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# New Social Services Regulator hits the ground running

In the first six months of operation, the new Social Services Regulator has processed thousands of worker and carer exclusion checks, registered more than 300 organisations and conducted more than 60 inspections of supported residential services, protecting Victorians from avoidable harm.

The Regulator has also released guidance and education materials, hosted more than ten webinars and information sessions and met with hundreds of social service providers, peak bodies and stakeholders around the state to help organisations understand their new obligations.

Introduced on 1 July 2024, the new Social Services Regulation Act was designed to strengthen the community sector by streamlining and simplifying the regulation of social services and reducing red tape.

Under the new system, a single set of Social Service Standards and a single registration process for hundreds of community organisations was established, as well the appointment of the independent regulator, Jonathan Kaplan.

As part of the new scheme, registered service providers are also responsible for reporting incidents to the Regulator that occur during the delivery of a service.

The Regulator is also responsible for implementing the new Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme which ensures that people who pose an unjustifiable risk of harm to children and young people in Victoria’s out-of-home care system are removed from the sector.

The scheme replaces the Victorian Carer Register and increases protections for children and young people by expanding the range of conduct that can result in a worker or carer being excluded when the conduct doesn’t meet the threshold for a criminal conviction.

Before engaging with a worker or carer for the first time, service providers are required to check with the Regulator if the person is on the excluded worker and carer database.

Under this scheme, the Regulator has excluded three carers from working with children in out-of-home care and has processed more than 4,000 checks.

**Quotes attributable to Jonathan Kaplan, Social Services Regulator**

“For the first six months, my focus has been on stakeholder engagement, education and support to help providers understand the new standards so they can deliver services to those who need them the most.”

“Everyone at the Social Services Regulator has done a power of work in only six months to implement the new Social Services Regulation Act that has laid the groundwork to strengthen protections and safeguard vulnerable Victorians.

“With this foundational work in place, I am sharpening my focus as a regulator to protect social services users from avoidable harm, and I will expect the see more data and progress over the next six months.”