

Frequently asked questions

August 2023

Why does being a registered worker matter?

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.

By registering, disability workers can show employers and the people they work with that they are safe, skilled and professional.

Employers choosing registered workers show their commitment to an independently assessed quality workforce.

What is the *Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018* (the Act)?

The *Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018* (the Act) sets out the powers and functions of the Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner and the Commission to regulate Victorian unregistered disability workers. The Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria regulates registered disability workers.

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).

How do I know if I'm a disability worker?

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.

For more information, please read our 'Who is a disability worker' factsheet.

Isn't the NDIS Worker Screening Check the same as disability worker registration?

No. The NDIS Worker Screening Check and disability worker registration are two different things.

Registration provides additional checks to the NDIS Worker Screening by assessing a person's skills, experience and commitment to undertaking continuing professional development.

For information on the NDIS Worker Screening Check, please visit the **NDIS Worker Screening Check** page.

How much does registration cost?

It is currently free to register. In addition to no registration fee, the Commission will cover the cost of the police check required to apply for registration.

How long is my registration valid for?

Registration is valid for 12 months. Each registration year will start on 1 October and end 30 September in the following year. Workers can apply to renew their registration each year.

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

Registered disability workers are listed on the public register of Victorian registered disability workers, available at vdwc.vic.gov.au.

How do I show people I'm registered?

All registered disability workers are issued with a registration certificate. Registered disability workers are 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.

Are there different types of registration?

There are two types of registration - **disability support worker** and **disability practitioner**, and people may apply based on professional experience, qualification/s, or both.

Disability support worker - Registered disability support workers are disability workers in direct support or supervisory roles.

Disability practitioner - Registered disability practitioners are disability workers with advanced skills, experience and qualifications.

Once registered, your registration will be categorised as either:

- **General** – registration to practise as a disability worker, which will apply to most workers, or
- **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.

What do I need to have to be eligible for registration?

There are different ways to be eligible for registration.

Registered Victorian disability support worker

Registered disability support workers are disability workers in direct support or supervisory roles.

Qualification(s)

To qualify based on qualification(s) you must have:

- a Certificate III or higher in Individual Support, Disability or a related field, **and**
- relevant work experience providing disability services (may include placement hours completed as part of a relevant qualification), **or**
- training as a disability worker equivalent to Certificate III in Individual Support (Disability), **and**
- relevant work experience providing disability services.

The Board will consider qualifications in disciplines such as community services, counselling, youth work, psychology, childcare, education and health

on a case-by-case basis as to how these support people with disability.

Work experience

To qualify based on professional experience you must have:

- at least 1,440 hours of relevant work experience providing disability services over at least 2 years in the past 10 years.

Combination of qualifications and relevant experience

To qualify based on qualifications and relevant experience you must have:

- a qualification in community services, health or a related field that is relevant to the worker's experience providing disability services, **and**
- at least 120 hours of relevant work experience providing disability services.

Registered Victorian disability practitioner

Registered disability practitioners are disability workers with advanced skills, experience and qualifications.

Qualification(s)

To qualify based on qualification(s) you must have:

- a relevant tertiary qualification* at Diploma level or higher in a professional discipline that supports people with disability, such as allied health or social work, **and**
- relevant work experience providing disability services as a disability practitioner **and**
- professional registration (if required to practice the profession in which they are qualified).

*or equivalent training where training rather than a tertiary qualification was required to gain professional registration to practice the profession.

The Board will consider qualifications in disciplines such as community services, counselling, youth work, psychology, childcare, education and health on a case-by-case basis as to how these support people with disability.

Professional experience

To qualify based on professional experience you must have:

- professional registration (if required to practice), **and**
- at least 1,440 hours of relevant specialist, professional experience providing disability services as a disability practitioner over at least 2 years in the past 10 years.

Combination of qualifications and relevant experience

To qualify based on qualifications and relevant experience you must have:

- a qualification in a professional discipline that supports people with disability that is relevant to the worker's specialist experience providing disability services as a disability practitioner, **and**
- at least 120 hours of relevant professional experience providing disability services as a disability practitioner.

What do workers need to register?

There are three registration requirements that applicants must meet in order to become registered and continue to meet if they wish to maintain their registration. These are:

1. Competency in English

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

2. Criminal history

Applicants will be asked if they have plead or been found guilty of, been charged with or convicted of any offence(s) in Victoria or elsewhere. A criminal history check will be done during the application assessment.

3. Continuing professional development

All registered workers must complete 10 hours of continuing professional development during the registration year and provide details of these hours when they apply to renew their registration.

For more information on registration standards please visit vdwc.vic.gov.au/registration-standards.

Help build a safer, stronger, disability sector

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

Applications can be made online by visiting Victorian Disability Workers Commission at vdwc.vic.gov.au.

To register, applicants need to complete a webform to:

1. prove their identity
2. agree to a national police check
3. provide personal details and upload or provide relevant documents.

If needed, assistance is available to help you to complete the online application. If you are unable to complete the online application with assistance, a hard copy application form will be available.

Information and evidence to support an application is required including:

- personal information including all legal names used and previous addresses
- how an applicant qualifies for registration – either by providing copies of qualifications or other evidence of training and/or professional experience
- meeting the requirements for being suitable for registration.

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

How long will it take to find out if my 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.

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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