

DISABILITY SERVICES, CARERS, CHECKS ON SUITABILITY

334. Hon Ken Travers to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Disability Services:

- (1) What police checks does the Disability Services Commission carry out on staff employed as carers?
- (2) What other checks are in place to ensure undesirable people are not employed as carers?
- (3) What requirements does the Disability Services Commission have in place that ensure DSC funded agencies carry out police checks, and any other checks for suitability, on people employed as carers?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

The commission engages a range of occupational groupings to give direct care to clients in a range of programs including specific group home and accommodation sites. These staff are recruited using a rigorous process required to meet Public Sector Standards on Recruitment, Selection and Appointment established under the 1994 Public Sector Management Act.

The commission provides grants to non-government agencies and families, who are at liberty to engage carers, if required, through their own recruitment processes.

Any prospective commission employee is advised that a comprehensive criminal record check is to be obtained before any offer of appointment or promotion can be made.

The commission requires the Offender Information Bureau, WA Police Department to provide information on criminal records held against the name of the prospective carer if recorded on the National Names Index including spent convictions - by specific provision of the Spent Convictions (Amendment of Act schedule 3) Regulations 1994.

This check offers an assurance that identification of a court history in another jurisdiction than Western Australia is captured. The Western Australia Police Service has indicated they will only be able to perform a state check from 3 August 2000. Arrangements are being put in place to continue to meet a comprehensive criminal records check necessary to reduce the risk of individuals being employed who may pose a threat to clients of the commission.

- (2) The commission engages professional, qualified and unqualified staff after a comprehensive selection process including an assessment of suitability for the position. Other checks include medical clearance and reference checks. Staff in direct care positions are also trained in the specifics of the client needs and have their performance regularly monitored, by supervisory staff, against policies and procedures to safeguard duty of care to people with disabilities.
- (3) The requirement is included in all Tender documents. A Briefing Paper 11/96 was issued to funded agencies detailing the guidelines to be followed for police clearances for prospective staff. The Purchasing Agreement between the Disability Services Commission and the funded agencies includes a clause that requires documented procedures are put in place to ensure its consumers are protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation.