

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR SCREENING OF COMMUNITY PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Q 1. Does the “Policy and Guidelines for Screening of Community Personal Support Workers” apply only to personal support workers?

A 1. All agencies funded by the Ministry employing PSWs must have policies for initial and ongoing screening procedures as part of their human resources policies. With this notice, the Ministry will expect agencies employing PSWs to develop or update existing screening policies to be consistent with the “Policy and Guidelines for Screening of Community Personal Support Workers” and apply them to their initial and ongoing screening procedures. These guidelines are also applicable to policies for screening of other staff and volunteers working in the community with vulnerable clients.

Q 2. Do volunteers working for community support agencies need to be screened?

A 2. It is recommended that all volunteers be screened based on their role and the nature of the supervision involved in their volunteer work. If a volunteer is working directly with vulnerable clients, consideration should be given by the agency to following the “Policy and Guidelines for Screening of Community Personal Support Workers”.

Q 3. Why does the “Policy and Guidelines for Screening of Community Personal Support Workers” recommend police checks for PSWs working in the community?

A 3. Police checks provide a measure of assurance that unsuitable applicants would not be hired. This is considered a “best practice” measure in community services to safeguard the well-being of vulnerable clients served in the community.

Once an offer of employment is made, the guidelines state that a Canada-wide criminal reference check be carried out. This is recommended as a condition of employment.

Q 4. Do PSW training programs carry out police checks?

A 4. PSW Training programs do not carry out police checks.

Q 5. Do the guidelines recommend police checks to be carried out just for new PSWs being hired or for all PSWs on staff?

A 5. The agency is expected to have an appropriate risk management strategy, including appropriate screening policies.

Q 6. Does an applicant cover the costs of the police checks?

A 6. Some agencies require prospective employees to pay for their police check at the time that a conditional offer of employment is made. The employee would then be the owner of the police check and could use it for more than one job offer.

Good human resource policies, including police checks, are part of an agency's cost of doing business. Most agencies view police checks as a quality assurance measure.

Q 7. When is the new policy effective?

A 7. Many agencies already have policies in place for the screening of community PSWs that may only require updating. For agencies that do not have policies, regional office staff will work with each agency to establish a reasonable time frame for development of written policies. In each agency's 2004/05 service plan, the human resources section will include a plan for the review and update of their screening policies.

A 8. Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) have contracts with service providers for the provision of PSWs. Does this new policy apply to CCAC contracted service providers?

A 8. This new policy applies only to community agencies that receive Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care funding. It does not apply to CCACs as standards are set out in the service and quality requirements of the "Client Services Procurement Policy for CCACs".