

2024/25 SLSNSW Working with Children Check Requirements

Introduction

Surf Life Saving is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. The SLSA Child Safe Policy provides a framework of policies, procedures, resources and education to support clubs in meeting this commitment. A key action area of this program is to **screen and recruit the right people**, ensuring that where applicable, members have a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC).

This document outlines the legal requirements and responsibilities for members and clubs in relation to WWCCs in NSW.

Summary of Changes 2024/25 Season

There are no major changes this season.

- The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) have reinforced that verification and re-verification of WWCC renewals must be done for all volunteers and employees. SurfGuard must be updated for all verifications.
- The cost for a WWCC for paid employees increased on 1/8/2024 and is now \$105. A WWCC for volunteers is still free.

The NSW Working With Children Check

Under the [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012](#) and the [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Regulation 2013](#), a WWCC is a prerequisite for anyone in a child-related role, either paid or voluntary.

The WWCC is managed by the [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) (OCG) and involves a national criminal history check and review of findings of workplace misconduct. The result of a WWCC is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring, and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked.

The WWCC cannot identify people who have not previously been caught or are yet to offend.

Who needs a WWCC?

SLSNSW members who work directly with children under the age of 18 must complete a WWCC, unless their role falls within one of the scheme's defined exemptions. The exemptions which are most relevant to SLS include:

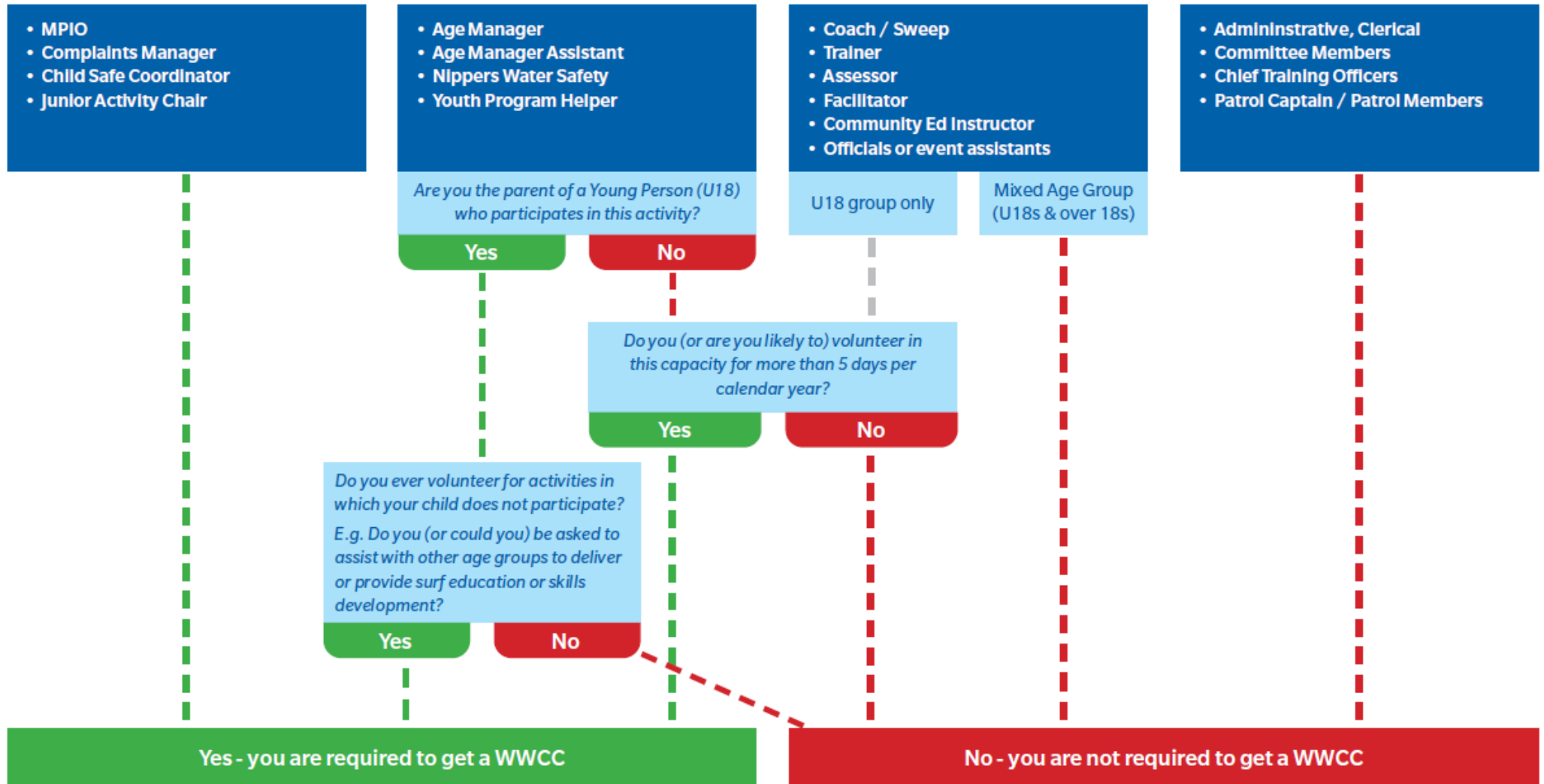
- Children (under the age of 18)
- Administrative, clerical or maintenance work
- Very short-term work (less than 5 working days in a calendar year) such as a visiting speaker, assessor or performer.
- Volunteering by a parent or close relative where the child participates*.
- Co-workers and supervisors where a child works (e.g. Patrol Captains or patrolling members)
- Interstate visitors volunteering at a one-off event (e.g. State Championships) for up to 30 days a year if they hold the WWCC in their home jurisdiction.

** This is not a blanket exemption for all parents. Parents will require a WWCC If they:*

- *are volunteering on overnight camps;*
- *are volunteering for an activity where their child is not participating (e.g. for a different age group in Nippers or for a different training squad)*
- *are volunteering as part of a formal mentoring program; or*
- *are volunteering in a role which involves intimate, personal care of children with a disability.*

Do you require a WWCC?

If you perform multiple roles in surf life saving, please check all the roles that may apply to you and obtain a WWCC where needed.



Can I ask all members to do a WWCC?

Asking someone who is covered by an exemption under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 to complete a WWCC means that you are not compliant with the legislation. If you are not compliant with the legislation, you may be contacted by the Office of the Children’s Guardian and given a timeline within which to become compliant. If you do not comply according to the timelines, the matter can escalate, and penalties may apply.

Member responsibilities

Members who require a WWCC have a responsibility to apply for this check, and to provide the club with their WWCC number.

Club Responsibilities

Clubs have a responsibility to;

- **Identify** child related roles that require a WWCC for volunteers and/or employees
- **Inform** the volunteers and/or employees of the need to get a WWCC
- **Verify** WWCCs and renewals with the OCG.
- **Record and update SurfGuard** with current WWCC information.
- **Suspend or reject membership and/or participation** of volunteers and/or employees if required, depending on the outcome of the WWCC.

Applying for a WWCC – information for applicants

Those who already have a WWCC can simply provide their WWCC Number, full name and date of birth to their club for online verification.

Those who do not already have a WWCC will need to follow the below steps:

1. Complete the [online application form](#) (once the form has been submitted an Application Number will be received).
2. Take the Application Number and [proof of identity](#) to a Service NSW Centre.
3. Once received, provide their WWCC Number to the club for verification.

Child-related roles cannot be undertaken until the Club has completed the online WWCC verification and the result is ‘Application in Progress’ or ‘Cleared’.

Once you have provided proof of identity, most people will receive their WWCC number within a few days. However please allow up to four weeks as in some cases waiting times may be longer.

Verifying WWCCs and acting on verification outcomes – information for clubs

The process for Clubs who undertake child-related activities involves:

1. Register as an ‘employer’ with the OCG

If not already completed, register via the [registration portal](#). Online help can be found [here](#).

2. Identify who will need a WWCC and inform the individuals.

It is recommended that you document that an individual has been informed they need a WWCC, to ensure this person gets their WWCC before starting in a child-related role.

The ‘Notes’ field under the ‘Other Details’ section on a member’s SurfGuard profile could be utilised for this purpose of tracking who has been contacted.

3. Complete the online verification with the OCG

Login to the [OCG employer portal](#) and use the WWCC Number, family name and date of birth to verify. Online help can be found [here](#).

This is a vital step in the verification process. Without it, you have not confirmed that the WWCC is valid. This step also enables Surf Life Saving to be notified by the OCG if the individual becomes barred from working with children in the future.

4. Enter the WWCC details into SurfGuard

The following details must be recorded on SurfGuard. The OCG does not store this information on their system for later recall.

SurfGuard Field	Information to be Entered by SLSC
Working with Children Registration/Verification Date	The date the online verification was completed
Working with Children Registration Expiry Date	The WWCC expiry date
Working with Children Registration No	The WWCC Number
Member Protection Note	The result of the online verification, i.e. Result = In Progress / Cleared / Barred / Interim Barred / Not Found

If the club receives a 'Barred' or 'Interim Barred' result during the initial verification process or at any other point during the person's engagement with the club, then the person must immediately cease any child-related roles. See **point 6 "Removing someone from a child-related role"** for further information.

5. Appoint or remove a worker depending on the outcome of the WWCC verification

Status	Meaning
Application in progress	The applicant has completed the application process and may begin working with children. If he or she becomes barred, the employer will receive notification.
Cleared	This applicant is cleared to work with children until their Working With Children Check expires (date shown in result).
Barred	The applicant has been barred and cannot work with children, paid or unpaid. It is an offence to engage a barred individual in child-related roles.
Interim barred	The applicant been barred and cannot work with children, paid or unpaid, pending the outcome of a risk assessment. It is an offence to engage a barred individual for child-related roles.
Not found	<p>The database cannot find a matching result because the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data entered for online verification (name, date of birth and/or WWCC number or application number) has errors; Application has been withdrawn or terminated without an outcome; Application process has not been completed (i.e. completed the online form; presented proof of identity; paid any applicable fee). <p>It is an offence to engage this individual in child-related roles.</p>

Status	Meaning
Closed	The applicant's check has been closed. It is an offence to engage this person in child-related roles.
Expired	The applicant does not have a current WWCC. It is an offence to engage this person in child-related roles.

6. Removing someone from a child-related role

The WWCC is valid for five years and during this time, cleared applicants will be subject to ongoing monitoring. Surf Life Saving Clubs will be notified by the OCG (using the contact information supplied during the online verification process) if the individual becomes barred from working with children in the future.

Receiving notifications from the OCG - If the OCG sends a letter advising the Club that a volunteer has become barred (or has an interim bar) you must immediately remove them from the child-related role. It does not matter whether they are paid or unpaid; supervised or unsupervised.

Note, the OCG will not advise SLSNSW of the reason for the change in status, so it is the responsibility of clubs to advise the SLSNSW [Chief Executive Officer](#) and update the member's SurfGuard record.

The club has the option to:

- Dismiss the member;
- Suspend the member from child-related roles, pending the outcome of an appeal; or
- Transfer the member to a non-child-related role within the club (although the club is under no legal obligation to find an alternative position for a barred individual).

7. Provide the SurfGuard data to the OCG if required as part of the Compliance Program

The OCG have implemented a [Compliance Plan](#) which aims to ensure Clubs understand and comply with their legal responsibilities. The compliance program is primarily focused on achieving compliance and not engaging Clubs in enforcement action.

If required, there is a pre-created report in SurfGuard which can be utilised as part of the compliance plan: **Reports > Member > Report Type – Membership Protection Details.**

8. **Monitor WWCC records** to ensure that those in child-related roles renew their WWCC before their current WWCC expires.
9. **Re-verify WWCC renewals** – You must re-verify all WWCC renewals and update SurfGuard with current information.

Further Information

For additional information/clarification on these requirements, please visit the WWCC Frequently Asked Questions document.