

Why should disability workers be registered?

Registration aims to increase safety for people using disability services by ensuring Victorian disability workers are independently assessed as safe and competent professionals. Registration will create greater trust and confidence in the profession because only suitable and competent workers will be registered.

The *Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018* (the Act) requires applicants for registration to show that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes for safe practice to be registered as a disability worker by the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria (the Board).

What types of disability worker can be registered?

The Act defines 'disability worker' as: a person who provides a disability service to a person with disability. Supervisors and managers of a person or people who provide a disability service are also disability workers.

Various occupations and roles can be a disability worker. Being a disability worker is not dependent on funding source, or whether the service is provided by a person who works for a disability provider, an organisation or is self-employed.

A person is a 'disability worker' when they do all of the following:

- (a) provide a service to a person with disability
- (b) deliver the service themselves, or you supervise or manage another person to do so
- (c) provide a service which involves more than 'incidental contact' with a person with disability
- (d) the main purpose of the service is to care for, treat or support a person with disability to manage their limitations to undertake certain activities.

More information on how to determine whether a person is a disability worker is available on the Registration web page.

When can I register?

Applications for registration for the 2021/22 year open on 1 July 2021. Each registration year will start on 1 October and end 30 September in the following year.

Registration will be valid until 30 September each year. You can apply to renew your registration if you want to continue to practise as a **registered** disability worker after this date.

How do people know if a disability worker is registered or unregistered?

Registered disability workers will be listed on the public register of Victorian registered disability workers, available at: www.vdwc.vic.gov.au

How much does registration cost?

For the first registration year (1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022) there is no registration fee.

How do I demonstrate my registration?

All registered disability workers will be issued with a registration certificate. Registered disability workers will be able to use the distinctive registration mark approved by the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria to promote their registration and that they have been independently assessed as safe and competent disability workers.

What are the requirements for being registered?

For the first registration year (from 1 October 2021 -to 30 September 2022) a disability worker must meet one of these requirements:

- Hold a qualification or have completed or training as a disability worker that is adequate for the purposes of providing disability services
- OR
- Provide disability support services
 - For the type of registration ie. disability practitioner or disability support worker
 - for a total period of 2 years or more
 - during 30 September 2012 to 30 September 2022

All disability workers must satisfy the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria that they are professionally competent as a disability worker.

These arrangements are in place for the first year of registration until 30 September 2022, to allow existing disability workers with relevant skills and experience to qualify for registration.

From 1 October 2022, new applicants will be required to demonstrate that they meet the following qualification requirements:

- They hold a **qualification approved by** the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria or
- They hold a qualification which is **equivalent** (or based on similar competencies) as an approved qualification or
- They hold a **combination of qualifications** or **relevant experience** (or both).

What information and documents do I need to provide with my application?

Applications can be made online at www.vdwc.vic.gov.au

To register, applicants need to:

- Prove their identity
- Agree to a national police check.
- Fill in an application for registration form with personal details and upload or provide relevant documents.

Applicants need to submit information and evidence including:

- personal information including all legal names used and previous addresses
- how they qualify for registration – either by providing copies of qualifications or other evidence of training and professional experience

- that they meet the requirements for being suitable for registration. Further information regarding suitability can be found on the Registration web page.

Applicants may be asked to provide further evidence, or their application may be refused.

Are there different types of registration?

The register has two divisions:

- **Registered disability practitioners** are disability workers with advanced skills, experience and qualifications. They hold a relevant tertiary qualification issued by an Australian University or another institution with registration/authorisation to deliver higher education in a professional discipline that supports people with a disability, such as allied health, teaching or social work and where required for practise, registration with the relevant professional body must be maintained along with any other requirements such as continuing professional development.

This pathway is only available if the individual can provide verifiable evidence that is assessed as showing that they have adequate qualification/s and training and are professionally competent to be registered in this division of the register. Verifiable evidence means documented information such as academic certificates or transcripts, descriptions of training, statements of service, descriptions of roles where the person provided disability services including hours of work and duties, letters from employers, satisfactory performance reviews or even a detailed personal submission.

- **Registered disability support workers** are disability workers in direct support roles. They must either hold a certificate III or higher qualification in disability or a relevant field or have two years of professional experience, or training that is equivalent to a Certificate III in disability.

All disability workers must satisfy the Board that they are professionally competent as a disability worker.

There are three types of registration within the disability practitioner and disability support worker divisions:

- General – registration to practise as a disability worker, which will apply to most workers
- Limited – which may be granted to workers who do not meet all the requirements for general registration but are otherwise eligible for registration for a specified purpose and period of time. An example is a student completing a placement.
- Non-practising – which allows workers to continue to be registered while not in practice as a disability worker.

When you apply for registration, applicants will be asked to choose which registration division and type best suits them.

What registration standards must I comply with?

There are three registration standards – criminal history, continuing professional development and competency in English. Applicants must meet the requirements in each registration standard, and comply with registration standards when they are registered.

Criminal history

The criminal history of all applicants will be assessed to determine if a person is suitable to be registered. The Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria will assess an applicant's criminal history in a manner consistent with the criteria used for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Worker Screening Check (NDIS Check).

Competency in English

To be registered, disability workers must be competent to speak or communicate in English.

Continuing professional development

There are no continuing professional development requirements for the first registration year (1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022).

After the first year, registered disability workers will need to complete a minimum of 10 hours of continuing professional development (1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023).

How long will it take to find out if a registration application is approved?

The Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria will make a decision on applications within 90 days of receipt. Applicants will be notified within 30 days of a decision being made. In some instances, we may require further information to assess your application and this may mean it takes longer to assess your application. We will inform you if this happens.

When will a disability worker be unsuitable to be registered?

The Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria considers a range of factors to assess if a person is suitable to be a registered disability worker. Under the Act, the Board may decide that an individual is not a suitable person to hold registration having regard to:

- (a) any impairment that detrimentally affects an individual's capacity to practise in a safe manner
- (b) the individual's criminal history
- (c) competency in speaking or communicating in English
- (d) whether an individual's registration has been suspended or cancelled by another regulator
- (e) whether an individual is subject to a prohibition or banning order in health or disability services or involving the care of children
- (f) what type of work you have done, when and for how long
- (g) whether the individual meets relevant approved registration standards
- (h) whether an individual is a fit and proper person and able to practise in a competent and safe manner.