# Preparing for registration with the Social Services RegulatorGroup 3 service providers

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## Today’s webinar

* About the Social Services Regulator
* Meeting the Social Services Standards and the Child Safe Standards
* Registration
* Ongoing requirements
* Q&A

## About the Social Services Regulator

### Who is the Social Services Regulator?

The Social Services Regulator is an independent statutory authority established under the [Social Services Regulation Act 2021](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/social-services-regulation-act-2021)

The Act establishes a new framework for social services regulation in Victoria

The Act and the [Social Services Regulations 2023](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/social-services-regulations-2023/001) began on 1 July 2024.

The new laws mean Victorian social service providers have:

* a common set of social service **standards**
* a single **independen**t regulator.

### Roles and responsibilities of the Social Services Regulator

The Regulator ensures that the rights, safety and wellbeing of Victorian social service users are supported, and safeguarding systems are effectively administered.

Social Services Regulator focuses on:

* **Engagement and education** about the new laws
* Managing **registrations**
* **Regulating** the:
* six new Social Service Standards
* Child Safe Standards
* **Responding to** breaches of:
* Legislation
* Regulations
* conduct

The Social Services Regulator works with co-regulators, such as:

* Commission for Children and Young people
* Victorian Disability Worker Commission
* NDIS Commission

The Social Services Regulator makes decisions independently. It is not directed by the Minister when making decisions.

The Social Services Regulator has a separate and distinct role from TAC and WorkSafe as funders, and from the NDIS as a co-regulator.

This means that providers may have different obligations and respond to requests for information from each organisation separately. For example, a service provider may need to complete regular reporting as part of their funding contract, and make notifications of changes to the services they provide as part of their obligations under section 47 of the SSR Act.

### Snapshot of the new Social Services Regulatory laws

The Act established a new framework for social services regulation in Victoria. It began on 1 July 2024.

A single **regulator** that is **independent** from TAC and WorkSafe Victoria, the Department of families, fairness and housing and the NDIS

The new laws means social service providers operating in Victoria will have:

* streamlined registration and reporting requirements
* a common set of social service standards and Child Safe Standards
* a single independent regulator.

Previously four pieces of legislation with significant variances in the regulatory tools and responsibilities across each Act – SSR more streamlined and consistent.

### Who is covered by the new laws?

We refer to services covered by the new laws as being ‘in scope’.

These services are covered by the Social Services Regulator:

* Disability Services provided or funded by Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, or funded by Transport Accident Commission and/or WorkSafe Victoria
* Supported residential services
* Homelessness support services
* Family violence support services
* Sexual assault support services
* Out-of-home care and secure welfare services

[Find out more about services in scope of the new scheme](https://www.vic.gov.au/services-scope-new-scheme).

There are also some exclusions, such as in Disability services.

Registration is a staged process.

The registration requirement applies to all providers in scope of the scheme, no matter what size they are or how much funding they receive.

### Value of the new laws

* To give primary consideration to the **protection of service users** from harm, abuse and neglect
* **Minimise** risks of avoidable harm in social services delivery
* **Promote and support** the delivery of safe, effective social services
* Encourage **continuous improvement**
* **Close gaps** in safeguarding coverage

## Meeting the Standards, registration and ongoing requirements

### Most TAC and WorkSafe funded providers are in Group 3

For registration, providers are divided into groups with different timings

Group 3:

* Providers of disability services funded by TAC or WorkSafe
* Were not required to be registered with the Human Services Regulator
* Were delivering disability services before 1 July 2024

Group 1:

* Providers who **were** required to be registered with the Human Services Regulator
* Your registration automatically transferred

Group 2:

* Already registered or in the process of registering because you provide **other** services
* **Add** your TAC and/or WorkSafe funded disability services to your registration

New provider:

* Newly created provider
* Began receiving funding from TAC or WorkSafe after 1 July 2024

### Meeting the Social Services Standards

The Social Service Standards are a **consistent set of obligations** that registered social service providers in Victoria must meet.

These are supported by service requirements. **The Standards are high-level, while service requirements are more specific.**

* **Standard 1: Safe service delivery**
Social services are safely provided based on assessed needs.
* **Standard 2: Service user agency & dignity**
Social services are person-centred, and respect and uphold service user rights and agency.
* **Standard 3: Safe service environments**Social services are provided in a safe, secure and fit‑for‑purpose environment.
* **Standard 4: Feedback and complaints**Service users are supported to share feedback, complaints or concerns about service safety.
* **Standard 5: Accountable organisational governance**Effective governance and organisational systems support safe social service delivery.
* **Standard 6: Safe workforce**Social services are delivered by a workforce with the knowledge, capability and support to provide safe social services with care and skill.
* Service providers need to demonstrate they provide safe social services by meeting the **service requirements** of the six Standards
* There are several service requirements in each Standard
* It’s necessary to meet ALL the service requirements to meet a Standard
* Registered providers must meet these requirements as far as ‘reasonably practicable’

In practice, service requirements often guide providers to build on existing frameworks.

Once a provider has met a Standard’s service requirements, they have met the Standard.

[Find out more about the Social Services Standards.](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-social-services-standards)

### Supporting providers to get ready to meet the Standards

We have prepared information sheets for each standard.

Our information sheets have:

* **Checklists** to get ready
* **Outcomes**: each Standard aims to achieve key outcomes
* **Service requirements**: actions you take to meet an outcome and a Standard
* Indicators of success to show **ongoing compliance** with a Standard

[Find our factsheets and guidance about the Social Services Standards](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-social-services-standards)

### Meeting the Child Safe Standards

We also regulate the Child Safe Standards in social services.

There are 11 Child Safe Standards:

* Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
* Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
* Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
* Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
* Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
* Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
* Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.
* Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
* Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
* Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
* Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

[Find out more about the Child Safe Standards.](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/)

### Who must meet the Child Safe Standards

* Organisations and businesses in scope of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* must meet each Child Safe Standard
* This includes organisations that provide or facilitate services for children (for some or all of their services)
* Sole traders also need to meet the Child Safe Standards if they have engaged a contractor / employee / volunteer to provide services, facilities or goods

We regulate the Child Safe Standards in social services. The Child Safe Standards are not voluntary. There can be legal consequences for non-compliance.

There are multiple regulators of the Child Safe Standards: you may have multiple reporting requirements.

[Find out more about the Child Safe standards](https://www.vic.gov.au/changes-regulation-child-safe-standards).

### Registering with the Social Services Regulator

We refer to services covered by the new laws as being ‘in scope’.

#### Who needs to register as part of group 3?

Group 3 includes service providers that:

* have been delivering disability services before 1 July 2024 and
* were not required to register with the Human Services Regulator and
* are funded by TAC and/or WorkSafe.

You **are** in scope if you provide disability services which are funded by TAC or WorkSafe and you were providing these services prior to 1 July 2024

You must register with the SSR if you wish to continue providing these services

You are *not* in scope of the new laws if you provide disability services which are *not* funded by DFFH, TAC or WorkSafe Victoria.

It is not necessary to register these services or demonstrate that you meet the Standards for these services.

You do not need to contact us to begin the registration application process if you are in this group.

These requirements apply to organisations who were funded to provide services between April and une 2024. So if you had previously been funded by the department of families, fairness and housing but no longer are, you could still be included in Group 3.

#### What if I started providing Victorian funded services after 1 July 2024?

You are **not** part of Group 3 if you:

* are a newly established provider
* began receiving funding after 1 July 2024, or
* did not receive funding or deliver funded disability services in the 3 months leading up to 1 July 2024.

Instead, you are considered **a new provider.**

There is a different registration application process for new providers.

[Find more information about this process.](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-registration)

New providers need to email registration@ssr.vic.gov.au to start the registration application process.

The registration process may look different to other registration groups, including those are already registered to deliver disability services.

#### Registration is different if you provide multiple services

Some service providers may have already registered or begun the registration process for *other* services they provide if they are part of registration group 1 or 2.

If you also provide disability services funded by TAC or WorkSafe, you must **add** these to your existing registration profile.

The Regulator will contact you by email to begin and complete this process.

You must contact the Regulator if you have *not* received this email by **30 June 2025.**

#### Snapshot: registering your TAC and/or WorkSafe funded disability services with the Regulator

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Registration group | What do I need to do |
| New provider | Review the information on our website and email us to begin the registration application process |
| Group 1 or 2 provider | Add your TAC and/or WorkSafe funded disability services to your registration profile |
| Group 3 provider | Begin preparing for registration, while you wait for contact from us |

To recap: registration is a staged process. The registration process may look different for each registration group, including those are already registered to deliver disability services. This is because the Regulator looks to streamline the registration application process where it can.

It is important to note that whilst providers are being registered in line with particular groups, all providers are subject to the same registration and compliance requirements.

We will go into more detail about what Group 3 providers need to do as we continue in this presentation

#### Group 3 registration process snapshot

The Group 3 registration process:

* Uses relevant information the Regulator has about service providers’ operations
* Streamlines the process where possible by recognising familiarity with the requirements of the Human Services Standards
* Reduces administrative burden

There is **no cost** for registration. It is **not necessary to renew** registration with the Regulator.

The Regulator makes every effort to **email you** within the specified timeframe about completing the registration process.

#### How do service providers begin the registration process?

The Social Services Regulator will email Group 3 providers about starting the registration process. We will use a list provided by TAC and WorkCover of their funded service providers.

Email 1 will be sent between May and June*.* Group 3 service providers need to begin the registration application process during this time.

This is the first of a series of email communications you will have with the Regulator during the registration process.

This first email will ask service providers to:

* verify who will complete the verification process on behalf of the provider
* sign a statutory declaration to confirm.

**Note**: If you are not contacted by the Regulator to begin the registration process by 30 June 2025 , email the Social Services Regulator.

The Regulator will provide more information closer to the registration about the process and what evidence is needed.

#### Registration FAQs

You will receive more than one email – please be patient with this process.

The Regulator will review a registration application within 60 days.

Our response to reviewing the application may include:

* asking you to provide more information to complete your application
* clarifying details in your application.

We will email you once a decision has been made about your registration. We are committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals.

We collect, use, disclose and store personal, sensitive, health and commercially sensitive information in compliance with our obligations under relevant legislation.

Your CEO will need to sign a formal statement confirming that your provider understands these requirements.

This important legal confirmation will be part of your provider's registration record.

This attestation is to confirm the provider has a sound understanding of the Standards and the service requirements.

We will review completed registration applications within 60 days. We will email service providers once a decision has been made regarding your registration.

Our response to reviewing the application may include:

* asking you to provide more information to complete your application
* clarifying details in your application

If you do not provide the further information we request in a timely manner, the Regulator may refuse to grant your application for registration.

Due to the volume of registration applications we are currently assessing, we cannot provide regular updates to service providers on the status of their registration.

**What will the Regulator do with the information I give them?**

We are committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals. We collect, use, disclose and store personal, sensitive, health and commercially sensitive information in compliance with our obligations under relevant legislation.

[More information on privacy](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-privacy).

#### What can service providers do now?

We know some service providers are keen to get started. Whilst you can’t start the registration process until we contact you, there are things you can do in the meantime.

Group 3 service providers can start getting ready for registration by reviewing the information and the current guidance on [Regulator’s website](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-privacy).

There will be specific guidance to assist Group 3 providers to prepare for registration coming in December.

We will provide further information about specific evidence requirements closer to the registration timeframe.

You can [subscribe to our newsletter](https://confirmsubscription.com/h/y/1614A62FF102A239) to get the latest updates, sector guidance, news and events details from the Regulator.

Useful links:

Confirm what registration group you are in:

* [Who is covered by the new laws](https://www.vic.gov.au/services-scope-new-scheme)
* [Registration groups](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-registration)

Review the Regulator’s guidance:

* [Six Social Services Standards information sheets](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-social-services-standards)
* [Demonstrating suitability in registration process](https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-08/Suitability-requirements-fact-sheet.docx)

Review the Regulator’s information about our approach

* [Overview of the new laws and comparison documents](https://www.vic.gov.au/comparing-social-services-standards-other-standards)
* [Our principles and approach to regulation](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulators-approach-regulation)

All guidance and information is on the [Social Services Regulator website](http://www.ssr.vic.gov.au/).

### Ongoing registration and compliance requirements for all registered service providers

#### Ongoing registration requirements

Once registered, service providers do not need to renew registration with the Regulator. Your registration will continue unless cancelled by the Regulator.

Once registered, you must meet ongoing compliance requirements of the new laws. These include:

* meeting the six Social Services Standards
* meeting the Child Safe Standards (if they apply)
* complying with your registration requirements
* reporting incidents which occur during service delivery
* reporting changes to your operations and organisation.

It may take time and effort for some organisations to get things right. Over time, we will expect organisations to have comprehensively implemented the new Standards.

While there may be some overlap with other standards, compliance in other regulatory laws does not automatically mean that your service provider meets the Standards.

### Regulatory approach

Our initial focus is on guidance and education. We recognise some providers may need more support, as in some cases the new laws introduces new requirements.

Over time, we expect service providers to comprehensively implement the Standards.

We will not hesitate to act to protect service users from harm, abuse and neglect.

The Regulator makes decisions using:

* an intelligence-led and integrated approach
* a proportionate approach to risk
* objectivity and openness in our processes
* procedural fairness
* resources where they have the greatest effect.

We will take a graduated approach to regulating the new laws:

* Our initial focus will be on informing and educating organisations about their obligations under the new Standards
* For some organisations, it may take time and effort to get things right and they may not have fully completed implementation
* Over time, we will expect organisations to have comprehensively comply with requirements of the laws.

### How does the Regulator monitor compliance?

By using **a risk-based approach**, we monitor compliance in a graduated, timely and proportionate way. This means that:

* Registered service providers are *not* required to undertake scheduled periodic reviews
* Service providers may choose to undertake independent reviews with private providers

The Regulator uses a range of compliance and enforcement tools.

Using a data-driven approach to determine risk:

* Nature of service provided
* Profile of the service users
* Incident reports and handling
* Complaints and notifications from service users and the community
* Referrals from regulators and safeguarding bodies
* Announced and unannounced inspections

[Find out more about the Social Services Regulator’s approach to regulation](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulators-approach-regulation).

### Information to help providers prepare

#### Balancing existing good practices with maintaining oversight

While there may be some overlap with other standards, compliance in other regulatory schemes does not automatically mean that your service provider meets the Standards.

But some compliance requirements are similar to other regulatory schemes. For some service providers, this includes meeting previous compliance requirements some providers are already meeting the Child Safe Standards.

This means the Regulator:

* expects many providers to have systems and practices in place to help them meet new compliance requirements
* streamlines regulatory burden where possible by looking for evidence of good systems.

Preparing for registration:

* [Social Services Standards information sheets](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-social-services-standards)
* [Preparing to register – Group 3](https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-01/Preparing-to-register-with-the-Social-Services-Regulator-%E2%80%93-group-3.docx)
* [Demonstrating suitability in registration process](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator-social-services-standards)
* [Child Safe Standards](https://www.vic.gov.au/changes-regulation-child-safe-standards)
* [Overview of the new laws](https://www.vic.gov.au/changes-regulation-social-services)

Ongoing registration and compliance:

* [Our principles and approach to regulation](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulators-approach-regulation)
* [Reporting a notifiable incident](https://www.vic.gov.au/ssr-reporting-notifiable-incident)
* [Reporting changes to your organisational and operational information](https://www.vic.gov.au/reporting-changes-your-organisation)

All guidance and information is now live at the [Social Services Regulator website](http://www.ssr.vic.gov.au/).

## Getting in touch with the Social Services Regulator

* For general enquiries: enquiries@ssr.vic.gov.au
* For enquiries about registration: registration@ssr.vic.gov.au