

# FACT SHEET

## DCSI Screening Unit

### Aged Care Sector Employment Screening



## What is Aged Care Sector Employment Screening?

Aged care sector employment screening by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Screening Unit is an assessment of an individual's criminal conviction history to determine if they pose a risk of harm if engaged for employment or volunteering activities with Commonwealth funded aged care services.

## When is it required?

### Relevant legislation

The *Aged Care Act 1997* (the Act) provides a legislative framework for Commonwealth-funded aged care services. *The Aged Care Accountability Principles (2014)* provide specific details about what is required or permitted under the Act.

The Principles require that organisations funded by the Commonwealth to provide aged care services should be satisfied that a person providing those services has not committed a precluding offence.

Precluding offences are defined as:

- a conviction for murder or sexual assault;

- a conviction of, and sentence to imprisonment for, any other form of assault.

Any person with a conviction for a precluding offence must not be employed, contracted, hired, retained, or accepted as an unsupervised volunteer in an aged care service subsidised by the Commonwealth.

Aged care sector employment screening may be required when engaging people to work or volunteer in roles such as:

- key personnel (as defined in the Act) of the approved provider;
- employees and contractors of the approved provider who provide care to care recipients, this includes all staff employed, hired, retained or contracted to provide services under the control of the approved provider whether in the residential aged care setting, a community setting or in the care recipient's own home;
- allied health professionals contracted by the approved provider to provide care to care recipients;
- kitchen, cleaning, laundry, garden and office personnel employed by the approved provider either directly or through a contract agency; and
- consultants, trainers and advisors for accreditation support or systems improvement who are under the control of the approved provider.

Approved aged care sector service providers have a responsibility under the Act to familiarise themselves with its provisions, along with any state or territory specific legislation. All Commonwealth legislation is available on the Commonwealth Law website: [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au).



Organisations providing aged care services are not required by legislation to use services of the DCSI Screening Unit, and may conduct their own screening as required in the *Aged Care Accountability Principles 2014*.

An organisation may require its employees or volunteers to provide a National Police Certificate. Part 6 of the Accountability Principles sets out the police check requirements.

The Commonwealth Department of Health recommends that approved providers ensure they have policies and procedures in place to assess police certificates that record convictions for offences not considered precluding under the Act. Any decisions regarding the employment of a person with any recorded convictions must be rigorous, defensible and transparent.

More information about Commonwealth requirements for screening of people working in the aged care sector can be found on the Department of Health and Ageing's [website](#).

## What does screening involve?

Aged care sector employment screening by the DCSI Screening Unit involves an assessment of an individual's criminal conviction history to identify if a person poses a risk of harm if engaged to work or volunteer in activities providing Commonwealth funded aged care services.

The DCSI Screening Unit provides a 'point in time' assessment of risk, based on the information disclosed to it at the time of screening. Information may be shared with an employer.

A risk assessment provided by the DCSI Screening Unit is intended to assist an organisation to make informed decisions about recruitment of its employees and volunteers. Screening is

considered as one part of the recruitment process. The final decision-making responsibility about engagement rests with the employing organisation.

## Procedural Fairness

Applicants must give their written informed consent to undergo screening.

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 people receiving Commonwealth-funded aged care services, 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 will only commence once the DCSI Screening Unit has received a correctly completed form.

If there is no criminal conviction history to assess, screening should be completed within **30 business days**.

If the DCSI Screening Unit obtains information that requires further assessment, additional time may be required. In some

cases it may take **more than 8 weeks** to finalise, depending on the relevance, complexity, and amount of information which 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?

DCSI Screening clearances are valid for three years.

A clearance letter issued by the DCSI Screening Unit is portable across relevant organisations within South Australia.

## Is it different from a National Police Certificate?

Yes. An aged care employment screening by the DCSI Screening Unit involves a risk assessment of a person's criminal conviction history, specifically focused on that person's risk of harm to people who are receiving aged care sector services in a workplace or volunteer environment. There is no such risk assessment issued with a National Police Certificate.

## More information

More information about Aged Care Sector screening requirements can be found on the [Department of Health and Ageing's website](#).

Relevant Commonwealth legislation is available from the Commonwealth Law website: [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.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](mailto:DCSIScreeningUnit@sa.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/services/screening](http://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/services/screening)

**Postal address**

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