

# Working with Children Checks for kinship carers

Information Bulletin # 3 for divisional child protection practitioners  
May 2017

**Bulletin # 3 has been prepared by Statutory and Forensic Services and the Office of Professional Practice. It provides child protection practitioners with additional information in response to frequently asked questions regarding Working with Children Checks for kinship carers. [wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au)**

## What you know to date

	From 1 May 2017 the <i>Working with Children Act 2005</i> requires ALL Victorian kinship carers to hold a Working with Children Check
	All carers where placement began from 1 May 2017 on must apply for a WWCC within 21 days of the placement commencing. The Working with Children Check Unit has created a code specifically for kinship carers – <b>code 80</b> on the application form
	All new kinship carers must be advised at the time of placement of the requirement to obtain a WWCC and provided with the information and support to obtain their WWCC
	All persons in the household <u>assessed as a primary carer</u> for the child/children must apply for a WWCC within 21 days of the commencement of placement. There may be one or two carers
	It is the responsibility of the child protection practitioner to monitor their kinship placements and ensure the carers comply with this requirement
	Supporting carers to apply for or update their WWCC when completing the Kinship Part A assessment is essential to the success of implementing this new requirement
	For new placements an IAO cannot be extended past 21 days if the carer has not lodged their application for their WWCC

## Do kinship carers know they are required to hold a Working with Children Check?

Yes. All kinship carers received a letter with their care allowance remittance advice, posted 22 May 2017, to advise them of the requirement. For some carers, this may have been the first time they had been made aware of the change in legislation.

## What can I do to help kinship carers I am working with?

The most important person to assist kinship carers to understand the new WWCC requirement is the child protection practitioner.

**For new kinship care arrangements, it is essential that the WWCC is clearly explained during the assessment process, including the importance of compliance. For existing carers please proactively contact the carer and explain the new requirement. Some families such as those with low English literacy**

**or limited personal identification documents may find applying for the Check daunting and will require your active assistance.**

Tips to support compliance with the new requirements include:

- at the time of placement, provide the carer with all the relevant information sheets (see information below in relation to translated information)
- discuss with them the importance of applying for their WWCC
- be clear about who in the house is required to apply (adults assessed by child protection as the primary caregiver(s) only – other adults in the house do not need to apply)
- take your ultrabook and sit the with kinship carer and help them apply online if that assists
- refer to the information in other languages on the WWCC website (see below)
- for new placements, follow up with the carer by day 15 of the placement to ensure they have lodged their application at Australia Post. If they haven't lodged their application please understand the reasons or barriers to them applying and see what other assistance they require from you to apply
- if you believe that there may be issues with complying with the WWCC requirements, please speak with your manager as soon as possible
- if there are barriers such as distance to the post office or their capacity to travel to the post office, contact the WWCC Unit on 1300 652 879 (8.30-5pm, Monday to Friday) as they may be able to provide assistance.

## Is information available in other languages for CALD kinship carers?

The Working with Children Check General Information Guide from the WWCC Unit is translated into a number of languages. The information summarises:

- the purpose of the Check
- who needs to apply for a Check and how to apply
- what is screened or checked.

This information can be found here:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/resources/translations/>

Consider the use of a telephone interpreter to assist.

## Does a WWCC allow a person to be a kinship carer?

Child protection practitioners must undertake their usual assessment of all potential kinship carers, including Kinship Assessment Part A followed by Part B, police checks, CRIS checks and home environment checks.

A WWCC does not automatically approve a person to be a kinship carer.

## What does a WWCC mean for a kinship carer?

The WWCC that kinship carers apply for is the same WWCC that any other person in child related work applies for. Kinship carers undergo the same assessment by DJR and may use their WWCC in other child related work.

The 'Code 80' identifies the person as a kinship carer and by using the correct DHHS address this ensures the department is notified of any issues that may arise when DJR undertake their regular screening.

All WWCC cardholders are monitored by regular screening against Victoria Police records. By listing DHHS as their employer we will be notified of any new offences of concern.

## What identification do kinship carers need to apply for their WWCC?

All WWCC applicants need to provide proof of identity which includes primary and secondary documents. A list of what documents meet these requirements is located on the WWCC website.

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/lodging+your+application/proof+of+identity+requirements/>

Proof of identification may be verified electronically or in person at the post office.

## What if the carer does not have sufficient identification or an email address to apply for their WWCC?

The WWCC Unit don't have a 'points' system in place proof of identity is required at lodgement at Australia Post. Please refer to their Proof of Identification requirements for further information (as above).

If a kinship carer does not have the required identification to apply for a WWCC please have them contact the WWCC Unit on 1300 652 879. You may need to support them to make this telephone call. The WWCC Unit will provide information and guidance on how to apply.

## What if the carer does not have an email address to apply for their WWCC?

People who are having difficulties applying online (including not having an email address) can call the WWCC Unit on 1300 652 879 to discuss the best approach for them to take to apply for a WWCC. The practitioner supporting the kinship carer apply can also call this number for advice.

The WWCC Unit may suggest that the person, including the child protection practitioner, supporting the carer to apply, use their email address when they are assisting a kinship carer to apply for a Check. The WWCC Unit can email the support person the bar code that can be taken to Australia Post to lodge their application. The email address is not used for any other purpose other than to be an address to receive the application bar code.

Therefore practitioners providing direct support to carers should therefore consider providing their work email address to receive the bar code from the WWCC Unit.

## Do I need to wait for WWCC to begin carer payments?

No. Carer payments are not dependent on the WWCC being issued.

Child protection practitioners must lodge a commence payment form in CRIS. It is important that the allowance is initiated as soon as possible after the placement is endorsed (not more than three days after the commencement of placement).

## Assessments and endorsement

Child protection practitioners must follow the usual practice for assessing carers and seeking endorsement for any adverse criminal history prior to requesting carer payments. Any significant criminal history that would prevent a carer obtaining a WWCC will be identified at the commencement of placement when their criminal history is obtained.

Child protection practitioners, please add into your memo for adverse criminal history approval that the carer has been provided with information to apply for their WWCC.

## Do kinship carers residing overseas need to apply for a WWCC?

No. International carers are not required at this time to apply for a Victorian WWCC while they are living out of Australia.

## Do kinship carers residing interstate need to apply for a Victorian WWCC?

Yes. Interstate carers are required to apply for a Victorian WWCC.

## What happens when a kinship carer's WWCC is coming up for expiry?

The expiry date of the kinship carers WWCC will be recorded in CRIS by the Office of Professional Practice (OPP) in central office when they receive the carers' WWCC details.

In many cases kinship carers already hold a WWCC and have updated their details to include their role as a kinship carer. Updating their details does NOT extend their WWCC.

WWCCs last for a period of five years. There is a three month window from the expiry date in which kinship carers can reapply for their WWCC with the same details. During this three months their WWCC is not valid.

### **Kinship carers must renew their WWCC prior to the expiry date.**

At this stage, there is no prompt in CRIS to notify child protection practitioners of upcoming expiry dates of WWCC, however this will be implemented and child protection practitioners advised. In the interim practitioners will need to regularly check the compliance of their kinship carers.

## Do respite and 'voluntary agreement' kinship carers require a WWCC?

Yes. All kinship carers approved by child protection to care for children placed in their care whether on a short term, long term, respite arrangement or voluntary agreement are required to obtain a WWCC.

This is also applicable where the arrangement relates to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) when children are placed under the Children, Youth and Families Act with a kinship carer.

## What about permanent carers?

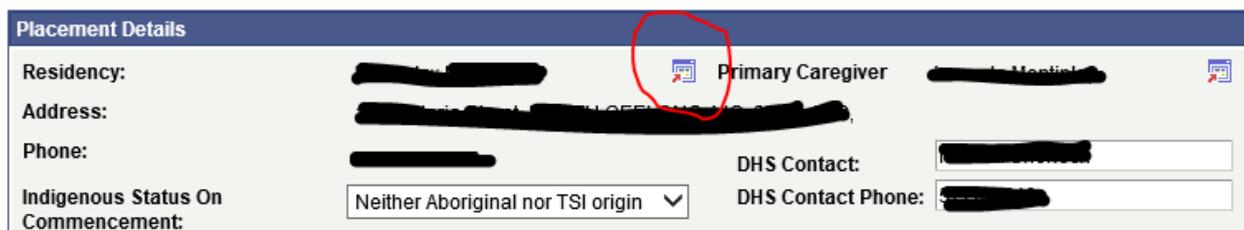
No. Permanent carers are not required to obtain a WWCC. As some permanent carer placement details were not recorded correctly in CRIS as a permanent care rather than kinship care placement, some permanent carers have received information that they are required to hold a WWCC. If you are working with a permanent care family who is receiving caregiver payments, please let them know that they do not have to apply for a WWCC.

To avoid this in the future, it is essential that CRIS is updated to reflect permanent care status – this includes updating court screens, relationships to add the carer in the role of 'permanent carer' and the kinship placement ended and permanent care placement entered.

## Where do I find WWCC details in CRIS?

**During implementation phase of this new legislative requirement, child protection practitioners should not enter any details into these fields.**

To find the record of an entered Check, go into your placement record, click on the blue icon next to the residency name in the placement details section.



The screenshot shows a 'Placement Details' form with the following fields:

- Residency: [Redacted]
- Address: [Redacted]
- Phone: [Redacted]
- Indigenous Status On Commencement: Neither Aboriginal nor TSI origin (dropdown menu)
- Primary Caregiver: [Redacted] (This field is circled in red in the image)
- DHS Contact: [Redacted]
- DHS Contact Phone: [Redacted]

Then click on the 'Contacts' tab and the blue icon next to the carers name. Next click on the 'caregiver details' tab and you will see the Working with Children Check box.

Working With Children Check			
Lodge Date	Issue Date	Description	
1 27/03/2014	28/04/2017	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Add Working With Children Check

## Can I enter WWCC details if a carer shows me their WWCC?

**No. At this stage please don't enter any details into the CRIS Working With Children Check field.**

During these first few months of the implementation phase, central office (OPP) will enter all kinship carer's WWCC check details into CRIS. The OPP is entering the details when the assessment confirmation letter from the Department of Justice and Regulation's WWCC Unit is sent to the OPP in central office.

This confirms that the kinship carer has listed DHHS as their 'employer' and will ensure the department is notified of any future issues during screening by the WWCC Unit at DJR.

Remember it is essential that the department is listed as an 'employer' for each kinship carer (see details below).

## What should I record then?

**Child protection practitioners should make a case note** with the title **WWCC Confirmation** when the kinship carers confirms with you that they have lodged their application for a WWCC or updated their details if they already have a Check. You may receive confirmation by viewing the receipt from Australia Post or the carer tells you that they have successfully lodged.

To be compliant with the WWCC legislation a kinship carer must lodge their application for a Check within 21 days of the child coming into their care.

Because it takes some days or weeks for a carers application to be processed and for the OPP to receive the assessment letter and enter the details, it is important for auditing and compliance purposes that child protection practitioners record compliance within the 21 day period.

## Help us to help you!

The OPP is undertaking the task of adding all kinship carers WWCC details to CRIS. This means searching each carer, reviewing their CRIS profile and adding the WWCC lodgement date, issue date, card number and expiry.

To help the OPP help you by making sure your carers details are added in a timely manner, please ensure that all carers are listed as contacts in the placement record as well as listed a 'caregiver - kinship' in relationships.

In the example below you can see the carer has a relationship to the child as 'caregiver – kinship' and 'aunt' and they are listed as the primary contact.

Name	Relationship	Start Date	End Date	Responsible for Harm	CP Case	CTPO	FRO	CBSO	LTCO	CSO	GSO	LTGSO
[REDACTED]	Caregiver - Kinship	02/02/2017			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
[REDACTED]	Caregiver - Kinship	02/02/2017			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
[REDACTED]	Aunt - Not Specified	31/01/2017			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
[REDACTED]	Aunt - Not Specified	31/01/2017			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
[REDACTED]	Contact <-> Company	21/02/2017	21/02/2017									
[REDACTED]	Primary Contact <-> Company	21/02/2017										

For more information on placement creation please see the CRIS help guide.

<http://intranet.dhs.vic.gov.au/resources-and-tools/guides-and-manuals/cris-placement-and-referral-guides/placement-guides>

## Remember to use the correct address

It is very important for the administration of the applications that carers fill in their application form or update their details with the specific information on the WWCC Unit form. They must use these details:

Department of Health and Human Services

PCB – Safety Screening – Kinship Carer

GPO Box 4057 Melbourne 3000

## Roles and responsibilities

Kinship carers	Central office	Divisional child protection programs
<p><b>People without a Check</b> Apply for a Working with Children Check</p> <p><b>Existing card holders</b> Update their existing Working with Children Check</p>	<p><b>CRIS data entry</b> Between March and September 2017 the Office of Professional Practice (OPP) will centrally manage the CRIS data entry for each child's carer including existing and new kinship carers.</p> <p>OPP will receive regular communication from the Department of Justice and Regulation with the list of kinship carers and take the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Match the kinship carer with children on CRIS</li> <li>• Enter the lodgement date into every related child's CRIS file</li> <li>• Enter the date and application number for all successful applications into the relevant CRIS files</li> </ul>	<p><b>Kinship carers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify placements which may be at risk due to a potential interim negative or adverse notice</li> <li>• Manage a list of all divisional kinship care placements. Include case contracted cases and unallocated cases on the list</li> <li>• Working from the divisional list of kinship placements, monitor CRIS to ensure lodgement of Check has occurred and Check has been issued</li> <li>• Assist kinship carers to apply and lodge an application as required</li> <li>• Manage non-compliance by proactively following up with carers who have not lodged an application and support them to apply</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Interim negative and adverse notices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive communication from Department of Justice and Regulation in relation to negative and adverse notices</li> <li>• Contact the relevant Divisional Assistant Director, Child Protection in relation to interim negative notices and adverse notices in regard to their kinship carers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Interim negative and adverse notices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Director, Child Protection will be the key contact for interim and adverse negative notices communication from central office</li> <li>• Commence immediate case planning review of cases where an INN has been issued</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Practice Advice</b> Child protection will review and update all related procedures, policies, advice and forms for kinship care and communicate these changes</p>	<p><b>Practice Advice</b> Operationalise new procedures, policies, advice and forms and implement policy</p>

Inquiries can be directed to [wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au)