

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK GUIDANCE NOTES

The following three guidance notes provide information to assist in the implementation of the Working with Children Check (WWC) Policy and Procedure.

1. [Guidance Note 1 How to determine if a WWC Check is required](#)
(including examples of child-related work in the Health Sector)
2. [Guidance Note 2 Working with Children Check steps and responsibilities](#)
3. [Guidance Note 3 Working with Children Screening Unit Factsheets](#)

GN1 HOW TO DETERMINE IF A WWC CHECK IS REQUIRED

In determining if a WWC Check is required, the manager must consider:

1. Are they doing paid, unpaid or volunteer work in connection with any of the categories of **child-related work** listed in section 6(1)(a) of the Act?

Refer to Factsheet 1 'What Is Child-Related Work' (www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au)

2. Do the **usual duties** of the work they carry out involve, or are they likely to involve, **contact** with a child?

Contact includes any form of –

- i. physical contact;
- ii. oral communication, whether face to face, by telephone or otherwise; and
- iii. electronic communication;

but does not include contact in the normal course of duties between an employer and an employee (including employees under 18 yrs) or between employees of the same employer.

3. Does an **exemption** apply?

Refer to Fact Sheet 5 Child-Related Work and Exemptions
(www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au)

A note about blanket policies

A manager cannot require a person to apply for a WWC Check whose duties do **not** bring them in contact with a child in one of the specified categories. People who are not in child-related work are by law unable to apply for a WWC Check and employers are by law unable to require that people who are not in child-related work obtain a WWC Check.

When deciding who needs a WWC Check, WA Health will make this decision on a case by case basis. It is not acceptable to adopt a “blanket” policy whereby an employer requires all or a significant number of employees to apply for a WWC Check, regardless of whether they undertake child-related work or not. For example, you may employ a number of nurses and not all of them have contact with children, therefore not all of them would be in child-related work. This is important because people who are not in child-related work are by law unable to apply for a WWC Card

EXAMPLES OF CHILD-RELATED WORK IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

The following examples of child-related work have been developed in consultation with the Working with Children Screening Unit (WWCSU) and illustrate how ‘child-related work’ as defined in Section 6 of the WWC Act may be applied in WA Health. **They represent only SOME examples of child-related work in relation to Category 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16.** Refer to [Factsheet 1 ‘What is Child-Related Work?’](#) for the complete list of categories (18) of child-related work.

When deciding if a position is child-related work, it is important to consider the **usual** duties of the person undertaking that work and not rely on the position title only. A position may be in scope under one or multiple categories of ‘child-related work’.

For further information, contact local Health Service Human Resources.

Category 9 A community child health service

Scope

A community child health service is not defined in the Act, but is interpreted by the WWCSU to be a community health service provided to children.

IN Scope Examples

- **Community Health Services** provide a comprehensive service which includes prevention, early detection and early intervention for children and young people. Services are delivered in community health centres, ambulatory service settings, inside health services/hospitals, nursing posts, schools, child health centres, homes and a range of other community settings. Services are delivered by community health nurses, child health nurses, school health nurses, health workers, health promotion staff, allied health, medical and support service staff. Some of the services delivered may include parent volunteers. Community Health Services for children and young people include the following:
 - **Child Health Services** assess children’s health and development as well as providing information for parents and carers about many aspects of parenting, maternal and family health and healthy lifestyles
 - **School Health Services** provide a universal assessment of school aged children at school entry and subsequent early identification of issues which may affect outcomes in education and health. School Health Services also provide access to primary health care for all school students and conduct immunisation programs

- **Child Development Services** provide comprehensive assessment and management of children with developmental delay and disability. Services are offered by a multi-disciplinary team which includes the disciplines of audiology, dietetics, nursing, paediatrics, speech pathology, podiatrists, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology and social work
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services** provide assessments and a therapeutic service to infants, children, adolescents and their families. This includes a community child and adolescent mental health nurse who conducts assessments and interventions in the home, community and schools. Aboriginal mental health workers deliver services in the home and community. There is also a clinically based service with clinicians from multidisciplinary backgrounds including psychiatry, clinical psychology and social work
- **Mobile health services** for at-risk young people provide access to primary health care services for at risk youth
- **Community Mothers' Program**. In this program, volunteer mothers trained by community nurses work supporting other mothers in the community
- Community child health nursing services in **nursing posts**
- **Outpatient clinics, medical imaging departments and pathology services** at a children's hospital.

Out of Scope Examples

- general practitioners or paediatricians in private practice (unless they also carry out child-related work in connection with 'a ward of a public or private hospital in which children are ordinarily patients, a counselling or support service or a child health community service', in which case they will require a WWC Check under that category)
- health programs run through community health centres which target the general community, such as sexual health programs, unless within these programs unless people are providing counselling, assessment, treatment and support services provided directly to people under 18 years of age
- health professionals working in Mental Health in-patient facilities catering for patients 18 years and over unless they are providing counselling and support services to children family members of adult patients.

Category 10 A counselling or other support service

Scope

The term "counselling or other support service" is not defined in the Act. Counsellors train in the "talking therapies" and are able to help with most personal issues such relationships, grief, stress etc, and is a therapy for most emotionally based issues.

In general terms, the WWCSU interprets the term "counselling or other support service" as referring to services designed to help people achieve some kind of remedy or treatment for a problem of a personal, emotional or psychological nature.

Note that the meaning of "other support service" is limited by its use in connection with "counselling".

A child may receive the counselling or support service individually or in a group (including the family) as the 'signature' client/patient. Alternatively the adult may be the 'signature' patient and the child may receive services as part of the adult's treatment or to assist the child to cope with the illness/problem of the adult.

In Scope Examples of a counselling or other support service targeted to children (the child is the 'signature' patient /client):

- individual, group counselling or therapeutic treatment services for children provided by counsellors such as psychologists, psychiatrists and nurses. Other staff at the counselling service (such as reception or other support staff) may also have contact with children as part of their usual duties (this refers to reception or other staff who are regularly involved in assisting children e.g. to fill out forms or complete tasks with children and it is part of their usual duties, rather than a receptionist who attends to booking/admin/information tasks and may just have incidental contact with children who are in the waiting room.
- those providing bereavement counselling to children e.g. some staff from John of God Murdoch Community Hospice or other specialized service
- those providing counselling and support to children who have illnesses e.g. cancer, diabetes
- cancer support services for young people
- telephone counselling – e.g. Kids Helpline
- 'day camps' for 'at-risk' youth
- staff working in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services whose usual duties involve or are likely to involve contact with a child.
- speech pathologists and occupational therapists providing support services to children.
- people working assisting mothers with breastfeeding, if they have contact with children as part of their usual duties of counselling breast feeding mums
- health professionals such as nurses and psychiatrists, who are members of the Mental Health Emergency Response Team, provide services directly to adults and to children. This team counsels and assesses people of all ages suffering severe mental health crises to determine whether they should be medicated or hospitalized
- professionals providing counselling and other support services to children, who have been admitted to ADULT mental health wards where children are NOT ordinarily patients. Examples include the psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker whose usual duties include contact with those children in provision of therapeutic/ counselling services. i.e. persons out of scope under category (13) may be in scope under this category (10)

(In this scenario other persons working on the ward are not in scope as they are not providing counselling and other support services, e.g. orderlies or nurses not counselling the child.)

Some of the above persons providing health oriented counselling and support services may also be captured in connection with a "community child health service" or "a ward of a private or public hospital in which children are ordinarily patients.

Counselling and support services also include services where Adults may be the target of the service (the signature patient/client) but children are part of the clientele of these services only if:

- children are part of the counselling or therapeutic treatment of adults, such as in family therapy or where a parent, who is the signature patient, has a serious illness (including a mental illness) and counselling is undertaken with the whole family.
- children are part of the clientele in the case management plan. For example, a parent suffers from a motor neuron illness or a psychosis, and the psychologist or social worker counsels the children to cope with the impact of the serious illness, and what to do if the parent becomes ill or needs additional help.

In Scope Examples include

- allied health professionals who visit the family home to counsel and support the children as part of the case management plan, to assist children to cope emotionally and to know what to do if the parent becomes ill or needs assistance e.g. at the onset of a depressed or psychotic state, or an epileptic seizure
- staff where involving children is part of the therapeutic treatment of adults.

Category 13 A ward of a public or private hospital in which children are ordinarily patients
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Scope

The term “ward” is not defined in the Act or in other legislation. This category applies ***only*** to people who have contact with children, as part of the usual duties of their work, on wards of private or public hospitals in which it is ***ordinary*** for children to be patients i.e. wards where the presence of children is an ordinary and common occurrence, not extraordinary or unusual.

Staff having contact with children as part of their usual duties in emergency departments and operating theatres in which children are ordinarily patients (WA Health considers an emergency department to be a ‘ward’ for the purposes of the WWC legislation)

This includes all wards in a children’s hospital, Bentley Hospital (Child and Adolescent Psychiatry) and certain wards (including mental health wards) of hospitals where adolescent children are **ordinarily** on wards with adults.

The WWCSU interprets “**in connection with**” a ward of a public or private hospital in which are ordinarily patients as work that occurs **on** the ward.

IN Scope Examples

- medical, nursing and allied health staff and support services staff – including paediatricians, psychiatrists, midwives, nurses, doctors, social workers, physiotherapists who provide services on the wards at a children’s hospital or *wards* of other *hospitals* in which children are *ordinarily* patients, and where their **usual duties** involve or are likely to involve contact with those children
- support services staff e.g. orderlies, catering staff and cleaners working on a ward, if the usual duties of their work involves or is likely to involve contact with a child
- volunteer “visitors” having contact with children on these wards (this does not include friends and relatives who visit patients at hospital wards)

- health professionals providing pathology services, medical imaging/sonograph services, dentistry and the like
ONLY if they provide these services to patients ON the ward and their usual duties involve contact or likely contact with a child patient (NB medical imaging technologists and sonographers employed at a children's hospital are also with scope of the legislation in accordance with part (3) (a) (vii) - community child health service).
- external contractors working in a child-related capacity on a ward as defined above e.g. Visiting health practitioners
- general practitioners with admitting rights if this means that have contact with their patients on "a ward of a public or private hospital in which children are ordinarily patients" e.g. hospital ward, theatre

Out of Scope Examples

- medical, allied health and support staff providing services that involve contact with a child on a ward of a hospital to which the admission of a child is **not** ordinary or common.
*note Where children are **occasionally** admitted to **adult wards (wards for people over 18 years)** (including mental health wards) where children are not ordinarily patients, those people providing **counselling and other support services** to these children on adult wards will be in scope under **category (10)**. Examples include the psychologist/psychiatrist/social worker counselling the child. Other staff on these wards are not in scope under either category (10) or (13) as they are not having contact with children as part of their usual duties in connection with either a counselling and other support services or a ward where children are ordinarily patients)*
- people providing pathology, medical imaging and sonography services and the like to children who are inpatients of the hospital, if they provide these services OFF the ward UNLESS they also provide these services in outpatient clinics at a children's hospital.
- People working in outpatient clinics unless:
 - they also provide services to a child as an inpatient and they physically go to the ward to deliver this service. (This must be a ward in which children are ordinarily patients)
 - they provide counselling to a child in any area of WA Health
 - clinics are part of child/community health service such as at a children's hospital
- administrative support and clerical staff whose usual duties do not involve contact or likely contact with a child
- persons contracted to provide maintenance or deliver goods to the ward. Such persons' usual duties (e.g. plumbing) are not child-related and are not specific to the wards of a hospital where children are ordinarily a patient
- general practitioners or paediatricians in private practice unless they also carry out child-related work in connection with "a ward of a public or private hospital in which children are ordinarily patients", in which case they will require a WWC Check under that category
- sleep technologists where they provide their services in a unit or department of a hospital that is NOT considered "a ward of a public or private hospital in which children are ordinarily patients".

Category 14 A babysitting or child minding service, but not including an informal arrangement entered into for private or domestic purposes

Scope

This category captures:

- work carried out for commercial baby-sitting agencies
- child minding services that are not licensed child care services (licensed child care services are defined under s.198 of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* and are already captured by s6(1)(a)(i) of the WWC Act).

In Scope Examples

- formal child-minding services arranged in health services during school holidays.

Out of Scope Examples

Examples of work which are not considered to be child-related work as defined under the WWC Act and therefore do not require WWC Checks include:

- private baby-sitting organised informally between friends e.g. baby-sitting clubs for neighbours, or by friends of the parents etc
- babysitting or child-minding provided by a relative
- the receptionist and administrators in areas where formal child minding services are conducted, where the usual duties of the work do not involve contact or likely contact with a child.

Category 15 An overnight camp, regardless of the type of accommodation or how many children are involved

Scope

This category captures a range of overnight camps and is not limited by the type of accommodation used or the number of children involved. Overnight camps for children are provided in many bush and urban settings and use a variety of accommodation types.

In Scope Examples

- health professionals and volunteers involved in an overnight camp including the parents of children who are working in the camp/s (e.g. a hospital organised camp for diabetic children under 18 years of age)
- caretakers of campsites who are in child related work or are involved in supervising activities involving children attending the camp
- people carrying out child-related work for a camp outside of WA, where the employees or volunteers join the children on camp in WA or return to WA with the children ***[Note that people involved in interstate camps may also need to comply with the criminal record checking requirements of the relevant state or territory camp destination. Links to relevant websites are provided on the website at www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au.]***

- the parent of a child attending the overnight camp, even if the parent is accommodated elsewhere, provided the parent is formally participating in the camp as a volunteer supervisor, organiser or similar.

Out of Scope Examples

- adults and parents who are participants in a camp involving children but who are not doing child-related work.
- campsite cook or the grounds person who has no contact or role with children.

Category 16 A transport service specifically for children

Scope

This category applies to services that are provided specifically for the transportation of children. Services are not in scope if they are provided to the general community and are used by children as part of that service.

In Scope Examples

- paid or voluntary persons specifically transporting children (people under 18 years of age for a health care facility (unless a volunteer who also has a child who ordinarily uses the service).

Out of Scope Examples

- transport services providing services to the general community and not established or provided specifically for children
- parents transporting children as part of an informal arrangement with other parents.

These examples were developed by the Workforce Division of the Department of Health in association with the WWC Screening Unit.

Disclaimer – this document provides summary guidelines on the scope of child-related work only. Representations are subject to the WWC Act and Regulations



GN2

WWC CHECK RESPONSIBILITIES

Category	Steps and Responsibilities				
	Identify if a WWC Check is required	Ensure Application for WWC Check is undertaken	Confirm and Record Evidence of WWC Check/Card	Review and Manage WWC Check Outcomes	Arrange Subsequent WWC Checks
Employee	Line Manager	HCN ES and Line Manager	HCN ES and Line Manager HCN ES to record in HRIS	HCN ES Health Service Workforce/Human Resources Director (or equivalent) and HR Manager to manage WWC outcomes	Employee Delegated Officers to follow up WWC cards that will soon expire
Medical practitioner	Line Manager	HCN ES and Line Manager/Health Service Medical Administration	HCN ES and Line Manager/Health Service Medical Administration HCN ES to record in HRIS	HCN ES Health Service Workforce/Human Resources Director (or equivalent) and HR Manager to manage WWC outcomes	Medical practitioner Delegated Officers to follow up WWC cards that will soon expire
Student on practicum placement	Education provider in consultation with Line Manager	Education provider	Education provider and Line Manager	Education Provider	Student
Health Service volunteer	Volunteer Coordinator or supervisor	Volunteer Coordinator or supervisor	Volunteer Coordinator or supervisor	Volunteer Coordinator or supervisor	Volunteer

Category	Steps and Responsibilities				
	Identify if a WWC Check is required	Ensure Application for WWC Check is undertaken	Confirm and Record Evidence of WWC Check/Card	Review and Manage WWC Check Outcomes	Arrange Subsequent WWC Checks
Work experience placement (aged 18 and over)	Line Manager in consultation with HR	Line Manager/HR Department	Line Manager	Line Manager	N/A
Casual nurse referred by NurseWest	Line Manager in consultation with NurseWest	NurseWest	NurseWest on Cascom HCN ES in HRIS	NurseWest	Employee NurseWest to follow up WWC cards that will soon expire
Agency nurse referred by NurseWest	Nurse Manager in consultation with NurseWest	External Agency	NurseWest on Cascom	NurseWest	Agency Nurse
Agency staff (other)	Line Manager in consultation with External Agency	External Agency	Line Manager and External Agency	External Agency	Agency staff member
Contractor	Contractor in consultation with relevant Manager	Contractor	Contractor and Manager	Contractor	Contractor

A variety of Working with Children Screening Unit Factsheets and related documents are available on the [WWCSU website](#) or by accessing the relevant link below.

Factsheets

[Factsheet 1: What is "Child-Related Work"?](#)

[Factsheet 3: Information for Employers and Volunteer Organisations](#)

[Factsheet 4: Class 1 and Class 2 Offences](#)

[Factsheet 5: Child-Related Work and Exemptions](#)

[Factsheet 6: Information for Employees and Volunteers](#)

[Factsheet 9: Information for the Health Sector](#)

[Factsheet 10: WWC Checks in the Education Sector](#)

[Factsheet 11: Information for the Sport and Recreation Sector](#)

[Factsheet 12: Application Process for Interstate Employees and Volunteers](#)

[Factsheet 13: Information for Self Employed People](#)

[Factsheet 14: Information for Students](#)

[Factsheet 16: The Parent Volunteer Exemption](#)

[Factsheet 17: Information for Education Providers](#)

Other documents

[WWC Check Summary of the Key Features](#)

[Child Safe and Friendly Organisations](#)

[Constable Care and WWC Check Flyer - Information for parents](#)

[Employer Responsibilities Summary Flyer](#)

[Working with Children Check Booklet](#)