



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**



Creating child safe organisations

through recruitment and staff management

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Introduction

Every organisation has a responsibility to keep children and young people safe.

Child safe organisations undertake the necessary steps to identify the most suitable people to work with children and young people.

This resource aims to guide organisations to adopt child safe practices in recruitment; staff induction and training; and supervision and management.

It aligns with Principle 5 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Recruitment

Recruitment processes for staff and volunteers include advertising through to conducting interviews and background checking. Each stage should be done consistently, thoroughly, methodically and where necessary, in consultation with internal human resources teams.

Job description

When creating a job description:

- Outline the specific skills and knowledge required and the supervision and accountability processes in place.
- Develop appropriate selection criteria.
- Clearly state the experiences, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant, including an understanding of culturally safe and child safe work.

Advertising

When advertising positions involving child-related work, you may wish to:

- Include an explicit statement of the organisation's commitment to child safety e.g.
 - » 'This is a child safe organisation'
 - » 'We are committed to providing a child safe environment'
- Reference the organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct and screening procedures in information/induction packages and job descriptions.
- Inform applicants that criminal record checks, inclusive of a Working with Children (WWC) Check, will be undertaken for successful applicants. Refer applicants to the [WWC Check website](#).

Interviewing

- Form a skilled interview panel, with clarity around responsibilities relating to child safety.
- Use open-ended questions, including behaviour-based questions on topics such as motivation for working in the role/organisation, how to work safely with children, and boundaries when working with children.
- Watch for 'red flags or warning signs which may include: erratic employment history, the applicant seems 'too good to be true', does not value or 'need' supervision and is evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers.
- Ask for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.
- Clearly document and discuss any concerns and follow up as required.

Working with Children Check (WWC Check)

The WWC Check is a compulsory screening strategy in Western Australia, required by anyone engaging in paid or unpaid child-related work. Information on WWC Checks, including who needs them and how to apply, can be found on the [WWC Check website](#).

If the person is not in child-related work, then it may be necessary to complete a National Police Certificate. In some cases, applicants may require both checks.

Referee and additional checks

When conducting referee checks please consider:

- Conducting a minimum of two referee checks on all applicants.
- Getting a verbal reference to provide better insight into the applicant's character and capabilities and to allow for deeper questioning.
- Obtaining referee checks from line managers or other people who can be objective, rather than friends or colleagues.
- Establishing the referee's relationship with the applicant, the applicant's responsibilities, perceived strengths, weaknesses and suspected concerns including performance issues.
- Including behaviour-based questions (some of which should be specific about direct contact with children) such as:
 - » What did the applicant do when....?
 - » Do you have any concerns about the applicant working with children?
 - » How did the applicant demonstrate a commitment to child safety and wellbeing?

Further background checking should include:

- Getting copies of at least two certified documents (e.g. driver's licence, passport) which confirm their identity.
- Verifying the applicant's qualifications and asking for a certified copy.

Staff induction process

The staff induction process provides a vital opportunity to provide new staff with information to understand the expectations of the organisation and how it works. Child safety should be incorporated into all staff induction and orientation processes.

Creation of a documented induction checklist

Consider developing the induction process as a documented checklist, which is tracked through a register. The following information could be compulsory for new recruits to review as part of their induction process:

- Child safety policy and procedures, including Code of Conduct.
- Complaints processes including that for child-focused complaints.
- Information on responding to disclosures and grooming.
- Record keeping, information and reporting (including mandatory reporting) responsibilities.

Contracts and orientation

Consider the following measures for supporting new staff to understand the organisation's commitment to child safety:

- Place the organisation's child safety policy, Code of Conduct and screening procedures in staff/volunteer contracts.
- Ensure new staff have a clear understanding of the information outlined in the induction checklist (see above) through an interactive orientation session about child safety principles. The orientation session can be used to explore values, attitudes, expectations and workplace practices.
- If necessary, set goals with the staff member/volunteer, in relation to their training, supervision and other support needs around the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**.
- Address any concerns about the ability of the staff member to uphold the National Principles for Child Safety Organisations within the organisation.



Ongoing supervision and people management

It is important for organisations to continue reinforcing child safe messages. Doing so will maintain awareness about potential warning signs of child abuse and send the message that abuse of children will not be tolerated by the organisation.

Strategies for maintaining a child safe organisation

Organisations should consider providing:

- Ongoing education to staff and volunteers in child abuse awareness, child abuse prevention and child safe practices.
- Ongoing support and supervision for staff and volunteers that explores values, attitudes, expectations and work practices relating to child safety.
- Opportunities to share workplace observations and problems, and to safely explore views about child safety issues with a designated staff member or trusted person.

Organisations should also:

- Implement risk management and monitoring procedures to enhance child safety.
- Manage and record any concerns through supervision, performance management and probation processes.

Further Information

Further guidance for creating child safe organisations can be found at:

- Department of Communities WA – [Child Safe Organisations](#)
- Department of Communities WA – [Working with Children Check](#)
- Commissioner for Children and Young People WA – [Child Safe Organisations resources](#)
- National Office for Child Safety – [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.](#)