

Queensland Disability Worker Screening

Frequently Asked Questions for Employers

What is Queensland Disability Worker Screening?

On 1 February 2021, new Queensland disability worker screening reforms will be introduced to protect people in receipt of state-funded supports or services from an unacceptable the risk of harm. The paramount consideration is the right of people with disability to live their lives free from abuse, violence, neglect or exploitation.

The new disability worker screening checks will determine whether a person is cleared or excluded from working in certain roles with people with disability.

As a state-funded disability support services employer it is important for you to understand the changes to screening in Queensland, your obligations and the impact on your organisation and employees.

Who needs a worker screening check?

From 1 February 2021 workers in roles who are newly engaged by a state-funded provider to provide state-funded disability supports and services must undergo a Queensland disability worker screening check. People covered by this system will include, workers in the Queensland Government run Accommodation Support and Respite Services and Queensland Government funded disability advocacy services.

What about existing workers who have a valid yellow card or yellow card exemption?

Existing workers or new workers who already have a valid yellow card or yellow card exemption won't be required to get a disability worker screening check straight away. Their existing card can be used until it expires, is suspended or is cancelled. There is a dedicated fact sheet which guides employers through transitional arrangements to the new Queensland Disability Worker Screening system.

State-funded providers are responsible for identifying employees who need screening and ensuring they hold a valid disability worker screening clearance.

It is an offence for a state-funded provider to engage or continue to engage a worker to carry out state-funded disability work unless they hold a clearance. Penalties apply for non-compliance.

Are any of my employees exempt?

Workers providing state-funded disability services and supports are exempt from holding a Queensland disability worker screening clearance if:

- They already hold a valid NDIS worker screening clearance.
- They are a student carrying out work experience and are appropriately supervised. For example, a school student carrying out work experience who is appropriately supervised by a screened worker does not require a check.

What if my worker needs a blue card too?

Workers delivering services or supports to children with disability will need both a Queensland disability worker screening check and a blue card. These workers can make a combined disability worker screening and blue card application for one fee.

The Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Disability Services) is responsible for processing the disability worker screening component of the application. Disability Services will forward the application details to Blue Card Services who are responsible for processing the blue card application component.

A dedicated fact sheet, 'Application process for state-funded workers' has been developed for workers on the application process. The combined application is made through Disability Services by the worker and cannot be submitted directly to Blue Card Services.

Workers who apply for and receive a Queensland disability worker screening clearance and subsequently need a blue/exemption card can apply through Blue Card Services for a reduced fee.

When can my employee start working?

Queensland has passed legislation to support a 'no card, no start' approach to disability worker screening. This means that workers providing state-funded disability services and supports cannot start working until they have been issued with a clearance.

Who applies for a worker screening check?

Workers are now responsible for applying for a disability worker screening check. The quickest way to apply is online via the [Worker Screening website](#). A dedicated fact sheet has been created to help workers navigate the worker portal registration, online identity check and application process.

A worker cannot make an application unless you (the employer) are engaging or proposing to engage them to carry out state-funded disability work in Queensland. You must instruct your employees to make an application if a clearance is required for the role they are performing. Please also provide your state employer ID number (issued to you by the Queensland Worker Screening Unit) to your employee, as they will be asked to enter this on the application form.

How much does the application cost?

The following application costs will apply:

- Queensland disability worker screening application for paid workers: \$97.60
- Queensland disability worker screening application and blue card application for paid workers: \$107.60
- Volunteer applications: Free

As part of the application process, a worker can make a payment or defer it to an employer or nominated representative. If you have arranged to pay for your worker's application, you will receive an email providing payment options including BPOINT (online), cheque or money order.

How do I verify applications?

From 1 February 2021, the Yellow Card Online portal will no longer exist and the new Queensland Employer Portal (the employer portal) will commence operation. The employer portal will assist you to verify workers you have engaged or intend to engage to provide state-funded disability services

or supports. The employer portal cannot be used to verify workers applying for an NDIS worker screening check and this must be done through the NDIS Worker Screening Database.

State-funded providers who already have access to the Yellow Card Online portal will be contacted to confirm instructions for transition to the new employer portal. If you do not have an existing login you will need to register for the portal via the [Worker Screening website](#).

A detailed guide has been developed for employers to help them use the Queensland Employer Portal.

How does the application process work?

After you have verified the application through the portal, the Worker Screening team will:

- ✓ Complete checks to determine if the applicant has any assessable information (such as criminal history, disciplinary information or other relevant information)
- ✓ Review any assessable information received and contact the applicant for further details if required
- ✓ Decide the application

What is an interim bar?

During the application process if assessable information is received that is of concern, an interim bar may be imposed on the applicant. This will prohibit them from working while their application is in progress and includes applicants in non-risk assessed roles. You will be notified if this occurs.

It is an offence for a state-funded provider to have a worker carry out state-funded disability work if the worker has been issued with an interim bar. Penalties apply for non-compliance.

How am I notified of the screening outcome?

The Queensland Worker Screening Unit will contact you directly to advise of the outcome for your worker. Applicants who have been approved to work will be issued a clearance. Applicants who have not been approved to work will be issued with an exclusion.

Workers will also be notified directly of application outcomes. Successful applicants will be sent a Queensland disability worker screening card.

It is an offence for a state-funded provider to have a worker carry out state-funded disability work if the worker has been issued with an exclusion. Penalties apply for non-compliance.

How long does the application process take?

The new online processes will make screening easier, quicker and more efficient. As part of the screening check, we rely on other departments to provide us with relevant information so processing times can fluctuate.

Applicants who have no assessable information to review will be processed quickly. It will take longer if assessable information is received because that information needs to be carefully reviewed before a decision is made.

Workers can login to the worker portal to obtain updates on the status of their application.

How long is a clearance valid for?

A Queensland disability worker screening clearance is valid for **three years** from the issue date unless it is cancelled earlier.

Can worker screening checks be used in other states or territories?

Queensland disability worker screening clearances are only effective in Queensland and cannot be used to provide disability work in other states or territories.

How do I link or remove workers associated with my organisation?

You can link new workers who already have existing Queensland disability worker screening clearances and remove workers who are no longer engaged by you through the employer portal. The employer portal can also be used to link new employees who already have a valid yellow card or yellow card exemption and remove employees who are no longer engaged by you.

What if my worker has a change to their criminal history or other relevant information?

If a worker who has been issued a clearance has a change to their criminal history or other information relevant to the screening process (assessable information), they must notify the Worker Screening Unit. A reassessment of their eligibility to hold the clearance will be conducted.

If it is necessary to suspend the worker's clearance during the reassessment process, they will be unable to continue to undertake disability work. You will be notified if this occurs.

It is an offence for a state-funded provider to have a suspended worker carry out state-funded disability work. Penalties apply for non-compliance.

How do I keep up to date with news about disability worker screening in Queensland?

Updates and important information for the disability services sector is regularly released through the 'Latest News' link on the [Worker Screening website](#).

What if I need help?

The easiest and quickest way to get help is by reading through our detailed fact sheets and user guides or accessing the [Worker Screening website](#).

If you can't find the information you need through the available resources, you can contact:

- Queensland Worker Screening Unit: Workerscreening@dldsatsip.qld.gov.au or phone 1800 183 690
- Blue Card Services: 1800 113 611 or (07) 3211 6999