

## GUIDE TO YOUTH PROTECTION SUITABILITY SCREENING AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

### INTRODUCTION

1.1 The [Suitability Screening and Working with Children Checks](#) policy clearly defines youth-related work and provides clarification on what would and would not be considered a Youth-related Work Position. To re-iterate, a position is not a Youth-related Work Position if any likely interaction/work with youth is incidental (secondary) to the primary duty/responsibility of the position and can generally be observed or monitored by others.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for personnel:

- a. identifying and annotating Youth-related Work Positions
- b. conducting suitability screening of personnel required to work with youth
- c. obtaining and maintaining Working with Children Checks (WWCC).

1.3 This guide should be read in conjunction with YOUTHPOLMAN [Part 1 Section 3 Chapter 2 Suitability Screening and Working with Children Checks](#) policy.

### IDENTIFYING AND ANNOTATING YOUTH-RELATED WORK POSITIONS<sup>1</sup>

1.4 Defence is committed to providing a youth safe environment. Identification of Youth-related Work Positions, as well as suitability screening and WWCCs for personnel required to work with youth are primary risk controls to prevent harm to youth.

1.5 In Defence, each business area/unit must assess the level of contact with young people under 18<sup>2</sup> required for each position/role to determine whether it needs to be annotated as a Youth-related Work Position.

1.6 An ADF, APS, contractor or volunteer position/role is categorised by Defence as a Youth-related Work Position where the incumbent is required to, on behalf of Defence:

- a. undertake youth-related work as the primary duty/responsibility of the position,  
or
- b. provide overnight care and supervision of youth participating in a Defence Youth Program or Defence Force Recruiting activity.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Youth-facing has been replaced by the terms *Youth-related Work Position* and *Youth-related Work*

<sup>2</sup> In Defence, a youth is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

1.7 The majority of Defence Youth-related Work Positions will be related to Defence Youth Programs, Defence Force Recruiting contexts, Chaplaincy and other counselling-related services (refer Attachment 1 for context specific information).

1.8 All ADF Cadet Organisation positions held by volunteers are Youth-related Work positions. Volunteer Youth-related Work Positions are annotated in CadetNet by assigning the appropriate ADF Cadet Organisation role (Officer of Cadets, Instructor of Cadets or Defence Approved Helper) to the individual.

1.9 Once an ADF or APS Youth-related Work Position has been identified, it must be annotated in PMKeyS. For guidance on annotating an identified ADF or APS Youth-related Work Position in PMKeyS refer to Attachment 2.

### OBTAINING AND MAINTAINING WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

1.10 All ADF and APS personnel in annotated Youth-related Work Positions must obtain and maintain<sup>3</sup> WWCC/s for the state/s and/or territory/ies relevant to the youth-related work<sup>4</sup>.

1.11 The WWCC application process and clearance validity period varies across jurisdictions. Defence business areas/units are responsible for ensuring:

- a. the appropriate procedure is followed
- b. clearances are current and renewed within the appropriate timeframe.

1.12 The assessment outcome of all Defence personnel who obtain a WWCC clearance must be recorded on PMKeyS. For guidance on recording a WWCC assessment outcome in PMKeyS, refer to Attachment 2. ADF Cadets Adult Volunteers clearance information is to be annotated in CadetNet under *Accomplishments* in the *Education & Qualifications* section of *My Details*.

1.13 A record of WWCC expiry dates for all personnel should be maintained and recorded appropriately<sup>5</sup> by the relevant Commander, manager or supervisor, and stored in accordance with the requirements defined in [Section 1 Chapter 2](#).

### SUITABILITY SCREENING OF PERSONNEL REQUIRED TO WORK WITH YOUTH

1.14 Screening adults for suitability to work or volunteer in organisations where personnel engage in child or youth-related work is mandated under legislation and policy.

1.15 Prior to selecting an individual to fill an ADF or APS Youth-related Work Position, career and human resource managers must assess the suitability of an

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<sup>3</sup> While the individual remains in a youth-related work position

<sup>4</sup> For further reference, the Australian Institute of Family Studies website contains a summary of WWCC legislation, requirements, contact information and website links for each state and territory.

<sup>5</sup> PMKeyS for ADF members; CadetNet for ADF Cadets; and Objective for contractors.

individual by reviewing, as a minimum:

- a. the Defence Complaints Management, Tracking and Reporting System (ComTrack) or any other unacceptable behaviour database, including SENTINEL
- b. the Defence Policing and Security Management System
- c. PMKeyS<sup>6</sup>
- d. the member/employee's service/employment file.<sup>7</sup>

1.16 An individual must not be selected for a Youth-related Work Position if they have adverse findings against them that relate to:

- a. protection orders or child custody matters, where the adverse finding relates to an individual's suitability to work with youth
- b. WWCCs.

1.17 Commanders and managers should use judgement to determine whether a record of past offence<sup>8</sup> precludes an individual from working in a Youth-related Work Position.

1.18 Notwithstanding a favourable suitability assessment by career or human resource managers, commanders and managers may consider undertaking due diligence referee checks and/or include child safety related questions in interviews (if applicable) when considering an employee, contractor or volunteer for a Youth-related Work Position. Refer to Attachment 3 for sample referee and interview questions.

1.19 Commanders and managers should ensure a code of conduct is signed once screening is successfully completed. A signed [Defence Youth Safety Code of Conduct \(Adult\)](#) is to be recorded:

- a. on the Defence member's personal file in Objective for an individual in a Defence Youth-related Work Position
- b. in CadetNet under Accomplishments in the Education & Qualifications section of My Details for volunteers in Youth-related Work Positions in ADF Cadets.

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<sup>6</sup> Manage Labour Relations>Use>Incident Investigation / Disciplinary Action

<sup>7</sup> In accordance with the Public Service Act 1999, Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Checks are part of the entry-level check for all Defence APS employees.

<sup>8</sup> Including but not limited to a criminal or civil offence, or a Defence disciplinary offence or misconduct that demonstrates poor character and/or prior unacceptable behaviour, as defined in the Defence Youth Safe Code of Conduct-Adult.

**FURTHER ASSISTANCE**

1.20 Further information and assistance relating to youth protection suitability screening and WWCCs may be obtained by contacting [Defence Youth](#) via email.

**Attachment 1**

**YOUTH-RELATED WORK POSITION APPLICABILITY**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Youth-related Work Position Applicability</b>
<b>Defence Workplaces</b>	
Defence ab-initio and initial employment education and training establishments  (Likely to have a small percentage of Defence members who are 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all Chaplain positions</li> <li>• May be applicable to Counsellor positions required to provide support to Defence members who are 17</li> <li>• Not applicable to other positions, unless youth-related work is the primary duty/ responsibility of the position</li> </ul>
Defence support directorates and units  (May support Defence members who are 17 or interact with participants <18 in Defence Youth Program activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable, unless the position requires services to be provided specifically (only or mainly) for youth</li> </ul>
Other Defence directorates and units  (May have one or more Defence members who are 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>
<b>Defence Youth Programs</b>	
Australian Defence Force Cadets  (ADF Cadets aged 13-17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all adult volunteer positions, including Officers of Cadets, Instructors of Cadets and Defence Approved Helpers</li> <li>• Applicable to ADF and APS positions required to deliver or participate in Cadet activities</li> <li>• Generally not applicable to other positions, for example Canberra based Cadet Headquarters and Joint Support Services Division (JSSD) positions where contact with youth is not a primary responsibility of the position/role</li> </ul>
Defence Work Experience Program  (Work experience students aged 15-17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all JSSD Division Work Experience Liaison Officers, Work Experience Administration Assistants</li> <li>• Not applicable to Defence directorate or ADF unit positions that support work experience placements, unless the placement requires overnight supervision</li> <li>• Generally not applicable to other JSSD positions</li> </ul>
Young Endeavour Youth Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all STS Endeavour positions</li> </ul>

<b>Context</b>	<b>Youth-related Work Position Applicability</b>
(Youth <18)	
Other Defence Youth Programs (Youth <18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all positions where youth-related work is the primary duty/ responsibility of the position</li> </ul>
Defence people capability entities	
Defence Community Organisation (May provided support and services to youth <18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable, unless youth-related work is the primary duty/responsibility of the position</li> <li>• Applicable to contracted youth-related work positions (eg child care services)</li> </ul>
Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Office  (May support Defence members who are 17 or Defence Youth Program participants <18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be applicable to some case management positions</li> </ul>
Employee Assistance Program  (May support Defence members who are 17 or Defence Youth Program participants <18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be applicable to some case management positions</li> </ul>
Defence Force Recruiting (Engage and recruit youth <18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all DFR Centre positions</li> <li>• Generally not applicable to other positions, in particular Canberra based DFR Headquarter positions</li> </ul>
Defence health and support services	
Health Services (May support Defence members who are 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable, unless youth-related work is the primary duty/responsibility of the position/role</li> </ul>
Psychology Services (May support Defence members who are 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable, unless youth-related work is the primary duty/responsibility of the position</li> </ul>
Chaplaincy Services  (May support Defence members who are 17, Defence Youth Program participants <18, and other youth <18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable to all Chaplain positions</li> </ul>

**Attachment 2****ANNOTATING AN IDENTIFIED YOUTH-RELATED WORK POSITION AND RECORDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN PMKeyS**

Load the following proficiencies (Table 1) under the Position Accomplishments tab (Figure 1) for the position:

- a. WWCC/Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) proficiencies for all applicable states and territories where the incumbent of the position will be required to undertake youth-related work<sup>9</sup>
- b. Defence Youth Safety Level 2 Practitioner proficiency
- c. Defence Youth Safety Code of Conduct proficiency

**Table 1: Youth-related Work Position Proficiencies**

<b>Proficiency Number</b>	<b>Name of Proficiency</b>	<b>Evidence to Assign Proficiency</b>
P121830	WWVP ACT	Certified true copy of WWVP Notice of Decision issued by the ACT Government (or presentation of actual WWVP card)
P122991	WWCC Tasmania	Certified true copy of WWVP clearance issued by the TAS Government (or presentation of actual WWVP card) <sup>10</sup>
P122992	WWCC WA	Certified true copy of WWCC Assessment Notice issued by the WA Government (or presentation of actual WWCC card)
P122993	WWCC Queensland	Certified true copy of WWCC clearance issued by the QLD Government (or presentation of actual WWCC Blue card)
P122994	WWCC NT	Certified true copy of WWCC clearance notice issued by the NT Government (or presentation of actual WWCC Ochre card)

<sup>9</sup> Each state and territory jurisdiction has its own WWCC legislation. Consequently, a WWCC Clearance may be required for each jurisdiction where youth-related work will be undertaken. For more information visit <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks/part-overview>. If a WWCC Clearance is held in one jurisdiction, the ability to undertake youth-related work in other jurisdictions without the need for additional WWCC Clearance(s) varies depending on the jurisdiction. A single WWCC proficiency annotation may be sufficient in cases where an additional WWCC is not required.

<sup>10</sup> PMKeyS refers to a WWCC for Tasmania but the actual name is a WWVP clearance. This will be amended in PMKeyS to reflect the true name.

Proficiency Number	Name of Proficiency	Evidence to Assign Proficiency
P122995	WWCC Victoria	Certified true copy of WWCC clearance email issued by the VIC Government (or presentation of actual WWCC card)
P122996	WWCC SA	Certified True copy of WWCC Screening Letter issued by the SA Government
P122997	WWCC NSW	Certified true copy of WWCC Notice letter issued by the NSW Government
P123754	Defence Youth Safety Level 2 Practitioner	Completion of Course 215758 Defence Youth Safety Practitioner
P124851	Defence Youth Safety Code of Conduct	Signed Defence Youth Safety Code of Conduct and sighting of the individual's photo identification document/s. Required for each new youth-related position/posting.

Figure 1: PMKeyS Position Accomplishments Tab

The screenshot displays the 'Position Accomplishments' tab in the PMKeyS system. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Duty Statement', 'Position/Sponsor Data', 'Position Accomplishments' (highlighted), 'Alternate Accomplishments', and 'Position Outcomes'. Below the tabs, position details are shown: Position Number: 00189181, EDUCATION & TRAINING OFFICER; Open/Filled: Filled; Current Head Count: 1. A summary bar indicates 'Find | View All | First | 1 of 1'. Below this, key details are listed: Effective Date: 28/10/2019, Status: Active, Action Reason: UPD; Family: FM00914 Health, Function: FN90095 Allied Health; Sub Function: SF90116 None, Skill Grade: S960372 Dental Hygienist; Rank: N/A, Job Group: N/A. A section for Security Clearance shows 'B', NegVel L1, and MEC. The main table lists accomplishments with columns for 'Catg', 'Find', 'Accomp', and 'Importance':

Catg	Find	Accomp	Importance	
PRF	🔍	P108378	DEFENCE YOUTH SAFETY LEVEL 1 AWARENESS TRAINING PACKAGE COMPLETION	Mandatory
PRF	🔍	P123754	DEFENCE YOUTH SAFETY LEVEL 2 PRACTITIONER	Mandatory
PRF	🔍	P124851	DEFENCE YOUTH SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT	Mandatory
PRF	🔍	P122995	WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (WWCC) - VIC	Mandatory

A certified true copy of the Working with Children/Vulnerable People Check/s assessment should be sighted and recorded as shown in Figure 2:

**Figure 2: Recording Evidence of Attaining Working with Children/Vulnerable People Check/s**

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Proficiency	Date Issued	Expiry Date	Status	View
WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (WWCC) - NSW	26/07/2018	25/07/2023	Proficiency Satisfied	<a href="#">View</a>
RESPONSIBLE RECORDKEEPING	21/03/2018		Proficiency Satisfied	<a href="#">View</a>

[Proficiency](#) [Other Details](#)

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<b>Proficiency:</b>	WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (WWCC) - NSW
<b>Issue Date:</b>	26/07/2018
<b>Issued By:</b>	NSW Government
<b>Expiry Date:</b>	25/07/2023
<b>License #:</b>	

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Issued In	Status
<b>Country:</b> Australia	<input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Protection
<b>State:</b> New South Wales	<input type="checkbox"/> License Verified
<b>Certificate Number:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal in Progress
<b>Certificate Issued:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proficiency Satisfied
<b>Name:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Externally Issued

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- No proficiency data for civilians was recorded on CIVILPRISM prior to PMKeyS roll out.
- New proficiencies are automatically assigned to employees on completion of Defence courses or uploaded weekly on completion of CAMPUS e-learning modules.

Please email the [Defence Service Centre](#) or free call 1800DEFENCE (1800 333 362) for assistance with or feedback about PSS functionality.

**Attachment 3**

**SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH-RELATED WORK POSITIONS**

The questions below are provided as a guide only and may be contextualised as appropriate.

Referee	Candidate
<p>How well do you know (the candidate) and in what capacity?</p>	<p>Can you give an example where you have interacted with a young person?</p> <p>Protecting youth is an important part of our work. Can you give me some examples of how you would contribute to making the organisation a safer environment for young people?</p>
<p>Have you observed (the candidate) interacting with children/youth in their professional capacity?</p> <p>If yes: how would you describe that interaction?</p> <p>Do you know of any reason why Defence should be concerned about this applicant working with young people? Would they pose a risk to young people?</p>	<p>Have you experienced any challenges interacting with youth? Can you give an example of what has worked well, and any lessons you may have learnt?</p> <p>If you had concerns about a colleague with regard to his/ her behaviour or attitude towards youth in his/ her care, how would you deal with this?</p>
<p>If ... (the candidate) was given a job with this department, where their primary role would be to interact with young people on a regular basis, including supervising young people on camps and at overnight activities, would that give rise to any concerns for you?</p>	<p>What is your understanding of the terms: "Child Safety" and "Child Protection"?</p> <p>Can you spot the signs that a child is suffering from a type of abuse, neglect or harm? What are these signs?</p>
<p>What particular traits would assist the candidate when interacting with people from different social, ethnic or religious backgrounds?</p>	<p>What interactions do you currently have with young people?</p> <p>(for example through sport/other community youth programs)</p> <p>Tell me about a time when you have been working with youth and your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? With hindsight, how might you have improved your response?</p>

### Tips for Interviewers recruiting for Youth-related Work Positions

Not only when asking questions about youth protection, but throughout the interview process, interviewers should be attuned to answers that are vague or unrealistic. In particular, interviewers should look out for answers that show no or little understanding or appreciation of young people's needs or expectations; that fail to recognise the particular vulnerabilities of young people from troubled backgrounds; inappropriate language about youth; unclear boundaries with youth; and answers that imply adults and young people are equal.

It can be particularly difficult for an inexperienced staff member to maintain proper boundaries where the age differential between adults and youth is small, for example, a 20 year old Defence member working and training alongside under 18 colleague/s. It may be worth designing a question around this issue if it is relevant for your setting.