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| The Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme |
| Information for foster carers |
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## What is the Worker and Carer Exclusion

## Scheme?

The Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme (the scheme) started on 1 July 2024 and is managed by the Social Services Regulator (the Regulator). You can read more about the Regulator on [our website](https://www.vic.gov.au/about-social-services-regulator).

The scheme aims to keep children and young people in out-of-home care safe by excluding certain workers and carers from working in out-of-home care. These workers or carers have behaved in a way that shows they are an unjustifiable risk of harm to children or young people.

### How do out-of-home care services know if a carer or worker is excluded?

Out-of-home-care services covered by the scheme, including foster care agencies, must check with the Regulator that a worker or carer is not on the scheme’s exclusion database before engaging them to provide services. This includes checking new foster carers.

A person disqualified from providing foster care before 1 July 2024 is also excluded under the scheme.

### What types of conduct may lead to exclusion?

The scheme broadens the range of conduct that may lead to a person’s exclusion from being a foster carer. Conduct can now include harm of a physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, financial or cultural nature, and neglect.

Conduct is not limited to conduct with the child in the foster care placement. For example, abuse of a child placed in kinship care with the foster carer may now lead to exclusion.

### Who decides if a worker or carer should be excluded?

A panel, called a Worker and Carer Exclusion panel, decides whether a person is excluded from working in out-of-home care.

A person can now be excluded temporarily while an investigation into the person’s conduct is underway, or while a panel is considering the person’s conduct.

### How will a worker or carer know if they are under investigation or excluded?

The Regulator or a Worker and Carer Exclusion panel writes to a person to tell them if:

* the Regulator is investigating their conduct
* they have been excluded, including temporarily.

### Workers or carers under investigation or subject to exclusion

A person must inform out-of-home-care service/s where they are employed or engaged, such as their foster care agency, if they receive a notification that:

* their conduct is under investigation (**it is an offence not to do so**) or
* they have been excluded, including temporarily (**it is an offence not to do so**).

The person must also provide the following information to the Regulator:

* details of out-of-home-care services where they work (**it is an offence not to do so**)
* changes in their personal details including name and address.

The person must not:

* apply for employment or engagement to provide services under the scheme while being investigated, or while a panel is considering the matter, without telling the service that fact (**it is an offence to do so**)
* apply for employment or engagement to provide services under the scheme if excluded (**it is an offence to do so**).

## Useful resources and contacts

### Resources

You can find more information on our website about understanding the:

* [Social Services Regulator](https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator)
* [Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme](https://www.vic.gov.au/worker-and-carer-exclusion-scheme)

### Contact us

For more information about the scheme not outlined in this information sheet, email the Social Services Regulator: WCESdatabase@ssr.vic.gov.au.

For general enquiries about the Social Services Regulator, email the Social Services Regulator:enquiries@ssr.vic.gov.au.

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