




## Worker Screening – Client Safeguarding Policy

### STATEMENT

The Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Ltd (PQSA) has a responsibility to uphold the rights and maintain the safety of our clients. We acknowledge that a key step in the safe provision of services is to ensure that all workers employed by PQSA have the appropriate background checks in place as part of a framework which optimises client safeguarding.

<p>Approved by:</p>  <p>Chief Executive Officer</p>	<p>Date: July 2021</p>
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**In this policy, 'us' 'we' or 'our' refers to The Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Ltd ACN 644 670 977, which is a Company Limited by Guarantee and conducts its business through Lifestyle Support and HomeCare+ services.**

*Please note that printed copies are not able to be controlled and the Shared Drive should always be referred to for the most current version.*

## **SCOPE**

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

## **DEFINITIONS**

Refer to the PQSA Policy and Procedure Definition Glossary

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is our responsibility to communicate our policies and procedures to all workers on a systematic basis. Individual Directors and Supervisors are responsible for monitoring workers' understanding of their obligations and need for compliance with policies and procedures. Workers are responsible for complying with our policies and procedures.

## **POLICY**

As a registered NDIS provider (and under the terms of other service funding agreements), PQSA must ensure that key personnel and other workers in certain types of roles have a worker screening clearance that meets legislative and statutory requirements. This helps ensure that key personnel and workers in these roles do not pose an unacceptable risk to the safety and wellbeing of NDIS participants and other PQSA clients.

Depending on the requirements of an individual role, workers will require one or more of the following worker screenings:

1. DHS Child-Related Screening (if obtained prior to 1 July 2019) – only recognised until expiry
2. DHS Disability Services Employment Screening (if obtained prior to 1 February 2021) – only recognised until expiry
3. NDIS Worker Screening – to be renewed every five (5) years
4. DCSI Working with Children Check – to be renewed every five (5) years

PQSA reserves the right to alter these requirements due to changes in legislation and/or contractual obligations or based on risk-assessment of specific roles, and will communicate such changes to all workers immediately.

PQSA workers are required to work in situations which involve the acceptance of trust and responsibility for the welfare and safeguarding of child and adult clients, finances and private and confidential information.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- contribute to a framework of safeguarding of PQSA clients
- establish the suitability of workers working with our clients
- establish the suitability of workers working with finances and private and confidential information.
- protect PQSA's integrity.

Current Worker Screening(s) must be provided by all existing or prospective PQSA workers.

It is a condition of employment that all new workers produce appropriate Worker Screening(s) with a minimum of six (6) months validity prior to commencing work. All existing workers are required to renew their Worker Screening(s) prior to their expiry.

Each person, by consenting to undertake Worker Screening(s), demonstrates their commitment to the provision of a safe working environment. Refusal or failure to apply for/supply Worker Screening(s) will result in that person's application for employment being withdrawn or that worker being immediately suspended from duty without pay.

PQSA recognises that Worker Screening(s) do not constitute a comprehensive assessment of the suitability of a person to hold a position with PQSA and will ensure all aspects of the recruitment process are undertaken to determine suitability. Furthermore, PQSA's performance monitoring system will assist in informing the assessment of suitability in conjunction with Worker Screening(s).

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

### **Confidentiality**

The protection of privacy of an applicant and existing workers must be maintained. Worker Screening information will be stored securely in a restricted area of the Shared Drive.

Worker Screening information will only be accessible to those personnel who require it to properly discharge their administrative responsibility for safeguarding of PQSA clients.

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

### **Right of Appeal**

Should any existing or prospective PQSA worker feel that they have been unjustly dealt with in relation to the Worker Screening process, they have the right of appeal through PQSA Worker Grievance and Complaints Policy and Procedures.

## **RELATED LEGISLATION**

- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019
- Disability Services Act 1993
- Motor Vehicle Accidents (Lifetime Support Scheme) Act 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Practice Standards – Worker Screening) Rules 2018
- National Standards for Disability Services – Standard 6: Service Management
- Privacy Act 1988

## **SUPPORTING PQSA DOCUMENTATION**

- Child and Young Person Protection Policy and Procedures
- Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour
- Complaints/Concern Management Policy and Procedures (Client Complaints)
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Position Descriptions
- Privacy – Private Information Management Statement and Procedures
- Recruitment Application Forms
- Recruitment Policy and Procedures
- Worker Confidentiality Screening
- Worker Screening – Client Safeguarding Work Instruction

## **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.