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| Quarterly Bulletin Child Safe Standards |
| Human Services RegulatorOFFICIAL |
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Introduction

Welcome to the Human Services Regulator (HSR) Child Safe Standards (the Standards) June edition of the Quarterly Bulletin for 2024, our final one before we move across to the Social Services Regulator (SSR).

What’s new?

**Commencement of the Social Services Regulator**

As highlighted in the April edition of the bulletin, the regulation of Child Safe Standards will transfer from the HSR to the new SSR from 1 July 2024. This transition has been a long time coming and we are excited to be a part of this reform.

The SSR will regulate the new Social Service Standards and the Victorian Child Safe Standards, as an integrated sector regulator for the social services sector.

As an integrated sector regulator, the SSR will have various functions that include:

* providing education, information, and advice on the Child Safe Standards to promote consistency in child safety outcomes
* investigating, monitoring, and enforcing compliance with the Child Safe Standards by agencies in scope
* collecting, analysing, and publishing information and data regarding compliance with the Child Safe Standards and providing information and data to the Commission for Children and Young People as required, and
* promoting continuous improvement by relevant entities in relation to the safety of children.

**Changes to the regulation of Child Safe Standards**

Organisations that are in scope of the Child Safe Standards (the Standards), and are currently regulated

by the HSR, will be regulated by the SSR from 1 July 2024.

Services in scope of the Standards in the new regulatory framework include:

* some of the services delivered by the Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH), including child protection services and secure welfare services
* out of home care services for children and young people
* community-based child and family services including early parenting, intake services, Aboriginal child specialist advice support services and counselling services
* disability services offered or funded by the department, or funded by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), WorkSafe or the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
* family violence services e.g., case management, support, and accommodation services (for those at risk of or who have experienced family violence) and services for perpetrators
* sexual assault services e.g., specialist services for survivors of sexual assault and specialist harmful sexual behaviour services, and
* homelessness services e.g., assessment, case management, support, and accommodation services.

The SSR will take a graduated approach to regulating the Standards, focusing on informing, and educating organisations about their obligations under the Standards. However, there may be instances where the SSR takes further regulatory action to ensure an organisation’s compliance with the Standards and to address serious risks to the safety of children and young people.

Further information is available on the [Changes to the regulation of Child Safe Standards](https://www.vic.gov.au/changes-regulation-child-safe-standards) webpage <https://www.vic.gov.au/changes-regulation-child-safe-standards>. Additional guidance materials will be added to this page over the coming months.

**Updates regarding the Worker Carer Exclusion Scheme**

As indicated in the April bulletin, the new SSR framework includes the Worker Carer Exclusion Scheme (WCES).

On 23 May 2024, the Victorian Government announced that the Disability and Social Services Regulation Amendment Bill (the Bill) which included the proposed delay to the commencement of the Worker Carer Exclusion Scheme (WCES) is unlikely to pass prior to 1 July 2024.

As a result of this delay, the WCES for workers and carers of children and young people in residential, foster care and secure care will start on 1 July 2024.

The WCES will replace the current Victorian Carer Register and the Suitability Panel. This means providers engaging or employing residential, foster care or secure care workers and carers will have obligations under the WCES.

The scheme aims to prevent workers and carers of children and young people in residential, foster care or secure care from working in the out-of-home care sector if their behaviour presents an unjustifiable risk of harm to children and young people.

Providers seeking to employ or engage a new worker or carer of children and young people in residential, foster care or secure care, will need to confirm with the SSR that the worker or carer is not listed on the scheme’s exclusion database before engaging them.

To find out more about the SSR and WCES, visit the [Social Services Regulator](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator) website <https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator>

Spotlight: Changes to workers covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) recently announced upcoming changes to the

Reportable Conduct Scheme.

From 1 July 2024, the Reportable Conduct Scheme will

cover more types of employees including labour hire workers, secondees, directors of companies and individual business owners.

This means responsibilities for heads of organisations will extend to include more individuals in their workplaces whether they are employed directly or supplied by an external provider. The changes are being made to ensure that allegations of harm and abuse by workers in all types of employment are reported and investigated to create better safeguards for children in Victoria.

These changes also align with the broader definition of an employee for the Reportable Conduct Scheme outlined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

More information regarding the above changes can be accessed via the[Changes to workers covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/labour-hire-workers/) webpage <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/labour-hire-workers/>

**Resources for Child Safe Standards**

To support your agency’s compliance with the Child safe standards, you can make use of the following resources:

* [Child Safety Risk Management Resources](https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/child-safety-risk-management-resources) <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/child-safety-risk-management-resources>
* [CCYP Resources and support for the Child Safe Standards](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/#CSS_Guide) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/#CSS\_Guide>
* [Office of the Children's Guardian Resources, Guide to the Child Safe Standards Handbook](https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/resources) <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/resources>

Closing remarks

**Future communications**

While this is the last bulletin from the HSR, we anticipate that the SSR will set up some form of periodic communication with providers going forward. We will be in touch with you once we have established the format in which this will occur.

**A special thank you from the HSR**

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our subscribers across the sector. It has been a great pleasure working with you all and we appreciate the feedback and suggestions that you have provided to us over the years.

Lastly, thank you for your hard work and commitment towards keeping children safe. We look forward to working with you again soon, under the SSR reform.

For more information

If your organisation needs information or guidance about implementation of the Standards, under the SSR you can email SSR Enquiries <enquiries@ssr.vic.gov.au>

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