. If contact details change the organisation must update the information.



Account

Account email address joe.citizen@gmail.com

PRINT

I declare that I am an employer, licensing authority or volunteer organisation, operating within one of the child-related sectors defined in the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 and the Child Protection (Working With Children) Regulation 2013. I will comply with the requirements of the Act and Regulation. I will not require any workers or volunteers who do not undertake child-related roles, or who are exempt by the legislation, to obtain a Working With Children Check.

I acknowledge that the contact details that I provide may be used by the Office of the Children's Guardian to contact me and/or my organisation about the OCG's education activities to ensure my organisation complies with Child Safe principles and practices under s 38 of the Act and consent to such use.

☒ Please check the box to confirm you have read and agree to the above declarations

PREVIOUS SUBMIT

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Step 4: Submit the online form to be registered with the OCG. Organisations can then log into the system to verify workers using their chosen username and password.

Before you submit the form you will need to complete a security screening – simply enter the numbers or letters displayed.

Once registration is complete organisations will need to remember the nominated username and password as these will be needed to access the register of clearances for verification of WWCC statuses.

Employers have a legal responsibility to verify their workers' APP or WWC numbers.

Only after an organisation has verified its workers' WWC or APP numbers will the OCG know who to notify if one of its workers becomes barred.

Username and password requirements

Organisations choose their usernames and passwords, and if they need to reset a password an email will be sent to the email address the organisation nominated when they registered.

Requirements for a username include the following.

Username requirements	Password requirements
Must contain between five and 15 characters	Must contain five and 10 characters
Must start with a letter	Must contain at least one letter
Must not contain spaces or special characters	Must contain at least one number
May contain numbers or underscores	Must contain at least one special character

Account

This email address will be used for login and sending password reset notifications for the employer portal

Email address *

Confirm Email address *

The minimum password length is 10 characters and must contain at least 1 letter, 1 number, and 1 special character.

Password *

Confirm Password *

The minimum password length is 10 characters and must contain at least 1 letter, 1 number, and 1 special character.

Number of characters

Letter

Number

Special character

For example:

Username: sydney_kids

Password: sydney_kids1!

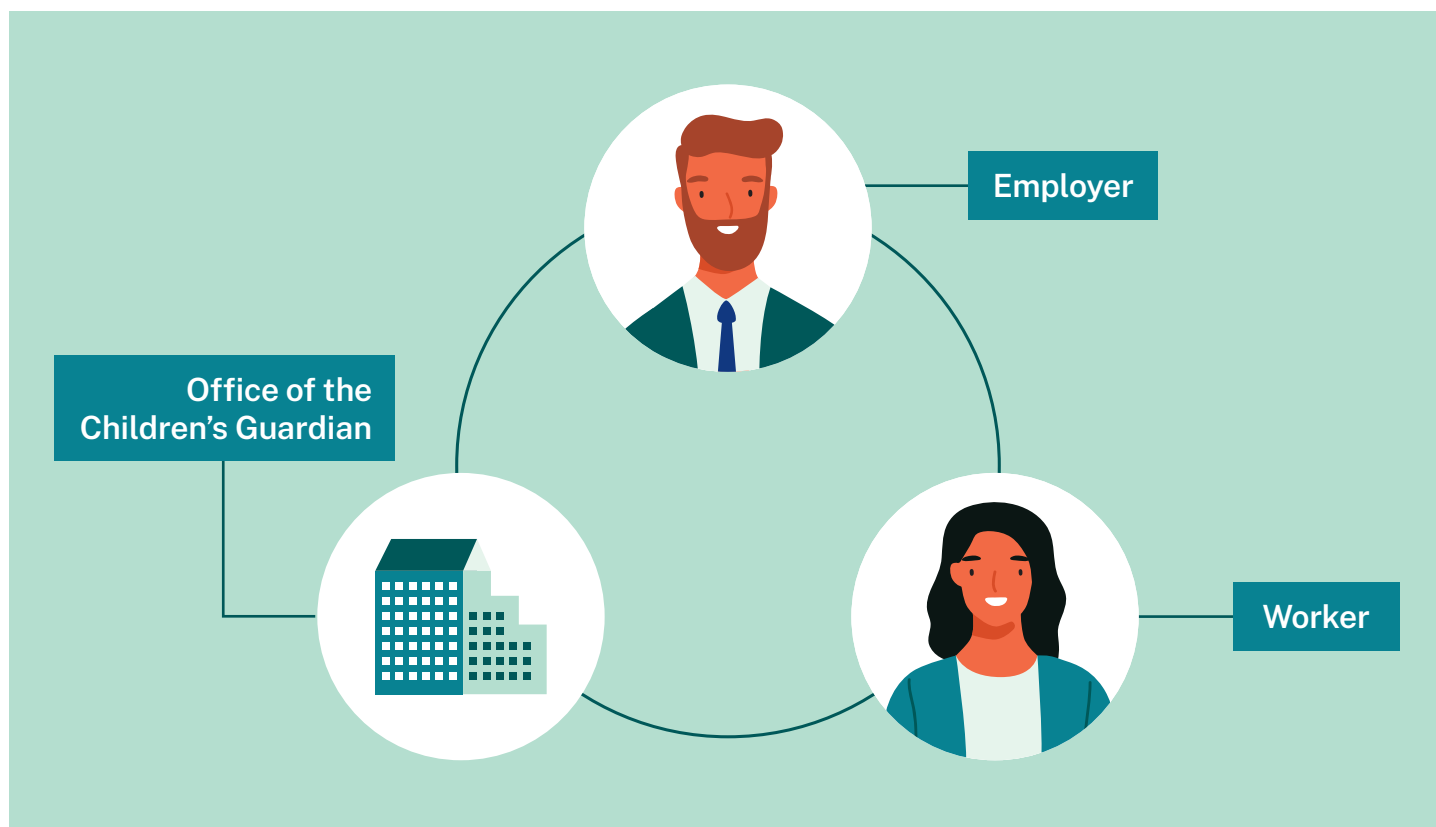
Nominated contacts

Organisations are asked to nominate two contact people when they register. The OCG will contact these people if a worker the organisation has verified is subsequently barred. It is therefore very important these contacts be authorised to respond to a bar and be the appropriate people in the organisation to receive that information.

Important!

If either one of the two people nominated as contacts change, or both do, organisations should immediately update the system with the new details of who has replaced them. If the status of a worker changes these are the only people the OCG is authorised to talk to. This is particularly important to remember in volunteer organisations where there is often a high turnover of staff as parents come and go each year.

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All workers with a verified WWC number are continually monitored for any new police or workplace records that may indicate they are a risk of harm to children, and they can be barred at any time.

Apart from it being a legal obligation, the following figures further illustrate why verifying is important.

Between 2016 and 2022, over 4,800 people have been barred from working with children. Of these, 52 per cent were never verified by an employer, which means the OCG had no one to contact to make sure that person wasn't working with children.

Of these people, over 2,400 were WWCC clearance holders whose clearance was rescinded because of information the OCG received.

This is why it's important that child safe organisations don't solely rely on the Check but also have robust risk management strategies in place.

Simply being shown a WWC number is not enough to ensure the worker is cleared to work with children. Accessing the WWCC database to verify workers is the only way to legally confirm a person is cleared to work with children in NSW, and that can only be done through [employer registration online](#).

Note: Parents and carers employing tutors, trainers or other adults for one-on-one time with their children are also able to verify the person's WWCC clearance [online](#). If the tutor or other person engaged to work with a child has linked their WWCC clearance to their Service NSW account, the parent or carer can ask them to show it on their phone. It will generate a QR code (valid for 15 minutes) that the parent or carer can scan to verify the person's WWCC status. (It will only indicate if their clearance status is current and clear.)

Employers should verify workers using the employer portal on the OCG website. Only parents and carers should use the [parent and carer portal](#).

When to verify workers?

The WWCC status of workers needs to be verified when:

- they engage with your organisation with an APP number
- they engage with your organisation with a WWC number
- they renew their WWC number.

When verifying, ensure the worker has the right class of Check. A volunteer with a 'V' (volunteer) WWC suffix cannot work in a paid role. Initial verifications of APP and WWC numbers should be done as a pre-employment screening. That is, before they commence in their new role. New workers need to be verified before they can begin working with children.

How to verify a WWC or APP number

Once a worker has applied for a WWCC clearance they will initially be given an APP number while their application is processed. This number will only appear in the database once the applicant has provided proof of identity at a Service NSW service centre and paid for their application if they are in paid work. In more than 85 per cent of cases the worker will receive their WWC number within 48 hours. However, there are instances where this can take longer.

A worker can begin working in a child-related role with an APP number. However, organisations must comply with their legal obligations to verify the WWCC status of their workers. If the person is barred, and their APP number has been verified, the OCG will get in touch with the nominated contacts at the organisation to let them know to remove the person from child-related work.

A WWC or APP number is not proof of identity. Organisations must still be satisfied that the person presenting with a WWC or APP number is the person named in their identifying documents.

Verifying a person's identity should form part of the pre-employment screening process.

A WCC number will only be issued in a person's legal name. If they are known by any other name, organisations will not be able to search this name in the database.

Verifying the APP number before the WWC number is issued means an organisation has already registered with the OCG. However, organisations still have an obligation to verify the WWC number as soon as it is assigned to the applicant.

From time to time a person will fail to declare all previous names or aliases. Once the OCG becomes aware of an undeclared alias, the person's application will be terminated. The person will have to re-apply, making sure they declare all previous names. If the person has paid for their application they will need to pay again.

If an organisation has verified the WWC or APP number of an applicant whose matter is then closed, it will have to re-verify their new WWC number.

WWCC clearances expire after five years. At that time, workers apply to renew their clearances. Organisations then need to verify they have received the renewal.

Remember, a paid WWCC has a number ending in an E and a volunteer WWCC has a number ending in a V.

As an employer you have a legal obligation to ensure the worker has the correct class of clearance.

Organisations can verify up to 50 numbers at once. You will need the workers':

- APP or WWC numbers
- family names (surnames)
- dates of birth.



How to verify a WWCC

The screenshot shows the 'Login' page of the Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal. It features a dark blue header with the NSW Government logo and the text 'Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal'. Below the header is a white box with a dark blue 'Login' button. Underneath the button are two input fields: 'Username' with an email icon and 'Password *' with a lock icon. A green 'LOGIN' button is positioned below the password field. At the bottom of the white box, there are links: 'Don't have an account? [Register as an employer](#)' and 'Forgotten username or password? [Reset your password](#)'.

Step 1: [Log into](#) the employer portal using the username and password that was created when registering.

If you've forgotten your username or password, click on 'Reset your password' and enter your email address to retrieve your login details.

The screenshot shows the 'Verify Working with Children Check status' page of the Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal. It features a dark blue header with the NSW Government logo and the text 'Office of the Children's Guardian Employer Portal'. Below the header is a white box with a dark blue 'Verify Working with Children Check status' button. Underneath the button is a teal bar with the text 'EMPLOYEES / VOLUNTEERS'. Below the teal bar is a text input field with a placeholder: 'Enter employee or volunteer details below. Check correct spelling. You must enter either a Working With Children Check number or an Application number. Numbers must start with WWC or APP:'. Below the input field are three input fields: 'Family name *', 'Date of birth *', and 'Reference number *'. A green 'ADD' button is positioned to the right of the 'Reference number *' field. Below the input fields is a table with four columns: 'Family Name', 'Date of birth', 'Reference number', and 'Actions'. The table is currently empty, and the text 'NO EMPLOYEES / VOLUNTEERS ENTERED' is displayed below it.

Step 2: The organisation's online profile will open up. Click on the 'Verify Working with Children Check status' tab.

By using the 'add' button to create additional fields, organisations can verify more than one person at a time.

WWCC statuses

Status	Meaning
Application in progress	A Working with Children Check application is being processed and the applicant may work with children if they provide their APP number. (Legislative requirements for the NSW Department of Education and NSW Health mean it is mandatory for workers to have a WWCC clearance to work with children. This means they cannot work with an APP number.)
Cleared	The applicant has a Working with Children Check clearance that is valid until the expiry date unless the OCG gets in contact before that time.
Barred	The applicant has been barred from working with children and it is an offence to engage this person in a child-related role.
Interim barred	The applicant has been temporarily barred from working with children while further information is obtained and a determination is made. It is an offence to engage this person in a child-related role.
Not found	<p>The database cannot find a matching Working with Children Check because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the data entered for verification (name, date of birth, and WWC or APP number) has errors• the person's application has been withdrawn or terminated without an outcome• the person has not completed an application for a Working with Children Check (that is, they haven't paid or provided proof of identity). <p>It is an offence to engage this person in a child-related role.</p>
Expired	The person's WWCC clearance has expired and they haven't renewed it. It is an offence to engage this person in a child-related role.
Closed	The person applied for a WWCC clearance but the application has been closed. This might happen if a person is being risk assessed and they fail to provide requested information, fail to declare an alias or a name they've previously been known as, provide a duplicate application or wish to surrender their clearance.

Ongoing monitoring

Unless the person becomes barred or their WWCC is closed, a Working with Children Check clearance will remain valid for five years. During this time clearance holders will be subject to ongoing monitoring for any new offences.

If a relevant new record comes from the police or a workplace, it may lead to the worker becoming barred before the five-year expiry date. If this happens, the employer will be notified using the information supplied during the employer registration process.

If an organisation has not verified a worker online and that person becomes barred, the OCG will not be able to notify the organisation about it.

Bar notifications

If a worker or volunteer is barred (or interim barred) from working with children, initial contact with the organisation they work with will be made via email to one of the people nominated when the organisation registered for the WWCC. The email will ask if the barred person is still employed by the organisation (or volunteering with them) and if so, whether they work with children. If the person is working with children, a follow up phone call is made. A formal notification is then issued outlining the legal implications of the change in WWCC status. Only the changed nature of the WWCC will be given to the employer. Details of the reason for the bar, criminal records or workplace records will not be shared. The employer is then required to remove the person from child-related work and must confirm this in writing to the OCG.

Managing a barred worker

A person who is barred cannot work in a child-related role. It is an offence to continue to employ a person in a child-related role if they do not hold the appropriate clearance. Section 9 of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* states employers must require clearance or current application.

- (1) An employer must not commence employing, or continue to employ, a worker in child-related work if the employer knows or has reasonable cause to believe that:
 - (a) the worker is not the holder of a working with children check clearance that authorises that work and that there is no current application by the worker to the Children's Guardian for a clearance of a class applicable to that work, or
 - (b) the worker is subject to an interim bar.

Penalties exist for organisations that fail to ensure a person in child-related work has a valid WWC number. The OCG may also consider further legal action.



Record keeping requirements

The OCG may audit an employer's Working with Children Check records at any time.

Section 40 of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*: Power to compel production of information for monitoring or auditing purposes

If an organisation is selected for audit it will be sent a notice that includes a form to complete and return.

At the time of printing audits take place either in person or online. As well as questions about how it is meeting its WWCC obligations, an organisation's nominated representatives may be asked how it meets other obligations of the [Child Safe Scheme](#).

It will be asked about the WWCC records it is required to keep such as:

- workers' full names
- workers' dates of birth
- workers' WWC and APP numbers
- expiry dates of WWCCs
- the dates APP and WWC numbers were verified
- the class of all WWCC clearances (paid or volunteer).

Organisations can choose how to keep these records (either on paper or a database) but they are obligated to provide records to the Children's Guardian when asked.

Appendices

C



Appendix A: Interview template

Place your organisation's name here

Interview template

Place your
organisation's
logo here

Adapt this template to suit your organisation's requirements.

Position title	
Name of applicant	
Interviewers	
Date	

Welcome applicant, introduce interviewers, and describe the organisation and the role.

1. What interests you about the role?
2. What skills and experience can you bring to our programs, activities or services?
3. Can you tell me what you understand about our Child Safe policies? What do you think of them?

Interview template

Sample behavioural questions

4. Can you describe a time when you have worked well with children. What happened and what was the outcome?

5. Can you describe a time when you have had to respond to a child with challenging behaviour, what happened and how did you deal with it?

6. Can you describe a time when you have helped a child, what happened and what was the outcome?

7. Have you had to work with a child you found uncooperative? What did you do?

8. Have you worked with someone who you thought was a good child-related leader? What characteristics did they model that particularly impressed you?

9. Can you describe your understanding of 'child safe' as opposed to 'child protection'?

10. How do you think children you've worked with in former roles would describe you?

11. Have you ever had to respond to a worker whose behaviours around children concerned you? What did you do? (Or what would you do if you experienced this?)

Sample scenario-based questions

12. You've entered a room and witnessed two children becoming increasingly frustrated with each other over the ownership of a piece of equipment. One of the children has behavioural issues and is known to bite other children. What do you do?

13. A colleague, who is great with children, has told you that they take pictures of them while at the centre and send them to their parents using their phone. How would you respond?

14. Your co-worker has just strongly disciplined a child for what you believe to be a minor matter. How do you deal with it?

15. You've been asked to support the engagement of a child-related organisation with your local community - how would you go about this?

Interview template

16. How would you go about ensuring children in a child-related organisation are able to participate in the decisions made by the centre?

17. Can you describe three things you'd do if you were asked to review a policy or procedure?

Other comments:

Surname		First Name	
Role applied for		WWC number*	
Date verified		Outcome (cleared, barred etc)	

*If someone has just applied for a WWCC, they will have an APP (application) number not a WWC number. They are allowed to work in child-related roles. You should verify their APP number, and then their WWC number when they obtain it. More information on this is in the WWCC section of this resource.

Panel member	Position	Signature	Date
Name			
Name			
Name			

This template was developed by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.
For more free child safe templates and other resources, please go to ocg.nsw.gov.au/our-resources

Interview template

Appendix B: Referee interview template

Place your organisation's name here

Place your organisation's logo here

Referee interview template

Adapt this template to suit your organisation's requirements. You are not required to ask every question, however the more you ask the more knowledge you'll have of the prospective employee.

Candidate name			
Referee name			
Organisation			
Referee position		Date	
Referee email		Phone	
Engagement period		Reference check conducted by	

Suggested introduction. Please replace the word 'candidate' with the person's name.

'Candidate' has provided your name, as a referee, and I'd like to obtain some information from you about them. Under privacy laws, 'candidate' can now access the information you give us. Equally, you may gain access to the information that you give me by contacting our Human Resources unit. Are you happy to proceed?

Referee interview template

Introductory

1. Describe the nature of your relationship to 'candidate'. (Are they 'candidate's' manager, etc?)
2. Can you please confirm their employment record (including position, responsibilities, start, and finish dates)
3. Can you please confirm remuneration details where possible (confirm base, superannuation, bonus/ commission).
4. What were the key technical aspects of the role and how well did 'candidate' perform them?
5. What key behaviours and personal attributes were required to successfully perform this role and how well did 'candidate' demonstrate these?

Candidate's skills

6. Who did this role require the candidate to liaise with on a regular basis, and how well did they communicate with them?
7. As far as you're aware, has the candidate been subject to any disciplinary action regarding children, or been engaged in any concerning or unacceptable behaviour?
8. Was 'candidate' responsible for managing people? If so, please comment on their management skills and style of management.
9. What do you consider to be 'candidate's' main strengths (explore technical skills, personal attributes and anything else of relevance)?
10. Please describe any areas of improvement you observed (such as where support and training was required).
11. What were 'candidate's' most significant achievements in your organisation?
12. To what level do you think they met the desired objectives of the role (explore and ask for examples)?
13. What management style does 'candidate' respond to best?
14. What was the level of drive and motivation 'candidate' displayed while working in your organisation?
15. Please comment on 'candidate's' attendance record (including punctuality and reliability).
16. Please comment on 'candidate's' honesty and integrity.
17. Work, health and safety is a critical component of every workplace. Please describe 'candidate's' commitment and approach to work, health and safety (explore in further detail if applicable).
18. Please explain, as you understand it, 'candidate's' reasons for leaving (where unsure, attempt to determine whether the parting was amicable).
19. What roles do you think candidate would be suitable for in the future?
20. Please comment on how suitable you think they are for the job they've applied for (where appropriate).
21. Do you have any further comments that would assist us in considering 'candidate' for this role?
22. Hypothetically, would you or your company re-employ 'candidate'?
23. Do we have permission to disclose your comments to selected potential employers if required?
24. May we contact you again for any further clarification?

This template was developed by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

For more free child safe templates and other resources, please go to ocg.nsw.gov.au/our-resources

Appendix C: Role description template

Place your organisation's name here

Place your organisation's logo here

Role description template

Use this template to help develop role descriptions for your organisation.

Role title

Description of organisation (brief description of the organisation and its activities)

Primary purpose of role (Brief description of how the role contributes to the overall work of the organisation)

Duties of this role (Outline the duties the worker will carry out on a day-to-day basis)

Objectives of this role (List 3 or 4 key objectives – at least one should refer to how the role contributes to maintaining a Child Safe environment)

Role description template

Accountability (Identify the role title the worker reports to e.g. Manager, Director etc.)

Conditions of appointment (Specify if the position is full-time or part-time, and what hours will be worked. Mention whether it is a volunteer or paid position, and detail pay and conditions)

Performance criteria

Qualifications	
Knowledge and skills	
Experience	
Personal qualities	
Availability	
Other requirements	
Policy expectations	
Pre-engagement checks	

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Appendix D: Working with Children Check checklist

Place your organisation's name here

Place your organisation's logo here

Working With Children Check checklist

Is your organisation compliant with WWCC employer obligations?

Obligation	Self-assessment	Date reviewed
<p>Assess what roles within your organisation are child related.</p> <p>Note: "Child-related work" (including voluntary work) is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing services for people under the age of 18• Work which normally involves being face to face with children• Where contact with children is more than incidental to the work, or• Where you are:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— An approved provider or manager of an education and care service— A nominated supervisor of an education and care service— An authorised carer— An assessment officer within the meaning of section 27A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998— The principal officer of a designated agency— The principal officer of an accredited adoption service provider— Any other role with respect to children prescribed by the Regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For further information on particular work sectors, see Part 2 of the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 which can be found at https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/si-2013-0156#pt.2 <p>If there are no child related roles in your organisation, then the WWCC obligations DO NOT apply. Any actions to require a worker to apply for a WWCC and the creation of an employer registration should cease.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliant (document how)• Non-compliant (act, document how)• Unknown (investigate, act, document how)• Not applicable (document why)	

Working With Children Check checklist

Obligation	Self-assessment	Date reviewed
<p>Paid workers have a WWCC is of a class applicable for that work i.e. they do not have volunteer checks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant (document how) Non-compliant (act, document how) Unknown (investigate, act, document how) 	
<p>Maintain relevant records for each worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> workers full name and date of birth the WWCC number the clearance expiry date the verification dates verification status result records are kept for seven years after ceasing child-related work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant (document how) Non-compliant (act, document how) Unknown (investigate, act, document how) Not applicable (document why) 	
<p>Verify the WWCC status of all workers engaging in child-related work no-later than five working days after the expiry date for each clearance of the worker.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant (document how) Non-compliant (act, document how) Unknown (investigate, act, document how) Not applicable (document why) 	
<p>Handover processes have been implemented when authorised officers change.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advising newly the appointed authorised officer what needs to be done so that the employer remains compliant with the WWCC such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who needs a Check How to verify the Check What records must be maintained How to manage the expiry of workers' Checks What to do if a worker is barred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant (document how) Non-compliant (act, document how) Unknown (investigate, act, document how) 	
Working With Children Check checklist		

Obligation	Self-assessment	Date reviewed
Compliance self-assessment is conducted annually and when a new/replacement authorised officer is appointed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliant (document how) Non-compliant (act, document how) Unknown (investigate, act, document how) 	

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You can also email compliance@ocg.nsw.gov.au if you need any additional assistance regarding the WWCC obligations for your organisation. If your organisation is audited by the Office of the Children's Guardian, this self-assessment and any related documentations will be reviewed by the Compliance Officer.

Completed by:	Position:	Date:
---------------	-----------	-------

Appendix E: Working with Children Check record keeping template

Place your organisation's name here

Place your organisation's logo here

Working With Children Check record keeping template

This template can assist you in meeting your record keeping obligations under the *Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012*. Your records can be kept electronically or on paper using a template like one below. For auditing purposes you must keep these records for seven years.

You must keep the following records:

- Full name (including first, middle and last name)
- Date of birth
- WWC number
- Verification date (the date you verified them)
- Verification outcome (clearance, barred, interim barred or not found)
- Expiry date (when the WWC number expires)
- Status of the worker (paid or volunteer)

Working With Children Check record keeping template

Employee full name	Date of Birth	WWC number	Start date	Verification date	Verification outcome	Expiry date	Paid or volunteer work
John Smith	20/09/1989	WWC000XXE	01 July 2015	30 June 2015	Cleared	28 June 2020	Paid

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