

Fact sheet

Decision making on the Carers Register

November 2025

Introduction

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) is an independent, statutory authority committed to delivering better outcomes for children and young people in supported and statutory out-of-home care (OOHC). We are a regulator – not a provider of care services. We accredit and monitor the performance of agencies that arrange statutory and supported OOHC and adoption services.

The OCG administers the Carers Register, a database of persons authorised to provide or who apply to provide statutory or supported out-of-home care services in NSW. Household members are also recorded on this database.

This fact sheet should be read in conjunction with Carers Register [Guidance Notes](#).

Decision making

Schedule 2 Information to be recorded on carers register of the Children's Guardian Regulation 2022 sets out the timeframes for entering decisions on the Carers Register.

- Designated agencies are required to enter a decision on an individual's application to become a foster carer on the Carers Register.
 - The decision could be to Approve the application or Refuse (Not Approve).
- Designated agencies are required to enter a provisionally authorised carer on the Carers Register.
 - Provisional authorisations are only used where a child is placed in an emergency with a carer who is a relative/kin or known to them.
 - The designated agency must prioritise the assessment.
 - A decision must be recorded on the provisional authorisation within 3 months of the child being placed.
- Decisions must be entered on the Carers Register **within 14 days** of the agency making the determination to approve the application or not.
 - If the decision is to **Not approve** the application, the designated agency must record this decision on the Carers Register and note whether there have been concerns identified during the assessment.
 - Where the decision is **Approve** this is entered onto the Carers Register, the carer is assigned a Carers Register Carer Authorisation number with the prefix 'CRC'.

- Post authorisation, carers will be subject to ongoing reviews to ensure authorisation requirements are still being met.
- Where there are changes to a carer's authorisation, this must be reflected on the Carers Register within 14 days.
- Where a carer's authorisation ceases (either surrendered by the carer or cancelled by the agency), the designated agency must record this decision on the Carers Register within 14 days.
 - The agency records whether there have been concerns (or not) identified at the time the authorisation ceases.

Roles and Responsibilities

Application stage

An individual:

- applies to a designated agency for authorisation to provide statutory or supported out-of-home care (OOHC)
- signs and submits an application form to the designated agency
- attends any information and training sessions
- participates in the authorisation assessment
- reads and signs the Code of Conduct for authorised carers
- reads and signs/acknowledges agency specific policies/documents including the Charter of Rights.

A designated agency:

- enters the OOHC application on the Carers Register within 14 days of receiving signed application from the applicant/s
- searches the applicant/s and household member/s to determine if there are any other associations (current or historical) with other designated agencies
 - if associations are identified, the agency contacts the other designated agencies to exchange relevant information (Exchange of Information Contacts listed on [OCG website](#))
- assesses probity and suitability to determine suitability for authorisation including household member suitability
 - details of the assessment and rationale of these checks are recorded within the agency's own systems
 - the outcome and date are recorded on the Carers Register
- ensures that the carer understands their responsibilities including the Code of Conduct for Authorised carers
 - a copy of the Code of Conduct signed by the applicant is saved to the agency system
 - Charter of Rights and agency specific policies/documents are provided to applicant/s – to be read/signed by applicant/s
- completes authorisation assessment and panel report (where relevant) which includes:
 - recommendations and rationale to authorise or not
 - relevant authorisation conditions to support placement matching
- Principal Officer (PO) signs off on the authorisation decision including any conditions as this is reviewable by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)

- provides decision in writing to the carer applicant/s including
 - conditions of authorisation and
 - Carers Register PDF Summary of authorisation (best practice) and
 - Avenues to seek feedback with delegated agency staff and
 - NCAT appeal information.

Note: Conditions of authorisation are not recorded on the Carers Register, details of any conditions are to be retained on the agency system (including any changes).

Where decision is to refuse an application:

- a clear rationale and reason for refusal is recorded on the carer file and this matches the Carers Register record ensuring
- the agency has an approval process for recording the status of refused on the Carers Register
- ensures the relevant information is documented to support any future Chapter 16A requests from other agencies
- file closure process to ensure all relevant information and tasks have been completed.

Carers Register requirements:

A designated agency must:

- record an application within 14 days of receipt of signed application
- search the Carers Register to identify other designated agency associations
- update household and individual records prior to recording the decision
- record the decision on the Carers Register within 14 days of determination (after PO sign off)
 - the decision is recorded as Approved, Refused or Withdrawn depending on outcome of assessment – see below *Application Decisions on the Carers Register*.

During authorisation

Authorised carers:

- are provided with written notification of authorisation from designated agency including conditions and Carers Register PDF
- involved in placement matching process with children in OOHC and are matched in accordance with conditions of authorisation
- must abide by the Code of Conduct and agency principles and policies
- advises the agency of any change in circumstance, probity, household composition
- can surrender their authorisation if unable to continue to provide care
 - where a carer may be unavailable to provide care for a period, and there has been no change or decision on their authorisation, their authorisation does not change on the Carers Register. The change in availability is recorded on the agency file.
 - do not use Suspend to reflect carers are unavailable. Suspend is a reviewable decision and should be used where there is a current investigation or matter that needs to be resolved prior to any child being placed with the carer.

Designated agencies:

- supervise the placement for the child and ensures that the arrangements align with the authorisation conditions

- provide regular carer check ins, supervision and support specific to the carer’s needs/circumstance
- ensure probity including WWCC is monitored, current and renewed for carers and household members
- ensure household composition is accurate within the agency’s own records and those records reflect the Carers Register at all times
- review the carer’s authorisation to
 - ensure carer/s continue to abide by the Code of Conduct, agency policies
 - determine additional supports and if required, a change to the authorisation conditions
 - Principal Officer approves any change in authorisation conditions and signs a reissued letter of authorisation detailing the change in conditions.

Note: Changes to authorisation conditions is a reviewable decision.

- monitor carer authorisations and determines whether authorisation should continue based on outcome of carer reviews, any concerns raised, reportable allegations and/or other relevant information
 - Provides decision in writing to the carer including relevant avenues to appeal where authorisation of the carer ceases
 - Where the decision is to cancel a carer authorisation, the carer is advised in writing of the decision including reasons for cancellation
 - signed by the Principal Officer
 - include avenues to appeal internally and externally (NCAT).

Where decision is to cancel or surrender a carer’s authorisation with concerns,

- a clear rational and reason for the decision is recorded on the carer file and this matches the Carers Register record ensuring
- the agency has an approval process for recording the status of concerns on the Carers Register
- ensures the relevant information is documented to support any future Chapter 16A requests from other agencies
- file closure process to ensure all relevant information and tasks have been completed.

Carers Register requirements

- Must be updated within 14 days of the agency becoming aware or determining the following:
 - Change in carer circumstance, household address or composition
 - Reportable allegations lodged and when finalised
 - Decisions made by the agency relating to a carer’s continued authorisation (surrendered, cancelled or suspended)
 - see below *Authorisation Decisions on the Carers Register*.

Recording decisions on the Carers Register

Application decisions on the Carers Register

Decision	Rationale	Carers Register decision	Agency requirements
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Approved	<p>Decision by the agency</p> <p>Probity and suitability are satisfactory for all applicant/s and household members and agency determines authorisation</p>	<p>Approved – First time carer</p> <p>Approved – Previously authorised</p>	<p>Decision to carer in writing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any conditions sign off by the PO.
Refused	<p>Decision by the agency Assessment outcome has determined it is not appropriate for the applicant to be authorised; decision is recorded against the applicant.</p>	<p>Refused – suitability or probity guidelines not met; concerns identified during the assessment, or WWCC Interim Bar or Bar received</p> <p>Refused – agency specific policies – refused due to agency specific policies, not of concern</p>	<p>Decision to carer in writing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rationale for refusal based on outcome of assessment, avenues to appeal (internal and NCAT) sign off by the PO.
Withdrawn	<p>Decision by the applicant</p> <p>The applicant withdraws from the application assessment; decision is recorded against the applicant.</p> <p>Designated agency determines whether there were concerns or not identified during the assessment.</p>	<p>Withdrawn – with concerns – agency determines there are concerns that has arisen from the application process</p> <p>Withdrawn – no concerns – no concerns identified</p>	<p>Confirmation to carer in writing acknowledging withdrawal of application and signed by the PO</p>
Provisional authorisation – ceased no concerns	<p>Decision by the agency</p> <p>Emergency care for specific child no longer required.</p> <p>The application is not progressing to full authorisation for this child or any other children.</p>	<p>Provisional authorisation – ceased no concerns – no concerns identified</p> <p>Note: where there are concerns, use Refused decision.</p>	<p>Confirmation to carer in writing acknowledging provisional authorisation has ceased and signed by the PO.</p>

Authorisation decisions on the Carers Register

Decision	Rationale	Carers Register decision	Agency requirements
Suspended	<p>Decision by the agency</p> <p>A carer’s authorisation may be suspended during an investigation or pending action prescribed by the designated agency for the carer to maintain suitability.</p> <p>A carer’s authorisation must be suspended where the carer resides with a person who is barred, including a barred carer applicant, authorised carer or household member. This includes where a household member does not meet WWCC requirements.</p>	Suspend	<p>Decision to carer in writing includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reasons for suspension avenues to appeal (internal and NCAT) sign off by the PO

Whilst the carer's authorisation is suspended, **no children can be placed** with the carer.

Lift Suspension

Decision by the agency

The agency can lift the suspension if suspension is successfully appealed or overturned.

Lift Suspension

- Can be lifted back to current if the authorisation is to continue
- Can be cancelled where authorisation conditions are not upheld

Decision to carer in writing includes:

- change to authorisation
- any conditions
- avenues to appeal (internal and NCAT)
- sign off by the PO

Cancelled

Decision by the agency

The designated agency may cancel a carer's authorisation.

Where the carer receives a WWCC Bar or Interim Bar or does not meet the WWCC requirements, this is an auto cancellation, and the Carers Register needs to be updated to reflect this.

Cancelled – no concerns

carer's authorisation has been cancelled by the agency due to general suitability for the person to continue as an authorised carer and where no concerns identified.

Cancelled – with concerns

carer's authorisation has been cancelled due to concerns relating to complying with the carer's conditions of authorisation, obligations, restrictions or are due to the outcome of a reportable allegation investigation.

Decision to carer in writing includes:

- reasons for cancelling
- avenues to appeal (internal and NCAT)
- sign off by the PO.

Surrendered

Decision by the carer

An authorised carer may surrender their carer authorisation. The designated agency determines whether there are concerns or not.

Surrendered – no concerns

carer has surrendered their authorisation with no pending investigation or current concerns

Surrendered – with concerns

carer has surrendered their authorisation with an investigation pending or a current concern that may lead the designated agency in determining that the authorised carer should be marked as cancelled with concerns

Confirmation to carer in writing acknowledging surrendered authorisation and signed by the PO

Recording a decision against a Household

Application Decision	Rationale
Approved	Carer/s and household members have met probity and suitability, and agency has made decision to approve the carer and authorise.
Refused	Carer and/or household member have not met some and/or all the suitability requirements or carer/s have withdrawn their application.

Authorisation decision	Rationale
Current	Household has current authorised carers and remains authorised.
Cancel	<p>Will cancel the household and the household members, it will not automatically cancel any associated applicants or authorised carers.</p> <p>If the whole household including applicant/s, authorised carer/s and household member/s are cancelled, each carer applicant and authorised carer must be managed through the application/authorisation decisions (Individual Management process) which records a reason.</p> <p>The Carers Register has been designed this way to allow for carer applicants and authorised carers to be temporarily unattached to a household without the requirement to cancel the application or authorisation e.g. a carer does not have a permanent residence whilst they travel around Australia for 12 months</p>
Suspend	Used when an action triggers a concern and the outcome is pending, for example, pool not compliant, the suspension can be lifted once the matter is resolved.

Contact the Team

Please contact the OCG Carer and Residential Worker Monitoring Team for advice via email carers-register@ocg.nsw.gov.au