

FACT SHEET

DCSI Screening Unit

Disability Services Employment Screening



What is Disability Services Employment Screening?

Relevant legislation

Disability services employment screening is conducted pursuant to the *Disability Services Act 1993* (SA) (the Act) and the *Disability Services (Assessment of Relevant History) Regulations 2014* (the Regulations).

Disability services employment screening is a comprehensive assessment of a person's relevant history to determine whether they pose a risk of harm to the safety or wellbeing of people with disability.

'Relevant history' is defined in the *Disability Services Act 1993* (section 5B) and *Disability Services (Assessment of Relevant History) Regulations 2014* (Regulation 9).

In general terms, the relevant history considered includes:

- findings of guilt by a court
- charges for an offence (including pending charges) regardless of the outcome;
- information held by government and non-government agencies including human resources information about allegations of workplace misconduct;
- care concern investigations
- child protection information

When is it required?

Section 5B of the Act places a legal obligation on prescribed disability services providers funded under the *Disability Services Act 1993* to ensure that a person has undergone an assessment of their relevant history by an authorised screening unit, before being appointed or engaged in a prescribed disability service position. This applies to employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and subcontractors.



The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Screening Unit has been gazetted as the authorised screening unit for this purpose.

The Act also provides that the relevant organisation may cause an assessment to be undertaken for existing staff or volunteers at any stage for the purpose of ensuring the safety and welfare of persons for whom disability services are provided.

What is a 'prescribed position'?

A prescribed position is one that includes (but is not limited to) work or volunteer role in which

the person, in the course of their duties, has or is engaged in:

- regular contact with people with a disability or working in close proximity to people with a disability on a regular basis, unless the contact or work is directly supervised at all times; or
- supervision or management of people in positions requiring or involving regular contact with people with a disability or working in close proximity to people with a disability on a regular basis; or
- access to records of a kind prescribed by regulation relating to people with a disability.

For people working with children in the disability sector

People working with children in the disability sector are required to obtain a Child Related Employment screening clearance in accordance with the *Children's Protection Act 1993*. This clearance will enable them to work with both children and people with disability. A Disability Services Employment clearance alone is not sufficient for a role working with children. People who already have a current Child Related Employment screening clearance from the DCSI Screening Unit are not required to undergo a Disability Services Employment screening as well

for the purpose of working in disability services.

Once their Child Related Employment clearance is due to expire, an employee or volunteer should apply for a new Child Related Employment screening if they are still working with children. If, however, their role has changed and they only work with adults with disability, they must apply for a DCSI Disability Services Employment screening.

What does it involve?

Disability Services Employment screening involves the assessment of a person's relevant history, as detailed above, and is a 'point in time' assessment of the information available at the time of screening. Information may be shared with an employer.

Further information about the type of information considered and how it is assessed is available in the *Disability Services Employment Screening Standards* available on the DCSI Screening Unit website.

Where the DCSI Screening Unit finds that an applicant poses no risk to the safety or wellbeing of a person with disability following an assessment of their relevant history, a clearance letter will be issued by the DCSI Screening Unit to the individual.

Procedural Fairness

All matters are assessed in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. If the DCSI Screening Unit assesses information about

an applicant that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a person with disability, the DCSI Screening Unit will contact the applicant to discuss the matter before finalising the assessment. Applicants will also have access to a review process in the event they do not agree with a screening outcome. Further information is available on the Screening Unit website.

How long does it take?

The screening process commences only when the DCSI Screening Unit has received a correctly completed form.

If there is no criminal history and no match of the applicant's name against any government records searched, screening should be completed within **30 business days**.

If the DCSI Screening Unit obtains information that requires further assessment, for example, information from Courts, Police agencies or other sources, or if the applicant's name registers as a match against any government records assessed by the DCSI Screening Unit, additional time may be required. In some cases an assessment **may take more than 8 weeks** to finalise, depending on the relevance, complexity, and amount of information to be taken into account.

If the Screening Unit does not identify any risk requiring assessment, the turnaround time for your clearance should be **approximately 30 business days**. If your name registers as a match in any of the databases assessed by the Screening Unit, additional time **beyond the 30**

days may be required to process your application.

If the Screening Unit obtains information that requires further assessment, your application may take **more than 8 weeks** to process. This will depend on the relevance, complexity, and amount of information that requires assessment.

What does it cost?

Screening fees are gazetted annually. Refer to the DCSI website for the current fees.

How often is screening required?

A DCSI Disability Services Employment Screening clearance is valid for three years.

A clearance is transferable across services provided or funded under the *Disability Services Act 1993* in South Australia.

Is it different to a National Police Certificate?

Yes. Disability Services Employment Screening involves assessment of a wide range of criminal and other information about an applicant's relevant history specifically focussed on highlighting any risk of harm the applicant may pose to the safety or wellbeing of people with disability in a professional or volunteer environment. A National Police Certificate is limited to a record of a person's criminal conviction history

More information

For more information about DCSI Disability Services Employment Screening please refer to:

- the *Frequently Asked Questions* fact sheet;
- the *Disability Services Employment Screening Standards* available on the DCSI Screening Unit website www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/services/screening or
- email Disability SA :
DCSI.DisabilitySADisabilityScreeningPolicy@sa.gov.au

Contacting the Screening Unit

Please email the Screening Unit. Your query will be directed to the appropriate area for a response.

Email: DCSIScreeningUnit@sa.gov.au

Website: www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/services/screening

Postal address

Screening Unit, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion
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