



Assessor Character Check Policy

NatHERS for existing homes

Version 1.0

OFFICIAL
Assessor Character Check Policy

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

At a glance: Character Checks

Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) assessors of existing homes collect personal information about clients, enter private homes, and generate rating information that can be used to underpin home upgrade purchases, or financial products such as loans and rebates tied to rating outcomes. To ensure households have confidence in the integrity of the NatHERS, assessors seeking accreditation to provide NatHERS ratings for existing homes must demonstrate they are a fit and proper person.

When undergoing a NatHERS character check assessors can:

- ask any questions about the character check process including how their privacy will be protected
- ask for more information about how a decision was made
- be supported by a friend or a family member, an advocate, an interpreter, or a community Elder to ask questions or provide further information on their behalf.

To complete the character check process, assessors must submit with their application for accreditation:

1. A **Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check Certificate (NCCHCC)** issued by a provider who is accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and dated within six months of the date it is provided for accreditation. The type of check applied for should be an Employment check.
2. Details of any other **accreditations or licenses held in other residential or commercial building energy rating schemes in the last 10 years**, including confirmation that consent has been given for those other energy rating schemes to disclose details of the assessor's performance history.

This information is reviewed to identify behaviours of concern. Behaviours of concern are any behaviours that indicate a history of dishonesty or other material risk of harm to NatHERS or users of NatHERS ratings.

If behaviours of concern are identified

If the character checks indicate behaviours of concern, you will be provided with an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the behaviour and provide relevant information to support your application for accreditation. The accrediting officer will consider all relevant information including the severity of the behaviour, time since the behaviour last occurred, actions taken to address the behaviour, and other mitigating factors.

If the behaviours of concern present an unacceptable risk to NatHERS

Considering all available information, if the accrediting officer decides that the behaviours identified are deemed to present an unacceptable risk to NatHERS or clients who use NatHERS ratings, your application for accreditation will be refused.

You will be advised in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision. Where possible, we will inform you of the decision within 10 business days of the date we receive additional information and documentation from you.

What if I believe the decision is incorrect or unreasonable?

If you believe the decision is incorrect or unreasonable, you may request an internal review. Internal reviews are conducted by staff who have not previously been involved in your matter. A request for internal review must be received within 30 business days of the date you were notified of the outcome of your character check. Your request should explain why you believe the initial outcome is incorrect or unreasonable and provide any supporting information or evidence. The reviewer will consider all relevant information and may decide to confirm, vary, or revoke the decision. If revoked, a fresh decision will be made.

You will be advised of the outcome of any internal review process, and any external review options available to you. Where possible, internal reviews are completed within 30 business days of the request date (not including time in which the person managing your review is waiting on more information from you).

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1 Purpose

Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS) for existing homes assessments require assessors to visit a home and conduct assessments on site. This gives assessors access to client's personal information and knowledge of the layout of their home. In some cases, an assessor will also have contact with vulnerable people.

NatHERS ratings can also be used to underpin financial decision making. Householders may rely on rating information to inform the purchase of home upgrades or inform the sale price of a property. Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and financial institutions may also use NatHERS ratings to underpin financial products, grants, loans, or rebates.

Therefore, NatHERS requires its assessors to demonstrate high standards of integrity and ethical practice. Character checks assist NatHERS to:

- control fraud and other integrity risks to the scheme
- provide confidence to financial programs that there are barriers to malicious actors entering the scheme
- provide confidence for clients to consent to an assessor entering their home, especially where the client is a vulnerable person, or is a tenant but not the person requesting the assessment.

The inherent requirements for an accredited assessor to deliver NatHERS for existing homes ratings are to:

- a) be competent in producing accurate assessments and applying that knowledge in practice
- b) establish they are of good character, and have the knowledge and resources to conduct assessments in a safe and ethical manner
- c) have appropriate strategies in place to manage privacy, safety, and quality risks to clients and other stakeholders
- d) demonstrate a consistent, high-quality standard of performance and professional behaviour.

A determination whether an applicant or assessor satisfies the requirements of a character check is a lay statement of opinion for the purposes of NatHERS for existing homes only and is not intended to disparage, discredit, defame, victimise or harm an applicant or assessor or result in any material damage or loss to an applicant or the assessor in its ordinary dealings.

An AASP or the NatHERS Administrator will not be held liable for any damage or loss that may be suffered by an applicant or assessor that is subject to the NatHERS for existing homes Character Check requirements and its outcomes.

This Policy describes the character checks performed as part of the assessor accreditation process for NatHERS for existing homes. Changes to the NatHERS for existing homes Character Check Policy are communicated to accredited assessors via their assessor accreditation provider and are published on the [NatHERS website](#).

2 Principles

Assessors should not be accredited if they have a history of behaviours of concern unless there are mitigating circumstances. Behaviours of concern are behaviours that involve dishonesty or indicate other material risk of harm to NatHERS or users of NatHERS for existing homes ratings.

The following principles are applied to decisions about an assessor's character check:

Manage risk proportionally:	Be impartial:	Be transparent:
Accreditation processes consider the circumstances of each application and weigh these against potential risks to users and the integrity of the scheme. Decisions about assessor character check must be proportional to the seriousness of an identified risk.	Decision-making applies the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Decisions must be fully informed and based on the available information and evidence at the time. Character checks must be assessed reasonably and objectively, and without prejudicial regard for cultural identity, national origin, religion, linguistic background, sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical or intellectual ability, socioeconomic status, or other protected personal attributes.	Assessors are kept informed about the outcomes of their character check and provided opportunities to explain any behaviours of concern. Where accreditation is refused on the basis of a character check, the reasons for this are clearly communicated and options for review are provided.

When undergoing a NatHERS character check, assessors can:

- ask questions about the character check process including how their privacy will be protected
- be supported by a friend or a family member, an advocate, an interpreter, or a community Elder to ask questions or provide further information
- ask for more information about how a decision was made.

3 Character checks for NatHERS existing homes accreditation

When you are seeking accreditation as a NatHERS for existing homes assessor, you need to submit:

- a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC) Certificate; and
- details of other accreditations or licenses held in other energy efficiency programs.

Once accredited, NatHERS assessors are obligated by the Assessor Code of Practice to inform the assessor accreditation service provider of any change in personal circumstances that may affect their accreditation, including any changes that could reasonably be considered to impact their standing as a fit and proper person or any changes to accreditations or licenses held or obtained in other Commonwealth, state or territory residential or commercial building energy ratings schemes.

When a change in personal circumstances arises that is relevant to or may affect your accreditation, the assessor accreditation service provider may request further information from you or make relevant enquiries to confirm your ongoing eligibility for accreditation.

3.1 Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Checks

NCCHCs are government-approved background checks that compile relevant information from state and territory police databases about an individual's criminal history. They provide a certificate including details of any relevant disclosable outcomes.

NCCHC Certificates submitted for accreditation as a NatHERS for existing homes assessor must be:

- a) issued by a provider who is accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC)
- b) issued as an 'Employment check' and
- c) dated no more than six months prior to the date of application for accreditation.

The NCCHC Certificate will be reviewed for disclosable court outcomes, and an assessment will be made on whether they contain any behaviours of concern.

Disclosable court outcomes that may indicate behaviours of concern to NatHERS include:

- outcomes involving fraud or other deceptive conduct
- outcomes that indicate a disregard for the personal safety and wellbeing of others
- any other factor that the assessor service accreditation provider reasonably believes would affect the individual's ability to conduct themselves in accordance with the Assessor Code of Practice.

3.1.1 NCCHC Volunteer Check Certificates

Even though you are not seeking employment with NatHERS, you must provide a NCCHC undertaken as an 'Employment check'. You must not provide a NCCHC undertaken as a 'Volunteer check'.

Volunteer NCCHC checks generally require that the applicant is not entitled to receive a salary, payment (other than reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses), or other entitlements or benefits associated with the role for which they are applying for a NCCHC. Accreditation for existing homes enables you to receive a salary, payment, or other entitlement for the delivery of existing home assessments.

3.1.2 Working with Children/Vulnerable People Checks

If you hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC)/Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) check issued by an authorised state or territory authority, you can submit this in place of an NCCHC, provided the WWCC/WWVP check is still valid at the time of submission.

3.1.3 Submission of Character References

You cannot submit a character reference in place of a NCCHC. You may provide character references as supporting information if you are required to provide further information about a behaviour of concern.

3.2 Accreditation History in Other Energy Efficiency Programs

Assessors seeking to be accredited for NatHERS for existing homes must provide details of any other state, territory or Commonwealth commercial or residential building energy rating scheme in which they have held accreditation or a license within the last 10 years. Details that must be provided in the application form are:

- a) name of the program or scheme
- b) accreditation or license number
- c) date first accredited or licensed in the program or scheme
- d) last date of accreditation/license if applicable.

Assessors must also provide consent for listed programs/schemes to share information about their performance history with the assessor accreditation service provider.

The accrediting officer may contact the other programs and enquire about the assessor's performance history. This includes enquiring whether you have been subject to any disciplinary measures while accredited or licensed, and the status of any remedial actions required to be completed.

Examples of performance history that may indicate behaviours of concern include:

- behaviours or patterns of behaviour that indicate dishonesty
- behaviours or patterns of behaviour indicate a disregard for the safety or well-being of others

- repeated or serious non-compliance with program/scheme rules
- repeated poor performance in quality assurance audits
- repeated or serious substantiated complaints about conduct.

If consent is not provided for other programs to share information with the assessor accreditation service provider, accreditation may not be granted.

4 Right of Reply for Identified Behaviours of Concern

If behaviours of concern are identified in the character check process, the accrediting officer will contact you for more information. Behaviours of concern are any behaviours that indicate a history of dishonesty or other material risks of harm to NatHERS or clients who use NatHERS ratings.

You will be provided with an opportunity to explain the circumstances of the behaviour, provide information about extenuating circumstances and provide additional information in support of your application for accreditation.

The assessor accreditation service provider will review the additional information provided and decide your suitability for accreditation. The decision will consider factors such as:

- the circumstances of the behaviour and steps taken to address it
- how the behaviour impacts your ability to fulfil the inherent requirements of accreditation
- the risk of accreditation to NatHERS, users of NatHERS ratings, and other stakeholders.

You will be advised of the decision in writing. **Where possible, we will aim to advise you of the decision within 10 business days of receiving all additional information or documentation.** If the decision cannot be made within the 10 business days, you will be told why and provided an updated date for decision.

4.1 Extenuating Circumstances

An extenuating circumstance is any circumstances that lessens the severity of the risk of accreditation. Extenuating circumstances may include things like:

- time since the behaviour last occurred
- barriers to understanding cultural norms
- actions taken to address the behaviour
- personal circumstances at the time of the behaviour such as:
 - age, where it affected the responsibility of the person
 - mental illness or disability
 - family hardship or traumatic life events
- circumstances of the behaviour such as:

- motivation for the behaviour (e.g. whether it was driven by need or by a desire for personal gain)
- the severity of the harm that was or could be caused by the behaviour
- whether there is evidence the behaviour was intentional or premeditated
- whether the behaviour was an isolated event or a pattern of behaviour

5 Reviews

If you disagree with a decision not to accredit you, you can request a review of the decision.

Your request must be sent to the NatHERS Administrator within **30 business days** of the date you were notified of the outcome of your application for accreditation. You must explain why you believe the original decision was wrong and provide any supporting information. A decision may be varied or revoked in circumstances where you can demonstrate a reasonable argument that the original decision:

- was made without following the processes outlined in this policy
- did not consider, or misinterpreted, available information and evidence
- considered evidence that you did not submit without notifying you
- considered information that was not relevant to the concern/s identified
- would be considered by a reasonable person to be disproportional to the seriousness of the concern/s identified.

The review will be undertaken by someone who was not the original decision maker. They will consider all the information and may decide to confirm, vary, or revoke the decision. If revoked, a fresh decision will be made.

The person reviewing the decision will tell you the outcome of the review, what steps were taken, and the reasons for their decision. You will also be advised of any external review options available to you.

Where possible, internal reviews are completed within 30 business days of the request date. This does not include time in which the person managing your review is waiting on more information from you.

6 Expectations after you are accredited

To be granted accreditation you must agree to comply with the NatHERS for Existing Homes Assessor Code of Practice. This includes obligations to:

- conduct yourself in a way that upholds the reputation and integrity of NatHERS and not bring the scheme into disrepute
- exercise due skill, care, and diligence in the performance of all your duties

- engage with householders in a respectful, professional, and ethical manner
- operate in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations of the state or territory you are conducting NatHERS assessments in
- inform the assessor accreditation service provider of any change in your personal circumstances that could be perceived as relevant to your accreditation status.

7 Managing privacy

We only use your personal information for the purposes for which it was collected, being to accredit you as a NatHERS for existing homes assessor.

Your personal information will not be shared or otherwise in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and disclosed, other than as described in the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's (DCCEEW), and Water Privacy Policy, or unless:

- you have consented
- the disclosure is authorised or required under Australian law or a court/tribunal order
- it is otherwise permitted under the Privacy Act.

All information provided for the purpose of accreditation, including personal and sensitive information, is managed in accordance with [NatHERS Privacy Policy](#).

The personal information we receive from you is maintained in a secure environment (in either electronic or hard copy form). Your personal information will not be released unless the law permits it, or you consent. You can find more information on when the law permits sharing of personal information on the [OAIC website](#).

We take reasonable steps to ensure your personal information is protected from misuse and loss from unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. Personal information is destroyed or de-identified when no longer needed in accordance with the requirements of the *Archives Act 1983* (Cth).

Related Information

- NatHERS for Existing Homes Assessor Accreditation Application Pack
- NatHERS for Existing Homes Assessor Code of Practice
- NatHERS for Existing Homes Assessor Performance Management Policy
- NatHERS Complaints Management Policy.
- NatHERS for Existing Homes Assessor Conflict of Interest Policy

Glossary

Term	Definition
AASP	The assessor accreditation service provider (AASP) is the entity that manages the accreditation of NatHERS for existing homes assessors.
Accreditation	The formal approval of assessor, by an AAO or AASP, as someone who is appropriately trained and skilled to conduct assessments.
Assessment	The exercise and activities by which a NatHERS for existing homes assessor undertakes a NatHERS for existing homes assessment to produce a Home Energy Rating Certificate.
Assessor	A person accredited to perform NatHERS for existing homes assessments.
Cancellation	The cancelling of an assessor's accreditation, which means that they may no longer conduct assessments.
Conflict of interest	A circumstance where an assessor holds a personal or business interest that may influence or be perceived by a reasonable person to influence, any part of a NatHERS assessment.
NatHERS	Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme.
NatHERS Administrator	NatHERS is administered by the Australian Government on behalf of all states and territories. The role of NatHERS Administrator is a function of the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), or any subsequent Australian Government department that assumes responsibility for residential energy efficiency.
Personal information	Information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable, whether the information or opinion is true or not; and whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not. For example, personal information may include an individual's name, signature, address, phone number or date of birth.
Sensitive information	Shares the same meaning as 'sensitive information' as defined under section 6 of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).
Suspension	The temporary pausing of accreditation, preventing an assessor from conducting assessments or issuing Home Energy Rating Certificates.

Appendix A: NatHERS Risk Matrix for behaviours of concern

Each application is reviewed on a case-by-case basis supported by a risk matrix (refer table 1). The risk matrix is designed to ensure that decisions are made consistently within the guidelines set out by the NatHERS Administrator. This risk matrix will only be used if there are behaviours of concern identified.

Table 1: NatHERS Risk Matrix for behaviours of concern

	Minor Concern - Low Risk Issues	Moderate Concern – Medium Risk Issues	Major Concern – High Risk Issues
	Examples of a minor concern / low risk issues might include behaviour that: – resulted in minor harms/could cause minor harms – is once off or infrequent – is accidental/unintended	Examples of a moderate concern / medium risk issues might include behaviour that: – resulted in major harms/could cause major harms – is repeated – is opportunistic	Examples of a major concern / high risk might include behaviour that: – resulted in catastrophic harms/could cause catastrophic harms – is frequent – is intentional/deliberate
No extenuating circumstances	Low	High	Severe
Minor extenuating circumstances	Low	Medium	High
Major extenuating circumstances	Very Low	Low	Medium