

# Information for carers – the accreditation process

## How we accredit and monitor out-of-home care providers

November 2023

[www.ocg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ocg.nsw.gov.au)

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## Accreditation process

### What is accreditation?

In NSW, agencies must be accredited by the Children's Guardian before they can provide out-of-home care services.

This includes the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), non-government organisations and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

To be accredited, agencies must apply and show that they meet the requirements of the NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care. There are 23 mandatory standards and they are divided into four sections:

#### Section 1 - Children and young people – care and wellbeing

- There are 12 standards in this section that focus on health, education, social and emotional wellbeing, and the participation of children and young people and their families in decisions that affect their lives.

#### Section 2 - Casework practice to support care

- There are 5 standards in this section that focus on case plans for children and young people and casework to support children and young people and their carers.

#### Section 3 - People who work with and care for children and young people

- There are 4 standards in this section that focus on how agencies make sure that staff and carers are safe and suitable to work with or care for children and young people.
- There are also standards about how staff and carers are supported in their role, and receive training and supervision.

#### Section 4 - Child safe organisations

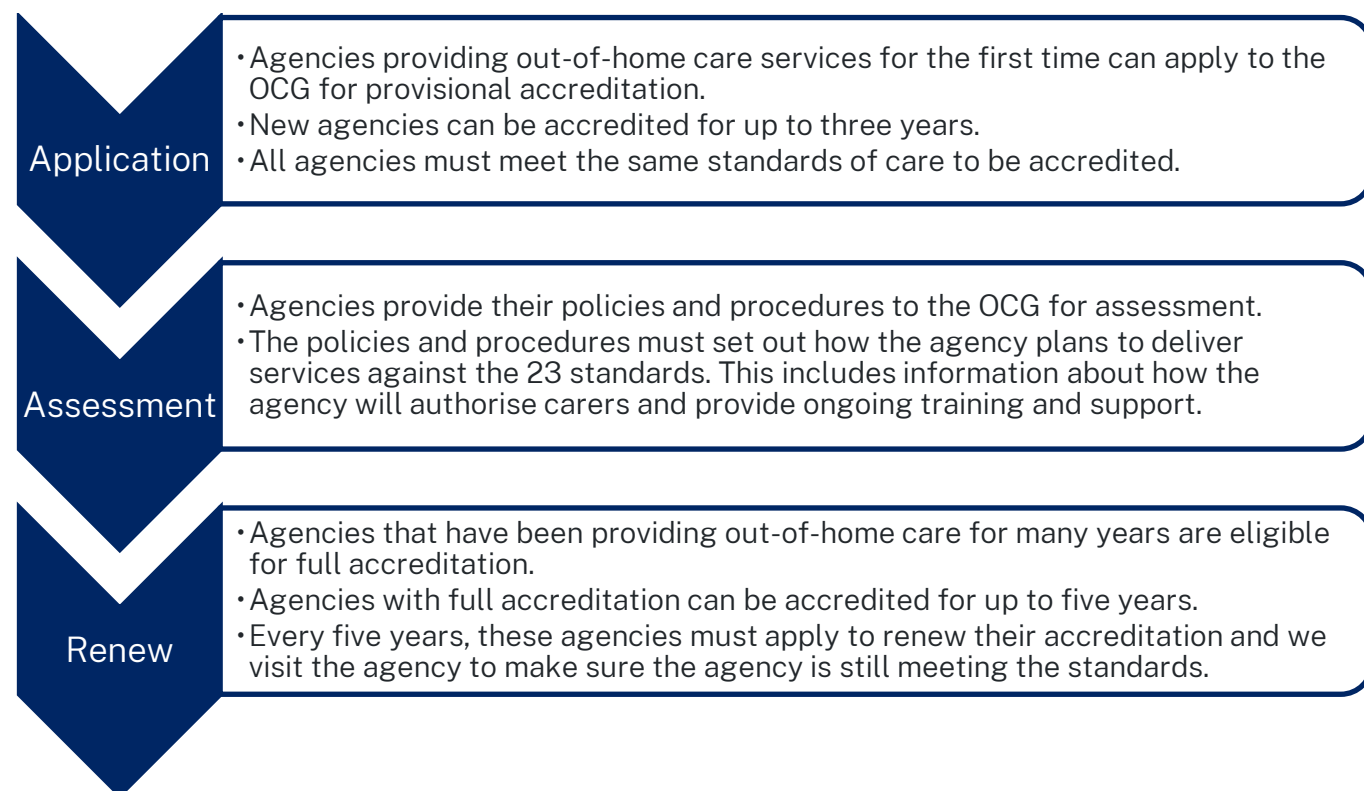
- There are two standards in this section that focus on the board and senior leaders in the agency.
- These standards look at how senior leaders run the organisation and constantly review the quality of their work.

Agencies must apply to renew their accreditation every three to five years and must show that they continue to comply with the 23 mandatory standards.



The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) publishes a **list of accredited agencies**

## How do agencies get accredited?



## How does the OCG monitor out-of-home care providers?

Once an agency is accredited, they can begin to provide services to children and young people and their carers.

Agencies must contact us as soon as they start providing services, and our assessment teams will visit the agency every four months to review their practice.

We also monitor agencies that have been providing out-of-home care services for many years. Throughout an agency's accreditation cycle, OCG assessors visit agencies to make sure that the agency continues to meet the standards.

The OCG has two assessment teams:

### **Accreditation and Monitoring Team**

focuses on how the agency supports children and young people

### **Carer and Residential Worker Monitoring Team**

focuses on how agencies assess, authorise, and provide ongoing support and training to carers

## What happens if an agency is not meeting the standards?

If an agency is not meeting the standards, the Children's Guardian has three options:



When the Children's Guardian imposes a condition on the agency's accreditation, this may mean that the agency must do certain things to improve their practices, or the Children's Guardian may prevent an agency from taking on further placements until its practices have improved.

When the Children's Guardian imposes a condition on an agency's accreditation, this is published on our website.

Where there are very serious concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children in the care of an agency, the Children's Guardian may shorten or cancel the agency's accreditation. When an agency's accreditation is cancelled, children and young people and their carers must transfer to another agency. We monitor agencies and try to address any practice concerns early, before they become so serious that the agency's accreditation needs to be cancelled.

## Are there different accreditation requirements for different types of out-of-home care agencies?

**No.**

All out-of-home care agencies are required to be accredited and must show that they are compliant with the 23 mandatory standards. The way large government organisations provide out-of-home care services will be different to how small, community-based organisations provide their services. But all agencies, regardless of their size or whether they are government providers, non-government organisations or Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations must be able to show how the services they provide meet the standards.

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## The Carers Register

The Carers Register was created to help agencies ensure that carers and members of the carer's household are safe and suitable to provide care.



Information for carers about the Carers Register is on our website

## What do agencies have to do?

Agencies are required to authorise carers before placing children and young people in their care. All authorised carers and their household members must be entered into the Carers Register.

When carers move from one agency to another, the new agency must decide if the carer and their household are safe and suitable. The new agency accesses the Carers Register records of the carer and contacts any other associated agencies to exchange information and inform the authorisation decision.

## Does the OCG monitor how agencies use the Carers Register?

The OCG's Carer and Residential Worker Monitoring Team monitors all agencies to make sure they are complying with their requirements. They also visit agencies to review how they assess and authorise carers and provide feedback to the agency about gaps or concerns about their practice.

## Who can investigate complaints from carers?

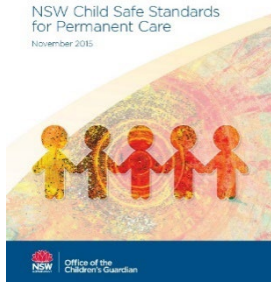


The OCG cannot investigate individual complaints about out-of-home care providers. The NSW Ombudsman investigates complaints about out-of-home care providers.

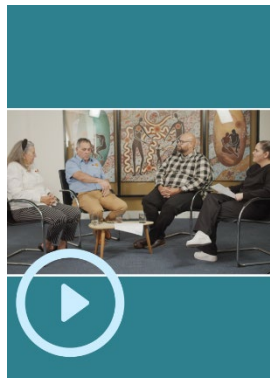
Carers may contact the NSW Ombudsman to discuss their complaint. Information about how to make a complaint can be found on [the Ombudsman's website](#)

## Resources for carers

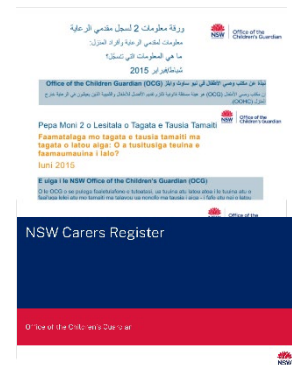
We have developed resources to help agencies and carers understand their role in keeping children in out-of-home care safe.



**NSW Child Safe Standards  
for Permanent Care**



**Culture in Care  
video series**



**Carers Register information  
for carers  
available in  
multiple languages**

Find more resources or contact us:

Office of the Children's Guardian

[www.ocg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ocg.nsw.gov.au)

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