



Working with Children Check Complaints Resolution Process

The Working with Children (WWC) Screening Unit places a high value on the standard of customer service we provide to the community. We support the right of members of the public and other customers to provide comment or make complaints about our work, and aim to provide an accessible, fair and efficient system for resolving complaints.

The WWC Screening Unit is committed to continuous improvement in service delivery and welcomes both positive and negative customer feedback. The Complaints Resolution Process outlines how we will respond to complaints and is an important part of the WWC Screening Unit's commitment to service improvement.

Background

The WWC Screening Unit is part of the Department of Communities and implements the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (WWC Act). The WWC Screening Unit carries out WWC Checks for the Western Australian community in accordance with the WWC Act which governs:

- who must have a WWC Check;
- what criminal records and relevant information can be received;
- what must be considered when deciding whether a person can be issued a WWC Card making them eligible for any type of child-related work.

Further information is available on the website www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au

All services of the WWC Screening Unit function in accordance with the WWC Act. Some functions are also governed by other contracts and agreements.

The WWC Screening Unit must make decisions under the WWC Act that contribute to the safety of children by identifying and preventing people from working with children where their criminal record and other relevant information indicates that a child may be harmed.

Under the WWC Act, all information about applicants and applications is confidential and therefore the WWC Screening Unit has a dedicated complaints resolution process that supports the service it provides.

The WWC Screening Unit undertakes to:

- treat people making complaints (complainants) with respect at all times;
- respect the right of people making complaints to tell their story in their own words, and to explain what they would like to happen; and
- respond to complaints honestly, and in a clear manner.

Formal complaints

Most concerns can be sorted out informally by getting correct information and talking to an appropriate staff member.

A formal complaint is one where the issue cannot be dealt with through informal contact or information and discussion, the matter is within the control of the WWC Screening Unit and resolution is expected by the complainant.

Such a complaint is a formal way of telling the WWC Screening Unit you are dissatisfied or concerned with something the Unit has done. A Manager or the Director will use the formal complaint procedures to try to resolve the problem.

Who can make formal complaints?

Formal complaints about the WWC Screening Unit or its services can be made by any individual, group, or member of a private or public organisation, including government agencies.

What can be complained about?

You may choose to complain about any aspect of WWC Checks. Examples of what can be complained about include:

- the quality of customer service;
- how we treated your personal information;
- the WWC Check website;
- access to timely feedback about the status of an application.

However, some concerns **cannot** be dealt with through the complaints process, because the complaint topic is outside of the influence of the WWC Screening Unit or because other avenues of recourse are provided. These include:

- **The WWC Act and processing of applications** - You may disagree with or query the legislation, the cost, and the method of processing applications. You may be unhappy that members of the WWC Screening Unit attend your residence or organisation in the course of an investigation or audit. However, these issues are governed by legislation or external agreements and cannot be investigated and remedied by the WWC Screening Unit through a formal complaints process. We do want to hear your concerns, which can be considered when legislation is amended or contracts are renewed.

If your complaint relates to these issues, one of the WWC Screening Unit's staff will contact you to talk about the matter, listen to your questions and explain the requirements of the WWC Act or methods for processing applications more fully. The staff member will also attempt to assist you if you need further help.

- **Matters that are dealt with by the State Administrative Tribunal** - If you are dissatisfied because a Negative Notice has been issued prohibiting you from child-related work and you believe you are suitable to do such work, you can apply to have the decision reviewed by the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT). Information about this process is provided to relevant applicants concurrently with the issue of a Negative Notice, or see www.sat.justice.wa.gov.au

In Western Australia the SAT is the primary authority for reviewing decisions made by Government agencies, public officials and local governments. The SAT's decision making processes are impartial and independent of previous decisions and the public officials who made them.

- **Australia Post** - Complaints about the WWC Check application process at Australia Post are to be made directly to Australia Post which has its own complaint process. The WWC Screening Unit monitors the performance of Australia Post under its contract and will seek information about the resolution of complaints.

If you want to lodge a complaint about Australia Post you can do this:

- in person at any Australia Post outlet;
- by phone to the phone to the Customer Contact Centre in your State on 13 13 18; or
- by writing to the Commercial Manager or General Manager in your State.

If you want to let us know that you have made a complaint to Australia Post please advise us through the website contacts or by phoning our call centre.

- **Anonymous complaints** - The WWC Screening Unit does not investigate anonymous complaints.

How we handle formal complaints

The first step - lodging your complaint

There are a number of ways to lodge your complaint:

- talk to one of our staff on: (08) 6217 8100 or 1800 883 979 (country callers);
- in writing - send a letter to: PO Box 1262, West Perth WA 6872.
- send an email to: checkquery@cpfs.wa.gov.au.
- complete a feedback form on the Complaints page (under the Resources tab) of the WWC Check website: www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au

Investigation

One of the WWC Screening Unit's Officers will contact you and gather as much information as possible from you to clarify:

- what the complaint is about;
- what you want to happen regarding the complaint.

Within five working days of receiving your complaint, the Director or his/her delegate will write to you to confirm he/she has received it.

Resolving a formal complaint

Resolution is achieved when the outcome of a complaint is satisfactory to both parties. Working together to resolve complaints is the best way to fix many problems. We genuinely want to resolve your complaints as quickly and easily as possible.

Within 15 working days, you will be informed of the outcome of the complaint in writing by the Director or his/her delegate, and provided with reasons for the outcome. If you believe there is further information that you have not provided that should be considered, you will be given the opportunity to provide this information.