



Information on the Screening and Authority Process

Duty of Care Policy

It is the policy and practice of The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of South Australia that “all appointed leaders within the Church (whether paid or voluntary) who would have or could expect to have contact with children, youth and vulnerable people obtain the required Screening Checks as part of being authorised by Church Council for the roles of responsibility which they hold” undergo a Screening and Authority Request.

An integral part of this process is completing a Screening Application through the Uniting Church with the Department of Human Services. This includes a South Australian Working with Children Check (WWCC) and for some designated roles a General Employment Probity Check and/or Vulnerable Person Related Employment Check.

Uniting Church SA Screening and Authority Process

The Screening and Authority process is an important part of the policies and practices of the Uniting Church SA. It involves two steps:

1. Apply to Synod for the appropriate screenings through the Department of Human Services.
2. Be appointed by the Church Council into a role of responsibility after having completed due diligence. (see inset)

Safe Church Leadership Authorisation and Appointment process

Church Councils are required to apply this to leaders who are in a position of trust, influence or authority because of their leadership role within the Church.

Appointed Leaders are people who are in a position of trust, influence or authority because of their leadership role within the Church. This would include, but not be limited to, lay preachers, elders, church councillors, those who lead worship, anyone involved in children and youth events/programs/activities, music leaders, organists, Bible study leaders, and ‘home group’ or ‘cell group’ leaders and any other person commissioned by the Church Council to perform a leadership role

Before appointing leaders the Church Council must:

- consider the six month guideline for voluntary leadership roles (i.e. people are only considered for leadership after they have been part of the congregation for six months)
- confirm and record screening completion
- interview applicants
- request and check references.

When do I need to complete my screening?

There will be transitional arrangements to make it easier for people to move to the new scheme.

- All current, valid DHS/DCSI child-related employment screening clearances will be recognised as WWCCs under the law, until they expire.
- **National Police Certificates assessed by organisations are valid for working with children until 1 July 2020.**

If your current Screening and Authority **expires after** 1 July 2020, you will need undertake the new process **before May 2020.**



Who needs a Working With Children's Check?

Everyone in a role of responsibility will need a **Working With Children Check (WWCC)**.

The Child Safe (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 of South Australia (Part 3: 6(b)) defines "Child related work" as: services or activities provided by a religious organisation.

The South Australian Regulations 7:(7)(2) define 'child related work' as services or activities provided by a religious organisation where a person would have or could be expected to have contact with a child. 'Contact' means: "has close physical proximity or communications with the child (orally, written, electronic, etc)." (Regs 7:(7)(6))

Which additional checks do I need?

Who (for the Uniting Church SA)	Role type	General Employment Probity Check	Vulnerable Person Related Employment Check	Disability Check	Aged Care Sector
Volunteers	Church Council members and Office Bearers	✓	<i>Maybe</i>	X	X
	other roles	see description below			
Ministry Agents as defined by the Code of Ethics	Active	✓	✓	X*	X*
	Inactive	X	X	X	X
Employees in Congregations	e.g. Admin Staff	✓	<i>Maybe</i>	X	X

Volunteers

1. Do your responsibilities include any of the following:

- Church Council member/office bearer
- Safe Church Congregation Liaison, Privacy, Property Officer
- Rostered to drive members to church or other church related activities?
- Handling money? (e.g. count offerings, organising activities or banking duties)
- Working in a Uniting Church Op-shop or café

If you answered yes to any of the above questions you will require:

General Employment Probity Check

2. Do your responsibilities include any of the following:

- Designated Visitor from a Church? (E.g. pastoral, aged care or hospital)
- Do you conduct or provide services in aged care facilities or hospitals?
- Work with refugees, migrants
- Offering social support services (e.g. counselling/ financial support/ soup kitchen)

If you answered yes to any of the above questions you will require:

Vulnerable Person Related Employment Check

Screenings for volunteers continue to be at no cost to the applicant.

Ministry Agents as defined in the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice will require:

1. Working With Children's Check,
 2. General Employment Probity Check
 3. Vulnerable Person Related Employment Check
- Ministers who are retired and not deemed as 'active service' and those Ministers on 'leave of absence' do not require a General Employment Probity or Vulnerable Person Related Employment Check.
 - *Ministry Agents **only** need a **Disability Check** if employed by a Government funded disability organisation.
 - *Ministry Agents who are employed in an aged care facility require an **Aged Care Check**. Confirm this with your work site.

Employees of Uniting Churches (e.g. Administrators) require:

1. Working With Children Check
2. General Probity Check.
3. If in addition, you perform a service as listed above (#2), then you will require a Vulnerable Person Related Employment Check as well.

Cost information for Ministry Agents & employees

Ministry Agents and employees are required to pay for their screening checks.

For prices please check: <https://screening.sa.gov.au/fees-payments>

The DHS advises: "If you have to pay for a check as part of your paid employment, you may be able to claim it as a deduction on your tax return. Find out more from the [Australian Tax Office](#)."

Is it illegal to work with children without a check?

From 1 July 2019, it is an offence to:

- work or volunteer in a child-related role without a Working With Children Check
- work or volunteer in a child-related role if a person is 'prohibited from working with children'
- employ a person or volunteer for a child-related role who doesn't have a valid Working With Children Check, or is prohibited from working with children.

Offences carry fines of up to \$120,000 and/or prison sentence.

'Child related work' is services or activities provided by a religious organisation where a person **would have or could be expected to have** physical proximity or communications contact with a child.

Documents required to verify your identity

All applicants are required to submit evidence of their identity for DHS Screening Checks. This is an online verification process which will require you to enter the numbers listed on your identity documents (e.g. licence number, passport number)

Required identity documents:

- a current Australian driver's licence
- AND
- a current Australian passport (may be expired up to two years)

If you do not have an Australian driver's licence or passport, please contact your Safe Church Congregation Liaison for assistance to complete your verification of identity with a 100 point check.

How do I begin the process?

Please use the information sheet [Process for Screening Checks](#) found on the Safe Church webpage sa.uca.org.au/safechurch/screening to navigate the Screening and Authority Process.

If you find you need assistance, please talk to your Safe Church Congregation Liaison.

General Safe Church enquiries

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Uniting Church. **Uniting People.**

Process for Screening Checks

Step 1 Apply for a screening check with the Uniting Church

A. Refer to the information sheet titled: *Information on the Screening and Authority Process* for further assistance.

B. Complete the online *Application for Screening Check through the Uniting Church SA* at sa.uca.org.au/safechurch/screening
Note: please use an active email address, ideally only accessible by you. This is where you will receive the links and communications about the status of your check in step 2 (after the Synod Office initiates the application through the Department of Human Services (DHS)).

C. To verify your identification in Step 2 there are two options:

1. If you have a passport/birth certificate/citizenship certificate and driver's licence, you will be able to complete the **online verification**.
2. If you do not have the above identification available, you will need to contact your Safe Church Congregation Liaison for the alternative option.



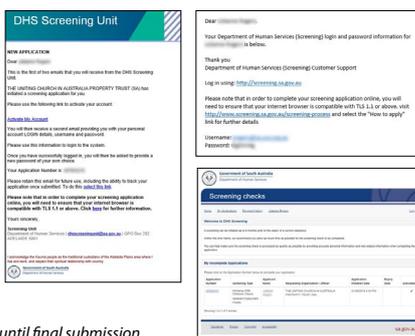
Step 2 Verify your identity with the Dept of Human Services

A. Receive an email from the DHS (noreply@salesforce.com). Click the link to activate your account.

B. A second email with your username and temporary password will follow. Use this to log into the DHS website. You will be asked to create a new password.

C. Follow the prompts to enter all of your personal details including **all of your previous names, previous addresses for the last 10 years, and verification of identity (document numbers)**.

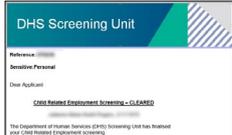
Note: If you make a mistake or lose your internet connection, you can go back into your application and change it at any time until final submission.



Step 3 Receive notification of your status

A. You and the Uniting Church SA will receive email advice of your clearance status- 'update' and/or finalised.

B. Forward this information to your Safe Church Congregation Liaison for recording by the Church Council or designated governance body.



V1 26 June 2019





Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is this happening?

The Government of South Australia has introduced stronger, more effective, and transparent screening laws for people working or volunteering with children. The new laws mean that, from 1 July 2019, everyone working or volunteering with children must have valid child-related screening. These changes were recommended as part of South Australian and federal royal commissions, to help keep children safe in our communities.

2. Why do I need a WWCC if I don't work in the creché?

Under the interpretation of the Child Safe (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, when considering the definition of Child related work 6(1)(b) services or activities provided by religious organisations all those in roles of responsibility are required to have a WWCC.

3. What if I don't have internet access?

Please contact your Safe Church Congregation Liaison as they will be given tools to assist you.

4. Do I have to pay anything?

Depending on your role within the Church:

- Employee/contractor - (including Ministry Agents) An organisation's permanent, temporary and casual staff, plus any external contractors/subcontractors working for the organisation. **Employees/contractors must pay the fee for each type of check needed.**
- Students - A registered tertiary pupil on a placement that is officially related to their studies. Secondary students on short placements related to their study may use a volunteer check. **Tertiary students on placements connected to their study pay a single fee no matter how many checks are needed, as long as the applications are submitted at the same time.**
- Volunteer - An individual who is officially performing tasks for the organisation requesting the check, without receiving a monetary reward or other remuneration. **Volunteers pay no fees, no matter how many checks are needed.**

5. What if my last screening hasn't expired yet?

There will be a transitional period over the next twelve months.

- If you are in a **leadership role with children, youth or young people** you are requested to apply for your Screening Checks **at your earliest convenience** (not later than 1 May 2020).
- If your current Screening and Authority **expires before** 1 July 2020, you will receive advice to renew your Screening Checks through the new process.
- If your current Screening and Authority **doesn't expire** before 1 July 2020, you will need undertake the new process **before May 2020.**

6. Which email should I use?

You should use an active email where you are comfortable having confidential communications sent. This is ideally an email that only you have access to. If you are unable to access an email account, please contact your Safe Church Congregation Liaison for assistance.

7. What if I don't have a driver's licence, passport or birth certificate?

If you do not have a driver's licence AND a current Australian passport OR an Australian birth certificate OR an Australian citizenship certificate please contact your Safe Church Congregational Liaison for assistance to complete your verification of identity with a 100 point check.

8. I've logged into the DHS website- now what?

You will have received a link in your email to create your login. After this, log on and click on the application number (in circle at right)

9. How long will this form take me?

The average time is estimated at 30 minutes if you have all of your details at hand.

If you need to stop (or lose your internet connection) before completing the DHS form, the fields you've previously entered will be saved (with the exception of your identity document numbers).

Application Number	Screening Type	Applicant Name	Requesting Organisation / Officer	Application Initiation Date	Expiry Date	Activated
[Red Circle]	Working With Children Check General Employment Probity	[Redacted]	THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA PROPERTY TRUST (SA)	21/06/2019 4:34 PM		✓

10. What is a reference number? (asked for on the DHS online application)

This field may be left blank and is not required (see circle at right).

Application For: Working With Children Check
General Employment Probity

Applicant Type: Current Employee

Reference Number: [Red Circle]

Title: [Redacted]

11. How long before I get a response from the first application to the Uniting Church?

The Screening Services Unit must initiate the request with the DHS upon which you will receive an email from the DHS to begin the verification of your identity. Screening Services only process applications during business hours.

After you submit your information to the DHS, they will then send an email to you and the Uniting Church when your Screening is at the 'Record review and evaluation' stage and/or when you have been cleared.

Please note that the DHS has advised of possible processing time of six weeks, though you may receive your check in a more timely manner.

12. I drive people to and from church activities: do I need to complete this process?

If you are transporting on behalf of the church (rostered or requested by a church leader) then you will need to complete this Screening process for both WWCC and General Employment Probity.

If you have a private arrangement with another person, then this is not a church-related transport task and does not require a Screening Check. However, if you are a volunteer in other roles, you are still required to complete the Screening and Authority Process.

13. What do I do with my form and/or number when I get it back?

Please take your email and/or certificate to your Safe Church Congregation Liaison who will confirm and record it with the Church Council. For non-Congregational placements, please forward to your designated governing body.

14. Why is this online only?

According to the [Digital Transformation Strategy of the Australian Government](#): "Being a world-leading digital government means changing how we do things for you. In the future we will use digital technology to deliver more responsive policy, less red tape and better services." All federal government services will be digitised by 2025.

