


The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA Inc



DCSI Employment Screening Policy and Procedures

STATEMENT

The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Incorporated (PQSA) has a responsibility to protect and remove unreasonable risk from the following groups: children, the aged, vulnerable adults (including people with disabilities) and workers. In meeting this responsibility, PQSA must be satisfied that all workers have the highest standard of integrity and suitability so that the risk of placing anyone in an unsafe environment is minimized.

Approved by: 	Date: 31/3/2017
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The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of SA Inc.(PQSA) is incorporated under the *Association Incorporation Act 1985 (SA)* and conducts its business through operating Divisions, namely Support Services and HomeCare+.

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SCOPE

Compliance with this policy is a condition of appointment for all persons engaged to provide services on behalf of PQSA.

DEFINITIONS

Child – a person under the age of 18 years.

Client - any person who uses the professional services of PQSA.

Currency of Employment Screening – all workers filling a position requiring Employment Screening (“Screening”) must hold a current Department for Community and Social Inclusion (DCSI) Clearance.

A DCSI Clearance will be regarded current when:

- ◆ New workers – appropriate DCSI Clearance has a minimum of six (6) months validity.
- ◆ Existing workers – appropriate DCSI Clearance has not expired.

DCSI Screening Unit – provides a range of screening background checks on behalf of organisations that are engaging workers in paid and unpaid positions.

DCSI Clearance – documented evidence provided by the DCSI Screening Unit that the worker has no restriction relating to the position applied for or currently held within PQSA.

DCSI Clearance – For the purpose of this policy, DCSI Clearance, which is determined by the requirements of the position within the organisation, can be obtained via:

- ◆ Child Related Employment Screening
- ◆ General Employment Probity Screening

Direct Client Contact – Regular contact with client/s during normal work activities, as prescribed in a worker’s Position Description.

Inherent Requirement of the Position – refers to all positions, prospective and existing, which requires a person to:

- ◆ Deal directly with children or vulnerable adults.
- ◆ Have direct access to records relating to children, vulnerable adults and personnel records.
- ◆ Have financial delegation of more than \$50,000.
- ◆ Deal regularly with significant amounts of money.

Must – indicates a mandatory action required by law, industrial instrument, or a PQSA policy or procedure.

Positions requiring screening - refers to positions (existing and prospective) where the inherent requirement of the position requires a worker to interact directly with children, vulnerable adults, PQSA finances or private and confidential Information.

Should – indicates a recommended action that should be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

Vulnerable Adult – person with a disability or recipient of aged care services.

Worker – is a person who carries out work in any capacity for PQSA including work as an employee, contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a contractor or sub-contractor, an employee of a labour hire company, an outworker, apprentice or trainee, or a student gaining work experience or volunteer.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Manager, Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that:

- ◆ Confidentiality and privacy are maintained at all times.
- ◆ Strict security measures are implemented which restrict access to Screening records to those personnel that require this information in order to properly discharge their administrative responsibility for protecting children and vulnerable adults.
- ◆ Advice is provided to Managers and Supervisors on issues related to Screening Clearances.
- ◆ The need for DCSI Screening is included in all recruitment application forms and correspondence.
- ◆ Existing worker requirements for updated Screening is monitored.
- ◆ Existing workers are clearly advised in writing of the requirements of DCSI Screening six (6) months prior to the anniversary of the three (3) year requirement.
- ◆ Potential applicants and existing workers are advised in a timely manner of decisions made in relation to Screening that will affect their ability to work for PQSA.

The Human Resource Department is responsible for:

- ◆ Issuing reports detailing workers whose Screening Clearance is due to expire within the following six (6) months.
- ◆ Sending emails/letters to all workers explaining the requirement for a current Screening Clearance.
- ◆ Giving the worker written notification of PQSA's decision to suspend shifts or remove the personnel from their current duties if the Screening is not cited by the expiry of the three (3) years and until such time as a current Screening Clearance has been received.
- ◆ Notifying the appropriate Manager/Supervisor in writing of the decision to suspend or remove the worker from their duties.

Managers/Supervisors are responsible for ensuring:

- ◆ Consistency of the application of this policy.
- ◆ Workers under their direct supervision acquire the relevant and up to date Screening.
- ◆ Workers who do not acquire the relevant and current Screening are removed from shift.
- ◆ They meet with and counsel workers who do not meet the requirements of this policy.
- ◆ Confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Prospective and Existing Workers are responsible for:

- ◆ Completing the Application for the appropriate DCSI Clearance.
- ◆ Paying the nominal fee for Screening.
- ◆ Renewing their Screening and providing the original for sighting by a member of the Human Resource Department every three (3) years.

POLICY

PQSA delivers services that are bound by contractual and legal obligations. One of these obligations is to ensure that all workers have had appropriate Screening before and during employment.

DCSI operates a screening and assessment process for current and prospective workers that meets the requirements of relevant legislation and contractual obligations; therefore DCSI Clearance will be the only clearance accepted by PQSA. PQSA will not accept a National Police Clearance issued through SAPOL or a Crim Track accredited organisation.

PQSA workers are required to work in situations which involve the acceptance of trust and responsibility for the welfare of children, vulnerable adults, finances, private and confidential information.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ◆ Protect PQSA's integrity.
- ◆ Establish the suitability of workers working with children and vulnerable adults.
- ◆ Establish the suitability of workers working with finances, private and confidential information.
- ◆ Ensure that all workers and clients are protected from working with workers who are deemed unsuitable to work in an environment of honesty and trust.

A current DCSI Clearance is to be provided by persons whom PQSA:

- ◆ Intends to employ
- ◆ Currently employs
- ◆ Engages to provide direct client services as a contractor and/or consultant;
- ◆ Accepts as a provider of voluntary services; and,
- ◆ Otherwise has a relationship with, in any form, where a potential risk exists, e.g. finance, worker relations and payroll.

It is a condition of employment that all new workers produce an appropriate DCSI Clearance with a minimum of six (6) months validity prior to commencing work. All existing workers are required to renew their DCSI Clearance every three (3) years. Each person, by consenting to undertake a DCSI Clearance, demonstrates their commitment to the provision of a safe working environment.

Refusal to apply for/supply a DCSI Clearance will result in that person's application for employment being withdrawn or that worker being removed from duty.

PQSA recognises that a DCSI Clearance is not in itself an accurate assessment of suitability to a position and will ensure all aspects of the recruitment process are undertaken to determine the suitability of a person. The decision process will be clearly documented with the applicant being informed of all steps in the process and given an opportunity to make submissions in person or writing.

Strict confidentiality and privacy will exist in relation to DCSI Clearance information. Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who discloses information without authorisation.

PROCEDURE

The Manager, Human Resources, in consultation with Divisional Managers, will ensure that all relevant worker Position Descriptions include a requirement for a current DCSI Clearance appropriate to the duties being undertaken. This will be based on the potential or expected level of personal contact that workers are likely to have with children or vulnerable adults or the potential or expected degree of access to money, private and confidential information and intellectual property of PQSA. This applies to positions that are permanent, full-time or part-time and to positions that are temporary, including contract, casual and voluntary positions. Job advertisements will include requirements for a DCSI Clearance and the appropriate type.

Confidentiality

The protection of privacy of an applicant and existing workers must be fully ensured. DCSI Clearance information will be filed on Personnel files in a secure area under the direct control of the Manager, Human Resources. Regional sites must forward all DCSI Clearance information to the Human Resource Department, along with all other relevant employment information. A copy of DCSI Clearance information is not to be retained regionally. Screening information will only be accessible to those personnel who require it to properly discharge their administrative responsibility for protecting children and vulnerable adults.

The principles of protecting the privacy of individuals will take precedence over the requirements of administrative expediency.

Existing Workers and Volunteers

All workers who have direct client contact will require the Child Related Employment Screening Clearance only. All workers employed in an administrative capacity with no direct client contact, will require a General Employment Probity Screening Clearance only.

It is the responsibility of the Manager Human Resources or their nominee to:

- ◆ Discuss a breach of policy with individual workers who do not produce a Screening Clearance upon request.
- ◆ Counsel workers who do not produce a satisfactory Screening Clearance.
- ◆ Remove any worker from duty who does not produce or does not have a satisfactory and current Screening Clearance.

New Workers

Only applicants who are short listed for interview will be required to possess a DCSI Clearance. At time of interview, evidence of application for DCSI clearance will suffice (unless otherwise stipulated at time of recruitment), however, new workers cannot commence employment or voluntary services until the DCSI Clearance is received by the Human Resource Department.

Screening can take up to six (6) months to finalise. PQSA recommends the application process for a DCSI Clearance is commenced as soon as notification of the requirement is received.

How to apply for an Employment Screening through The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

All applications must be submitted using the DCSI online screening application, unless the applicant can demonstrate that exceptional circumstances apply and they have no access to the internet. DCSI will not accept paper applications unless an exemption is granted through the DCSI Screening Unit.

Existing Worker – Online Application Lodgement

1. PQSA Requesting Officers are responsible for initiating DCSI Screening applications; **this cannot be initiated by the applicant.**
2. HR nominee will send the worker an email six (6) months prior to expiry to advise a DCSI Clearance is due to be updated and that the application will be initiated online within five (5) business days.
3. After five (5) business days, HR Requesting Officer to initiate appropriate online DCSI Clearance application.
4. Once the Requesting Officer initiates an application using the DCSI online system, the applicant will receive an email from the DCSI Screening Unit advising that PQSA has initiated the screening on their behalf.
5. The applicant will receive a second email from the DCSI Screening Unit providing them with a secure login, user name and password for their account to enable them to complete their application and make payment.
6. The applicant to log into the online application, complete and lodge following the prompts.

Workers with Exceptional Circumstances – No Online Access

1. HR nominee will contact these workers and advise of the need for an online exemption.
2. Following telephone contact, HR nominee will send worker a letter six (6) months prior to expiry to advise a DCSI Clearance is due to be updated and the requirement to provide their name to the DCSI Screening Unit to obtain an exemption from completing the application online.
3. Seven (7) business days after sending the letter, the HR Requesting Officer will email the DCSI Screening Unit with name/s of worker/s who do not have access to the internet.
4. DCSI Screening Unit will send an email to HR Requesting Officer with exemption approval of workers. DCSI will provide PQSA with the form to complete and an exemption number unique to each worker.
5. HR Requesting Officer will send DCSI Screening Application with unique number to the worker.
6. The worker must complete the Employment Screening Form (ensuring that all mandatory fields are completed as DCSI will send the application back to PQSA if fields are not completed or are completed incorrectly).
7. Once form is completed, applicant to lodge and pay for the Employment Screening at a location stipulated on the application form.
8. Only original applications will be processed; copies or faxed applications cannot be processed.
9. The DCSI Screening Unit will automatically notify PQSA of the outcome of the Screening Clearance via email and a letter will automatically be sent to the applicant.

PQSA will only cover costs associated with Employment Screening for Volunteers. It is incumbent on the applicant to submit their application in time to ensure they have a current DCSI Clearance (PQSA cannot be responsible for delays in DCSI conducting the Screening).

Right of Appeal

Should any person who has applied for a position with PQSA or who is an existing worker with PQSA feel that they have been unjustly dealt with in relation to the Screening process, they have the right of appeal through PQSA Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedure.

RELATED LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES

- ◆ Australian Human Rights Commission Regulations 1989
- ◆ Children's Protection Act 1993
- ◆ Children's Protection Regulations 2010
- ◆ Child Safe Environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children.
- ◆ Crimes Act 1914
- ◆ Disability SA Bulletin 25 – Use of Department for Communities and Social Inclusion Screening Unit
- ◆ Disability SA Bulletin 68 - Clarification about new DCSI screening requirements
- ◆ DCSI Screening Unit – News 26 October 2016.
- ◆ Disability Services Act 1993 (the Act)
- ◆ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission – Guidelines for the prevention of discrimination in employment on the basis of criminal record 2012.
- ◆ Motor Vehicles (Lifetime Support Scheme) Act 2013
- ◆ National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- ◆ Privacy Act 1988
- ◆ Standard 6 Disability Service Standards: Service Management

SUPPORTING PQA DOCUMENTATION

- ◆ Child Protection Policy
- ◆ Client Complaints Management Policy
- ◆ Code of Ethical Behaviour (Under Review)
- ◆ Confidentiality Policy and Procedures.
- ◆ DCSI Employment Screening HR Procedures (Under Review)
- ◆ Equal Opportunity Policy
- ◆ Position Descriptions
- ◆ Privacy – Private Information Management Policy
- ◆ Recruitment Application Forms
- ◆ Recruitment Policy and Procedures

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

A **breach** of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Ignorance of these procedures will not generally be accepted as an excuse for non-compliance. Only in extreme circumstances and where such ignorance can be demonstrated to have occurred through no fault of the individual concerned will PQSA accept such an argument.

DISTRIBUTION AND REVIEW

PQSA will ensure all persons engaged to provide services either paid or unpaid will be aware of this policy and will have easy access to it in an appropriate format. All policies are to be reviewed on a periodic basis or when legislation or government policy determines.