



The facts:

June 2021

Registration information for service providers and employers

Voluntary registration of disability workers commences on 1 July 2021. Registration aims to increase safety across the entire disability community and enable registered disability workers to demonstrate the safety and quality of the services they provide.

Registration forms part of the Victorian Government's "zero tolerance" approach to abuse of people with disability.

The Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria (the Board) is responsible for registering disability workers and for setting the standards for registration.

How will registration benefit disability service providers?

Different standards are in place to make sure disability workers are safe and professional, but not every disability worker is covered. Registration will create greater trust and confidence in the profession by ensuring registered workers have been independently assessed regardless of how their services are funded.

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

Service providers and employers can take confidence in recruiting registered workers knowing they have been assessed to be safe, skilled and competent professionals.

Registration will increase overall community confidence in the sector and ensure people with disability can access safe and quality services – no matter how they are funded.

Who can register?

A disability worker is defined by the Act 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.

Volunteers are not considered to be disability workers for the purposes of the Act unless they are providing services on behalf of an organisation or agency.

Family members of a person with disability are not considered to be disability workers for the purposes of the Act unless they are paid for the services they provide.

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

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

1. provide a service to a person with disability
2. deliver the service themselves, or supervise or manage another person to do so
3. provide a service which involves more than 'incidental contact' with a person with disability
4. 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 in our Resources hub.

Types of registration

Disability support worker

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

Disability practitioner

Registered disability practitioners are disability workers with advanced skills, experience and qualifications. They must 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. Where required for practise they must maintain their registration with the relevant professional body, along with any other requirements such as continuing professional development.

When does registration open?

Applications for voluntary registration of Victorian disability workers will open on 1 July 2021. Each registration year will start on 1 October and end 30 September in the following year. Registration is valid for 12 months and workers can apply to renew their registration each year.

What other registration requirements are there?

All applicants for registration must demonstrate to the Board that they qualify for registration and that they are suitable for registration.

In the first year of registration, transitional provisions apply for assessing how disability support workers qualify for registration. The transitional provisions allow existing disability workers who may not hold formal qualifications to qualify for registration by demonstrating that they possess the necessary knowledge, skill and professional competence for registration, developed through professional experience or training.

Further information about the requirements for registration are available in the 'Registration information for disability workers' fact sheet – available here.

The Disability Worker Register

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

Help build a safer, stronger, disability sector



Prohibited registered workers

The register will also record details about workers who have had their registration suspended or cancelled, or registered workers who have prohibition orders against them. A prohibited worker is unable to lawfully practice as a disability worker, or must meet certain conditions in order to practice.

Prohibited unregistered workers

A list of prohibited unregistered disability workers is available at www.vdwc.vic.gov.au/prohibition-orders

The Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner can make a prohibition order against an unregistered worker if satisfied that it is necessary to avoid a serious risk to the life, health, safety or welfare of a person or the health, safety or welfare of the public.

About the Victorian Disability Worker Commission

The Victorian Disability Worker Commission is an independent body established to better protect people with disability and build a stronger, safer disability sector. It is responsible for the Disability Service Safeguards Code of Conduct, establishing the minimum expectations for all workers in Victoria supporting people with disability, and the complaints service. It can accept complaints and notifications, with powers to investigate and ban workers who put people's safety at risk.

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