

Working with Children Checks for kinship carers

FAQs Bulletin Number 4: for divisional child protection practitioners
July 2017

Bulletin # 4 has been prepared by the Children, Families, Disability and Operations division. It provides child protection practitioners with information in response to frequently asked questions regarding Working with Children Checks for kinship carers. wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au

At mid-July, we are five weeks away from the August 22 deadline for all kinship carers (where placement started prior to May 1 2017) to obtain a Working with Children Check (Check).

Don't risk placement disruption. Help the carers you work with apply for their Check.

Who in the household needs to apply?

All persons approved by child protection as a primary carer for the child MUST obtain a Check.

All persons approved as a carer MUST be listed in the placement as individual carers in CRIS.

And a reminder about who does not need to apply...

Persons over the age of 18 who reside in the home and are not approved as providing care for the child do NOT need a Check.

If the children are on a permanent care order the carer does NOT need a Check.

People such as baby-sitters or family friends who occasionally mind the child, do NOT need a Check.

If a carer has been assessed as a respite carer and they receive caregiver payments, they are required to have a Check.

The spouse of the primary does NOT need a Check if you have assessed that they are NOT a primary carer.

What if a carer does not have photo identification?

You may wish to assist the carer to apply for a 'Proof of Age Card'. Photo identification is not required to apply and the fee is \$10. <http://www.vcglr.vic.gov.au/community-services/proof-age>

Carers can also contact the Check Unit on 1300 652 879 (8.30-5pm, Monday to Friday) for assistance if they do not have photo identification. Their Check card will also provide them with a form of photo identification.

A carer says they have applied but nothing has been entered into CRIS as yet?

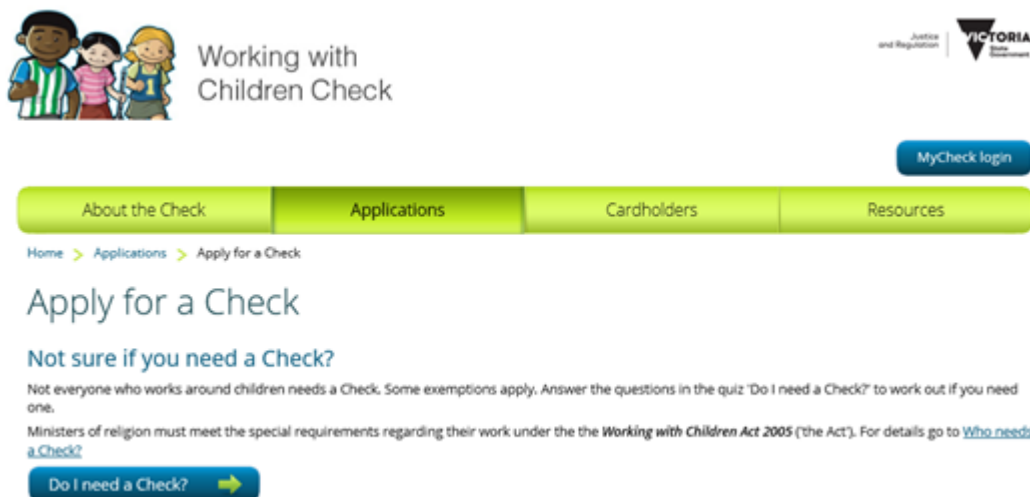
When a kinship carer applies for their Check, the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR) conducts their own assessment as to the carers' suitability to be granted a Check. On occasion the Check Unit may make contact with the carer via letter or phone to ask for further information. When the carers Check is granted a letter is then sent to the Department of Health and Human Services PCB – Safety Screening – Kinship Carer address. These letters are then processed by the OPP and the carers details recorded on CRIS.

It is important to case note your conversations with the carer about their Check application.

If after eight weeks from when the carers says they have applied and there is still nothing recorded on CRIS you can follow up via the wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au email address.

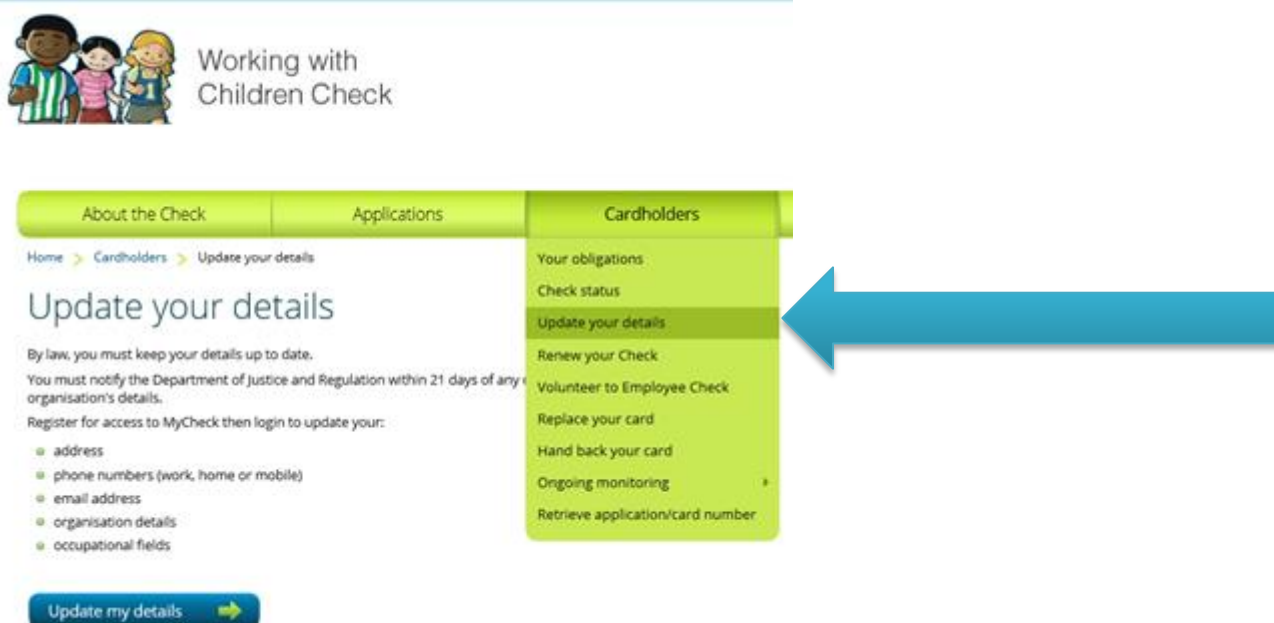
Kinship carers that do NOT have a Check go to this web address:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/apply+for+a+check/>



Kinship carers that already have a Check and need to update their details to include their role as a kinship carer and list DHHS as an 'employer' go to this web address:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/cardholders/update+your+details/>



Creating correct placements in CRIS

Each member of the carer household aged 18 or older is required to be entered within CRIS as a Residency 'Contact'. A police check must also be completed and recorded within CRIS. You can enter all household members regardless of their age and when they turn 18 CRIS will prompt you to obtain their police check.

The persons approved as the primary carer/s must be recorded as 'caregiver'. If you are approving two people as carers, for example an aunt and uncle, record both of them as 'caregiver - kinship' in relationships and as contacts to the placement residency with their role in the household being 'caregiver'. You can only select one person as the 'primary caregiver' on CRIS.

When undertaking your kinship assessment be sure to sight the kinship carers identification. Record them in CRIS under their legal name, if they have a preferred name or alias record this in CRIS as well. Confirm their date of birth and address, check the spelling of their name.

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>

What happens if a new kinship carer does not apply for their Check within 21 days of placement commencement?

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

For new kinship care arrangements, it is essential that the Check requirement is clearly explained during the kinship assessment, including the importance of compliance. 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 (these sheets are located on the child protection manual <http://www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/node/3831>)
- discuss with the carer the importance of applying for their Check. Provide reassurance that it is highly likely if the carer has been approved by child protection based on their criminal record check and kinship assessment that they will be granted a Check
- be clear about who in the house is required to apply (adults approved by child protection as the primary caregiver(s) only – other adults in the house do not need to apply)
- take your ultrabook and sit with kinship carer and help them apply online to assist them
- 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
- record on CRIS all your conversations and assistance provided to the carers to apply for and lodge their Check
- if you believe that there may be issues with complying with the Check 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 Check Unit on 1300 652 879 (8.30-5pm, Monday to Friday) as they may be able to provide assistance
- to avoid any placement disruptions be proactive and creative in your approach to supporting carers to apply for their Check where there is resistance by the carers to do so

- take note, that there may be some delays in a kinship carers Check details being recorded on CRIS and their details may not appear on CRIS by day 21. This is due to the delay in information being received from DJR
- if you are approaching 21 days of placement and are unsure if the kinship carer has applied for their Check please contact the OPP via email wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Where can kinship carers lodge their Check?

After completing the online application carers need to attend Australia Post **within 21 days** to complete the lodgement of their application. To find participating Australia Post outlets please go to:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/apply+for+a+check/apply+in+victoria>

Not all Australia Post outlets offer this service. You may wish to go to the website and enter the carers postcode to identify their nearest Australia Post outlet for them.

What about contracted cases?

All kinship carers of cases contracted to an agency for case management, prior to 1 May 2017, are being supported by their agency to obtain their Check. From now on, all new cases being contracted out to an agency will have lodged their Check prior to being contracted.

What's happening in CRIS?

There are a number of changes happening in CRIS to support the management and compliance of kinship carers Checks. This includes prompts being added to the dash board when a placement is coming up to 21 days and when a kinship carer's Check is due to expire.

There will also be new closure checks to ensure when cases are closed that placements are correct or ceased.

A 'carer checks' category will also be added for case note recording of discussions with carers about both their Check application and criminal history.

These changes are anticipated to be active on CRIS from September 2017.

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 Check Unit form. They must use 'Code 80' and these details:

Department of Health and Human Services

PCB – Safety Screening – Kinship Carer

GPO Box 4057 Melbourne 3000

Send your enquiries to wwcckinship@dhhs.vic.gov.au