

Disability Worker Screening

Combined application - disability worker screening and blue card

Introduction of disability worker screening in Queensland

From 1 February 2021, Queensland will commence the new disability worker screening system. The new screening check will determine whether a person is cleared or excluded from working in certain roles with people with disability. The paramount consideration is the right of people with disability to live their lives free from abuse, violence, neglect or exploitation.

This system replaces the existing 'yellow card' and 'yellow card exemption' screening provisions.

What if I need a disability worker screening check and a blue card?

If you are a disability worker delivering services or supports to both children and adults with disability, you will need **both** a disability worker screening clearance (NDIS or Queensland disability worker screening) as well as a blue card or exemption card. Workers who need both checks will be able to apply for both checks together.

We call this a *combined application*.

What is a disability worker screening check and disability worker screening clearance?

The disability worker screening check is an assessment of whether a person who works, or seeks to work (including a volunteer), with people with disability poses an unacceptable risk to them. The assessment will determine whether a person is cleared or excluded from working in certain roles with people with disability.

Approved applicants will be issued with a disability worker screening clearance.

What is a blue card check and a blue card or exemption card?

A blue card check assesses the eligibility of a person who works or seeks to work (including a volunteer) with children or young people in regulated child-related employment or who operate a regulated child-related business in Queensland. The blue card check is more than a police check and looks at a charge or conviction for any offence in Australia, even if no conviction was recorded.

Approved applicants are issued with a blue card or an exemption card (only Queensland registered teachers or police officers can be issued with an exemption card).

Who is responsible for issuing these cards?

The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (Disability Services) administers the *Disability Services Act 2006*. We screen and issue disability worker screening clearance cards for people providing disability services and supports.

Blue Card Services (BCS), a division of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, administers the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*. They screen and issue blue cards and exemption cards to people working with children.

What happens if I already have a current blue card or exemption card and a yellow card exemption?

You do not need to get a disability worker screening clearance until your blue card or exemption card and yellow card exemption are due to expire. If you are working with children with disability at this time, you can make a combined application via the [Worker Screening website](#). It is important to ensure you lodge your combined application before your current blue card or exemption card and yellow card exemption expire so you can continue to provide services while your combined application is being processed.

Workers with a valid blue card or exemption card and yellow card exemption can make a combined application up to three months before their current cards expires.

How do I apply?

A combined application can be made online via the [Worker Screening website](#).

If you do not have online access and wish to make a combined disability worker screening application and blue card or exemption card application, please phone the Worker Screening Unit on 1800 183 690 to request a manual form to complete.

Combined applications cannot be submitted to Blue Card Services directly.

What happens after my combined application is lodged?

We will process your disability worker screening application and advise you of the outcome.

We will also advise Blue Card Services of the outcome of your application, and if approved, will share the details of the disability worker screening clearance issued to you as well as the expiry date.

Blue Card Services will then process the working with children check component of your combined application. If approved, your blue card or exemption card will be issued with the same expiry date as your disability worker screening clearance.

How long will the disability services component of my application take?

The online processes will make screening easier, quicker and more efficient. As part of the screening check, Disability Services rely on other departments to provide us with relevant information so processing times can fluctuate. If you have no assessable information, your disability worker screening application will be processed quickly. It will take longer if assessable information is received because that information needs to be carefully reviewed by Disability Services before a decision is made. When Disability Services reaches a decision, we will notify Blue Card Services so they can start processing the blue card or exemption card component of your application.

How much are the fees?

The following application costs will apply:

- NDIS Working Screening application - \$147
- Queensland disability worker screening application - \$103.40

The following table outlines the complete NDIS and State disability worker screening and blue card or exemption card combinations for payment:

| NDIS worker screening check | Blue Card (BC) or Exemption Card (Ex) | Cost |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Paid | BC – Paid | \$162 |
| Volunteer | BC – Paid | \$15 |
| Paid | Ex – Paid | \$147 |
| Paid | BC or Ex – Volunteer | \$147 |
| Volunteer | BC or Ex – Volunteer | No charge |

| State disability worker screening check | Blue Card (BC) or Exemption Card (Ex) | Cost |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Paid | BC – Paid | \$118.40 |
| Volunteer | BC – Paid | \$15 |
| Paid | Ex – Paid | \$103.40 |
| Paid | BC or Ex – Volunteer | \$103.40 |
| Volunteer | BC or Ex – Volunteer | No charge |

Does a disability worker screening clearance and a blue card or exemption card have the same expiry date?

An NDIS worker screening clearance is valid for 5 years (unless suspended or cancelled earlier). An NDIS worker screening clearance is recognised across all states and territories in Australia.

A Queensland disability worker screening clearance is available for people who deliver non-NDIS disability services in Queensland. The Queensland disability worker screening clearance is valid for 3 years (unless suspended or cancelled earlier). You can't use this clearance for NDIS disability work or in other states or territories.

A blue card or exemption card is valid for 3 years (unless suspended or cancelled earlier). You can't use another state's or territory's working with children authority for regulated child-related work in Queensland. Using your blue card or exemption card elsewhere depends on that state's or territory's rules.

If you make a combined application and both checks are approved, your blue card or exemption card will have the same expiry date as your disability worker screening clearance.

What if I have applied for a disability worker screening clearance and then need a blue card or an exemption card?

If you have applied for (after 1 February 2021) or hold a disability worker screening clearance you should advise Blue Card Services when you apply for a blue card or an exemption card.

A special form is available to provide confirmation of your disability clearance application or card details. If you are working in paid employment or operating a business, you will be able to apply for a blue card for a reduced fee of \$15. If you do not use this specific form, the usual blue card fee will apply. Volunteer and exemption card applications will continue to be free. You must submit this form directly to BCS.

If your blue card or exemption card is approved, your blue card or exemption card will be valid for the same period as your disability worker screening clearance. This will allow you to apply to renew both cards together in future.

Can I work while my application is processing?

Queensland has passed legislation to support a 'no card, no start' approach for disability worker screening. This means that people who are required to be screened must have a clearance before they can start work.

If you hold a current blue card or exemption card and yellow card exemption, you can continue to work until your card expires or is cancelled.

Your employer can provide advice to you about when you can start disability work, depending on your role.

For information on requirements for working with children, visit the Blue Card Services website at www.qld.gov.au/bluecard.

Who do I update my contact details with?

If your contact details change, you must update both Disability Services and Blue Card Services with these changes.

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: email workerscreening@dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au or phone 1800 183 690
- Blue Card Services: 1800 113 611 or (07) 3211 6999