

# PeakCare Sector Voices Roadshow

HOT TOPICS AS AT 1 DECEMBER 2024



## HOT TOPIC:

# Amplifying Children & Young People's Voices

### Background

- PeakCare has spoken with boys and girls in Queensland's youth detention centres many times across 2023 and 2024. PeakCare sought the voice of young people directly impacted by potential changes to government policy and legislation.
- The young people participated voluntarily and agreed to have their words included in our submissions to government.
- For example, PeakCare has provided submissions with young people's voices to:
  - the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee about Youth Justice Reform in Queensland
  - the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee about the Queensland Community Safety Bill 2024
  - the Department of Youth Justice about the draft Youth Justice Strategy.
- We have also created a report, Young People's Voices, summarising the young people's views and insights, which has been shared with the young people who generously gave their time and shared their stories.

### Key information

- PeakCare's Core Principle is that children and young people are at the centre of everything we do.
- We are committed to working with our sector members to hear and amplify the voices of the children and young people you work with every day.
- Through our advocacy work, we will highlight the views of children and young people to inform our recommendations to government and our messages to the general public.
- PeakCare is happy to support our members in hearing the voice of young people.

### Next steps

- We want to hear from you about how we can safely and meaningfully hear from children and young people connected to your organisations. This may not always be direct contact, but also through your teams' relationships with the children and young people and their families.
- We know that 'traditional' engagement mechanisms like youth forums, consultative committees and reference groups are suitable for some young people, but these do not work for all young people.
- As part of the Sector Voices workshops and visits, we hope to understand the best way to partner with you to advocate for what's important to the people at the centre of our work.

## HOT TOPIC:

# Catalyst for Care

### Background

- The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS) has partnered with PeakCare to undertake the following activities (Catalyst for Care Program):
  - Develop a residential care workforce strategy to meet the current and future needs of the sector
  - Expand Queensland's Hope and Healing Framework and related training, to equip the workforce with a broader range of essential knowledge and skills
  - Establish a new sector-led forum to showcase and recognise best practice across the sector

We understand you are likely to have questions about the program, what it means for the sector, for organisations, for workers and for the young people you support

### Workforce Strategy:

#### **Why does the sector need a workforce strategy if the Queensland Government has committed to reducing the number of young people in residential care?**

Workforce is currently identified as the most significant challenge across all sectors in Queensland. A strong, supported workforce is essential to addressing the complexities in the child and family welfare landscape. By addressing workforce challenges, providing necessary training, and improving job satisfaction, we aim to attract, train and retain our dedicated care staff, leading to more stable and high quality care environments. A robust workforce strategy will directly benefit the young people for whom residential care is the most suitable option by ensuring they receive the best possible support and care from well-trained, motivated, and supported staff.

#### **Will the workforce strategy address immediate concerns for our organisation such as probity requirements?**

Catalyst for Care is committed to supporting workers and enabling the provision of the best possible care for all children in Queensland. While the Workforce Strategy is not designed to resolve immediate concerns, our engagement processes will contain vital insights and feedback for relevant government agencies on what is working well within the system, and what could be improved. Your sustained input and engagement is essential to informing the development of this strategy – let us know what the most pressing concerns and limitations are for you and your organisation to [workforce@peakcare.org.au](mailto:workforce@peakcare.org.au)

## HOT TOPIC:

# Catalyst for Care

### **Hope & Healing Framework:**

#### **Will there be changes to Hope & Healing?**

Catalyst for Care will review and refresh the overarching Hope & Healing Framework to ensure currency of theoretical underpinnings and applicability to emerging research. We will work with experts and researchers to create a curriculum framework with associated learning outcomes and customised assessment that supports workers to provide the best possible services to the children for whom they care. We will refresh and revise the existing Hope & Healing modules and content, tailored to the learning styles of the workforce to maximise utilisation of content to support professional development. In particular, new Masterclass content that we develop will facilitate increased interactivity with content, creating enhanced learning outcomes. We are excited for the refreshed and revised content we will be able to provide to the workforce, informed by your needs and the ways in which you like to consume, utilise and apply content.

#### **Will workers need to re-take the course?**

Existing successful completion of Hope & Healing foundational and Masterclass content will remain valid. However, with the renewed content we will be providing, you might feel like re-engaging with previously completed content at your leisure to refresh your learning and take advantage of new examples, contemporary theory, and accessibility features.

#### **Will there be improvements to the administration of the course?**

Catalyst for Care recognises that employers face increasing pressures on their time including ongoing compliance activities. As part of our review, we will be looking to address administrative burden and take advantage of opportunities to streamline efficiency for use of the platform and user management. We look forward to engaging with providers and Hope & Healing Admins on what this might look like to you.

### **Consultation and engagement:**

#### **How will regions and special interests be captured?**

We are committed to broad representation to inform an effective and sustainable workforce strategy. To ensure we are able to capture this, we will be travelling to each region in Queensland to seek your views on the issues most relevant to your region, and your thoughts on how they might be most effectively addressed. We will be holding specific forums in various geographic locations to ensure input from different areas, and invitations to communities of interest to share their unique perspectives. Every voice matters in shaping the future of a residential care workforce in Queensland that is inclusive and effective.

Your participation is essential for developing a residential care sector that truly meets the needs of all involved. If you have any questions or would like to find out more, please email us at [workforce@peakcare.org.au](mailto:workforce@peakcare.org.au)

## HOT TOPIC:

# Child Safe Standards & Reportable Conduct

### Background

- On 12 June 2024, the *Child Safe Organisations Bill 2024* was introduced by the Legislative Assembly (the Bill). The Bill seeks to establish an integrated child safe organisations system in Queensland that includes:
  - mandatory child safe standards by in-scope organisations
  - A nationally consistent reportable conduct scheme (RCS) for certain organisations.
- Queensland's proposed child safe organisations system is part of a broader effort to better support the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in various settings, particularly organisations, businesses and institutions providing services to children and young people.
- The objective of the system is to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people receiving services and/or care in Queensland organisations. Also, it aims to engage children and young people at risk of abuse or have experienced abuse in institutional settings in early support delivered in a trauma-informed and appropriate way.
- The proposed CSS are influenced by the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) and are aligned to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

### Key information

- The preferred approach is to establish an integrated child safe organisations system requires and supports organisations to implement the CSS and provides oversight of institutional child abuse complaints and allegations through an RCS.
- It is proposed that the functions of the CSS and RCS are integrated into the role of a single oversight body, with the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) being proposed as the body responsible for monitoring and implementing the system.
- The Queensland Government has not made a decision regarding the scope of organisations that will be included in child safe standards or a reportable conduct scheme. However, the scope is likely to be based on recommendations from the Royal Commission and other jurisdictions.
- The Queensland Government is considering ways to target scope to organisations that specifically provide services for children or provide facilities specifically for use by children.
- It is expected that the compliance with CSS would apply at an organisational level and have ability to implement standards across various services, activities and environments in a flexible manner that accounts for the individual organisation's unique environment and circumstances (e.g. organisations providing services to both adults and children, or different types of services to children).

## HOT TOPIC:

# Child Safe Standards & Reportable Conduct

### Next steps

- The response from the Parliamentary Committee was tabled in parliament on 2 August 2024
- There are three months for the Government to respond to this report and undertake the second reading and debate of the bill.
- The final sitting week of the current government is 10-12 September 2024.
- If the legislation is not debated in the final government sitting, the Bill will lapse and must be resubmitted in the next government term.
- PeakCare will continue to work with QFCC and DCSSDS to keep the sector informed of the implementation program once the legislation is passed in Parliament.

## HOT TOPIC:

# Embedding Joint Agency Protocols for Reducing Preventable Police Callouts

### Background

- The Joint agency protocol to reduce preventable police call-outs to residential care services was implemented on 1 January 2019 to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people living in residential care. Children and young people in residential care reported unnecessary exposure to police, and that they were being criminalised, as a result of police being called in response to actions that would not be treated as criminal in a family home.
- The Protocol, informed by the voices of young people with lived experiences, was developed collectively between the then Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, the Queensland Family and Child Commission, the Queensland Police Service, the Queensland Department of Health, the Office of the Public Guardian and non-government representatives including PeakCare.
- The Protocol aims to improve support for children and young people living in residential care by addressing the concerns that result in unnecessary police involvement and providing more appropriate responses and strategies.
- Service providers' internal policies and procedures should align with the Protocol, and should be reviewed and updated, as necessary, to reflect the Protocol's intent. Practice should be trauma-informed and responsive to the needs of children and young people in care and improved staff capability, learning and development should be promoted.

### Key information

- To deliver a therapeutic model of care for young people with complex needs flexibility in funding arrangements needs to be able to be applied.
- Repairs for property and insurance premiums are increasing dramatically, PeakCare continues to advocate for contracts to include appropriate funding to cover the cost of increasing insurance costs for our member organisations.
- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services currently holds a pool of funds that can be utilised as ex-gratia payments for damage to properties which in some instances may reduce the number of reports to police where it is a requirement for an insurance claim to be processed.
- Consideration needs to be given to supporting a young person with complex needs as part of the care package that covers repairs to the home, they may be placed in. These funds should be assigned to the young person. PeakCare will continue to have these discussions with DCSSDS.



## HOT TOPIC:

# Embedding Joint Agency Protocols for Reducing Preventable Police Callouts

### Next steps

- PeakCare are working in partnership with the Brisbane and Moreton Bay Region to identify opportunities to strengthen the consistency of practice and approaches for reducing preventable police callouts for young people in residential care settings.
- PeakCare would welcome examples or case studies providers might like to share with us, that will help demonstrate the issues being experienced in the sector around insurance, repairs and need to engage with QPS
- PeakCare will continue to raise the issues of funding allocation and ex-gratia payments for providers who experience damage to sites, and how these can be processed through regional offices to remove the need for an insurance claim, where appropriate
- PeakCare will also continue to call for funding arrangements to meet the insurance needs of the service provider given the rising costs to insurances in Queensland, with a particular focus on the Far North of the State



## HOT TOPIC:

# Extended Post Care Support & Transition to Adulthood

### Background

- Queensland introduced Extended Post Care Support (EPCS) for young people exiting care if they turned 18 after 1 July 2023
- EPCS services will work with you to provide the practical support you need to find a safe and affordable place to live, maintain your connections with family, culture, country, and community, apply for a job or enrol in a training course, and take you to appointments to meet your health and wellbeing needs.
- If you leave care to live as an independent adult, you will receive financial assistance from your EPCS service of up to \$16,000 a year until your 21st birthday to help meet your everyday living costs.
- If you remain living with your carer family, your carer will continue to receive the fortnightly care allowance so they can meet your everyday living costs up to your 21st birthday.

### Key information

- The Queensland Government has allocated an additional \$7.9 million annually for the Extended Post Care Support program in the 2024-25 budget.
- The \$7.9 million per annum ongoing for Extended Post Care Support services to support children exiting care between the ages of 18 and 21 and indexation of the Living Independently Allowance this will come into effect in 2024-25, with the annual amount increasing to \$16,630.
- From the EPCS Workshop in May, it was identified that carers needed more information about EPCS, the department developed an FAQ for carers distributed by Queensland Foster and Kinship Care (QFKC).

### Next steps

- PeakCare continues to call for the establishment of a Community of Practice for EPCS providers.
- The department is developing a business case on a Client Management System that is fit-for-purpose for EPCS service providers.
- Investment and Commissioning in the Department are having discussions with regions and Next Step Plus providers in relation to contracts due to expire 30 June 2025. PeakCare will continue to advocate for maintaining funding and support for services and young people until the transition has been completed.

## HOT TOPIC:

# Flexible & innovative placement models

### Background

- PeakCare knows that the models of care are changing and how our members deliver these models has been a focus of the development of the Residential Care Roadmap.
- Young people in care must get access to the right placement at the right time, to meet their particular needs.
- The number of children in care increased to 11,810 as at 31 March 2024. This is a 1.6 per cent increase compared to the same period last year.
- 48.5 per cent of all children in care are placed with kin. This is an increase compared to last year (47.1 per cent) and an increase from 10 years ago (40.2 per cent).
- As at March 31 2024, there were 1955 young people in residential care.
- The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services is piloting non-traditional residential care models, including a reunification house in far North Queensland, a family stay house in the Sunshine Coast and Central region, and a short-stay house in North Queensland.

### Key information

- The gap between the number of foster and kinship carers and the demand for child protection services is widening, necessitating an increase in residential care services.
- Queensland needs a child safety system designed to be flexible enough to respond to the needs of children and young people with the most complex support needs.
- Care packages need to be more effectively and holistically applied to improve the young person's safety, permanency, and wellbeing outcomes.
- To achieve this PeakCare will continue to advocate for funding to our member organisations to provide a consistent approach to therapeutic care and offering person-centered funding packages.
- The recent introduction of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024*, looks to address many of the barriers faced by First Nations Kin in becoming Kin Carers.
- PeakCare knows that the potential to provide innovative and flexible models of care lies within our membership.
- To bring those innovations to fruition our membership needs access to flexible funding arrangements. PeakCare continues to advocate with the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services to consider the Investment and Commissioning programs and how funding arrangements can be more agile and flexible to meet the changing needs of services and young people.

## HOT TOPIC:

# Flexible & innovative placement models

### Next steps

- PeakCare is leading the Residential Care Workforce Roadmap – Catalyst for Care and we are committed to broad representation to inform an effective and sustainable workforce strategy and expansion to Hope and Healing.
- PeakCare's Catalyst for Care Project Team will be travelling to each region in Queensland to seek your views on the issues most relevant to your region, and your thoughts on how they might be most effectively addressed.
- We will be holding specific forums in various geographic locations to ensure input from different areas, and invitations to communities of interest to share their unique perspectives. Every voice matters in shaping the future of a residential care workforce in Queensland that is inclusive and effective.
- The *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024* Parliamentary Committee report was tabled in parliament on 2 August 2024
- There are three months for the Government to respond to this report and undertake the second reading and debate of the bill.
- The final sitting week of the current government is 10-12 September 2024.
- If the legislation is not debated in the final government sitting, the Bill will lapse and must be resubmitted in the next government term.

Please feel free to let us know what the most pressing concerns and limitations are for you and your organisation [\*\*workforce@peakcare.org.au\*\*](mailto:workforce@peakcare.org.au)

## HOT TOPIC:

# Implementation of Enhanced Intake & Assessment Model

### Background

- From December 2024, the Department of Child Safety will introduce an enhanced Intake and Assessment model. The intention is to improve timeliness and appropriateness of supports, increase self-determination, respond earlier and divert children from tertiary responses where possible.

### Key information

- Active Support Response (new response type) – where there are repeated Child Concern Reports within 12 months. Department offers help to parents via a support service. Voluntary involvement, but Regional Intake Service Intake officers may continue to refer to Family and Child Connect and Family Wellbeing Service without consent.
- Safety and Support Response (new response type) – sub-set of Standard Response, used for first notification only. Regional Intake Service decision to use this type, which includes referral to secondary services if available (e.g. Assessment and Service Connect or Family Wellbeing Service). Support service assesses needs and links supports. If the family does not consent, Child Safety commences a Standard Response.
- Standard Response – Child Safety visits the home, offers support and resolves concerns. Can escalate to Priority Response. Response commences within 7 days, is completed within 30 days. No unscheduled visits or visiting schools first.
- Priority Response (Intake and Assessment) – where there is reasonable suspicion the child is in need of protection. Possible joint response with police, education, health and specialists. Includes interviews with the child and family.
- The Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services have provided a Frequently Asked Questions document to support this Hot topic.

### Next steps

PeakCare will continue to work with DCSSDS to advocate for the impact of the sector workforce's and what these changes in assessing risks for young people are and if the sector can manage this risk independent of the department and the support required for this change

PeakCare will continue to work with government to create whole-of-system governance and compliance mechanisms to capture the increased complexity of responses

PeakCare will continue to advocate with DCSSDS on the impact on data capture and reporting, e.g. how risk will be managed, and success be measured.

# PeakCare's Election Commitments

## Background

- PeakCare, as Queensland's leading advocate for child and family services, operates on three foundational pillars that guide our advocacy and service delivery priorities. These pillars are integral to fostering a safe, supportive, and thriving environment for children and families across the state.
- In 2024 PeakCare is calling on all political parties to acknowledge the critical needs of the child and family sector and commit to prioritising these initiatives so Queensland can lead the way in transforming the care and justice systems ensuring every child thrives.

## Key information

- Our three pillars are:
  - **Early Interventions:** Addressing the root causes of social challenge and disadvantage is critical in our approach. We focus on early childhood support, family interventions, and access to essential services like health including mental health, early education, and disability support. By investing in these areas, we aim to mitigate risks and empower families to thrive, thereby preventing future involvement in the child protection and justice systems.
  - **Child Safety and Protection:** Our initiatives under this pillar aim to provide comprehensive support systems for children at risk and those in care, ensuring their holistic development and successful transition into adulthood. Key priorities include expanding the Hope and Healing training program, enhancing educational opportunities, and advocating for a Housing First principle to secure stable housing for vulnerable families.
  - **Youth Justice:** Central to our efforts to do detention differently with the transformation of youth justice through evidence-based, therapeutic models that prioritise rehabilitation and community reintegration. We seek to reduce reliance on detention, promote early intervention programs, and support educational and vocational pathways to empower young people and rebuild community trust.
- Our Eight Priorities are:
  1. Focused investment in early intervention and prevention programs
  2. First Nations family focused and co-designed programs
  3. 'Housing First' approach
  4. Prevention and diversion programs to pre-empt involvement with youth justice systems
  5. Sustainable care sector workforce including foster, kinship and residential care
  6. Co-designing and making decisions with young people's voices
  7. Accessibility of transition services for children currently in care
  8. 'Doing Detention Differently'

## Next steps

- PeakCare continues to meet with all political parties on these commitments.
- Member organisations may want to support these commitments when meeting with local MP's
- These commitments lay the foundation for the government of the day to focus supports to the child and family sector over the next four years.

## HOT TOPIC:

# Queensland Government Best Practice Industry Conditions for Social Services Procurement (BPICs)

### Background

- The Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade announced the Best Practice Industry Conditions for Social Service Procurement on 13 June 2024, with a commitment to work with the social services sector, via the Industry Reference Group, to develop and implement associated guidelines, policies and procedures.
- PeakCare is part of the Industry Reference Group and represents the sector's voice on the development of the guidelines, policies and procedures.

### Key information

- One round of written consultation on draft guidelines has been completed. Based on the feedback, five key themes emerged and further co-design workshops were completed mid-August to progress the development of the guidelines.
- Key themes identified through the consultation process are:
  - Clarity, Specificity and Transparency
  - Flexibility and tailored approaches
  - Costing methodology and funding
  - Governance and accountability
  - Workforce and Employment Conditions

### Next steps

- Treasury has acknowledged the evolving nature of the process and expects full operationalisation of the conditions to take some time. The Queensland Government has committed to remaining open to feedback and co-design of the elements that support the best practice industry conditions.

### Treasury indicative timeline:





## HOT TOPIC:

# Release of the Unify System

### Background

- In 2019 following a Queensland Audit report that ICMS was “outdated” a commitment to a new IT system that would allow government agencies be able to share information.
- The Unify system is designed to improve information sharing and collaboration across various government and social service sectors. It focuses on supporting staff, continuing service reforms, and enabling more streamlined processes to ensure the best outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and their families
- Stage one products: Restorative Justice, Care Arrangements and SCAN products were released last year.
- Unify's stage two release will be completed in 2024

### Key information

- Unify will improve information sharing and collaboration across Queensland Government, social services and justice sectors while engaging with young people, families, carers and services
- Unify will also implement a contemporary case and client management system that will enable the best outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families.
- In the 2024-25 DCSSDS budget there is an allocation of \$7.4 million to enhance and develop information systems and programs to provide additional system functionality, information security and contemporary technology to improve service delivery, including a continuous improvement pipeline for the Unify program
- In the 2024-25 DCSSDS budget there is \$1.9 million of a total \$90.3 million to finalise and complete Tranche 1 of Unify (Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) Replacement Program)

### Next steps

- PeakCare will continue to advocate and work with the department and the sector to ensure that the implementation of the Unify system meets the needs and expectations of the sector.



## HOT TOPIC:

# Transition of Funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations

### Background

- Our Way - Breaking Cycles Action Plan 2023-2025 outlines key actions that build on the foundations set under Changing Tracks for transformational changes in the child protection system.
- Action 2.3 calls for developed strategy to transition investment in child and family support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector including targets and regional transition plans, co-designed with QATSICPP and in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector and non-Indigenous peaks.

### Key information

- There is more work still to be done in supporting the sustainable development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector: a clear transition plan is needed to guide investment in strengthening the community-controlled sector.



### Next steps

- The outcomes expected from the Breaking Cycles Action plan are:
- Development of a long-term blueprint and implementation plan to transition investment in child and family services to the ATSICCO sector by 2032, including development of targets and regional transition plans, co-designed with QATSICPP and in consultation with ATSICCOs and non-Indigenous peaks.
- Blueprint to incorporate the co-design of responses geared to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and the collaborative redesign of existing programs and services.
- PeakCare will continue to work with the Department, Government agencies, and QATSICPP to develop the long-term blueprint and continue to work with the sector through the transition process.

# Best Practice Industry Conditions for Social Service Procurement

The social services sector plays a critical role in providing services to vulnerable Queenslanders. The sector is particularly important in supporting responses to challenges such as cost-of-living, housing affordability, physical and mental health, domestic, family, and sexual violence, and youth well-being.

Recognising the role the sector plays in the lives of vulnerable Queenslanders and as an employer, the Queensland Government is supporting sustainability of the sector by adopting the following principles:

1. New or renewed contracts should be structured with default five-year initial terms (exclusive of extension options) to provide sufficient duration to support continuity and efficiency of service delivery. Where there are specific and clearly identified policy or service delivery grounds to justify alternative, terms for a particular program/service they should be made explicit.
2. Where service providers meet or exceed contractual requirements, to provide sufficient time to transition service users to new arrangements and provide more timely advice to key workers, six months' notice (in writing) will be provided where:
  - a contract is to cease,
  - not be renewed, or
  - where funding will be substantially reduced.

Where less than six months' notice is provided appropriate contractual termination rights will be developed in consultation with the sector, which will include a payment equivalent to relevant notice requirements with payments to be passed directly to impacted workers.

3. Where a contract is being renewed, the new contract will be offered within three months of the previous contract end date.
4. Where providers meet or exceed contractual requirements and a contract is ending appropriate 'wind down' periods will be provided to support transition.
5. For contracts subject to the above provisions, permanent employment for workers shall be prioritised, with sufficient funding and contractual flexibility to ensure payment of worker entitlements (including redundancies) where those long-term contracts are terminated or otherwise not renewed.
6. Provisions are made to ensure workers are appropriately classified and paid in line with intended funding and award parameters, including funding for suitable levels of training and support supervision, and to implement safe working models to support workers in areas of risk.
7. Contracts should deliver on outcomes and activities that support community service organisations (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations) to develop and implement local approaches.
8. Streamlining arrangements for community service organisations that have multiple and significant contracts with the Queensland Government, including working towards appointment of a lead agency to manage the relationship with these organisations on behalf of the Queensland Government.
9. Contracts will be indexed in accordance with government indexation policy as published annually in State Budget papers or on such other grounds as agreed at the time of execution between the parties.

These principles would not apply where agencies are working with the sector on trial or pilot programs.

Progressive implementation will commence immediately. Government agencies will work with the sector, via the Social Services Category Council Industry Reference Group, to develop and implement guidelines, policies, and procedures. This will include developing and documenting escalation and complaint mechanisms.

A review of standard terms and conditions of funding contracts and standard tendering approaches will also be undertaken.



# Enhanced Intake and Assessment Approach

## FAQs for Secondary Service Providers (IFS, ASC, FWS, FaCC)

This list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is a guide to the key elements of the Enhanced Intake and Assessment Approach and the related changes to policy, practice and procedures for intake and assessment service delivery.

### 1. What is the Enhanced Intake and Assessment Approach?

The Enhanced Intake and Assessment Approach (Enhanced Approach) enables a contemporary approach to ensuring families receive the right response at the right time. The approach provides proportionate and flexible child protection responses to promote earlier access to support, timely assessment and meet the needs of children and their families.

The Enhanced Approach is an opportunity to support families earlier and divert them from the child protection system where there is very low risk. Accordingly, Regional Intake Services (RIS) will continue to receive, record and assess child protection concerns received from notifiers, regarding harm or risk of harm to a child or the risk to an unborn child after birth, in accordance with legislation, policy and practice.

Culturally appropriate engagement and support will be offered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The Enhanced Approach reflects a commitment to place-based cultural knowledge, understanding the wishes and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. Through active efforts we will ensure decisions uphold self-determination, meaningful partnerships and promote safe care and connection with family, community, culture and country.

### 2. When will the changes be implemented?

The Enhanced Approach will be implemented from 29 July 2024 and will be aligned with the release of Unify, the new client management system that will replace ICMS.

Unify incorporates new and updated functionality for the Enhanced Approach including streamlined referral and information sharing for the new response pathways and outcomes.


Note, secondary service providers will continue to use the Advice, Referral and Case Management system (ARC).

### 3. What are the approach types in the Enhanced Intake and Assessment Approach?

#### Active Support Response

An Active Support Response (ASR) is an early intervention response where concerns do not meet the threshold for a notification, but the family would benefit from support from secondary family support services and other services. This response will be considered where there is a pattern of ongoing child concern reports over a 12-month period. Practice guidance will consider cumulative harm, domestic and family violence and cultural safety when determining the appropriate response to the reported concerns.

This response enables Child Safety to contact parents to discuss the concerns and offer help and support. With the parents' consent, Child Safety will facilitate a referral to secondary family support



services or other relevant services to help meet the family's needs and reduce the likelihood of a more intrusive response in the future.

The Active Support Response will be operationalised by Child Safety RIS.

### **Safety and Support Response**

A Safety and Support Response (SSR) is a sub-set of the Standard Response and the criteria for a Standard Response must first be met before determining whether it may be appropriate for this response. Regions will have the discretion to refer to a Safety and Support Response depending on the availability and capacity of secondary services.

This response enables Child Safety to make direct referrals to a secondary family support service for home visiting to provide early support to families, where there is no indication of imminent or serious risk of harm. Child Safety will first contact the secondary service provider, such as Assessment and Service Connect (ASC) or an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Service (FWS), to ascertain their capacity to accept the referral. Child Safety will then contact the pregnant person or parents to discuss the concerns and seek consent to facilitate a referral to that service.

With the parents' consent, Child Safety will facilitate a referral to a secondary family support service. The service will engage with the family to assess their needs and link with supports, independently of Child Safety. If the family does not consent to the referral, Child Safety will proceed with the assessment in line with procedures under the Standard Response pathway.

The Safety and Support Response will be operationalised by the Child Safety Regional Intake Services.

### **Standard Child Protection Response (Standard Response)**

The Standard Response is a new proactive and supportive approach to a notification where there are no immediate safety concerns.

This response is a pre-planned home visiting response where Child Safety will visit the family to assess the child's immediate safety needs and if deemed safe, will assess a family's needs and the supports required to meet these needs. There will also be additional information gathering as required. The family will be offered the opportunity to link with supports and services to address their needs and resolve issues.

This response does not include an assessment of whether a child has suffered harm or is in need of protection. However, if it is believed that the child has suffered harm or requires an assessment of their protective needs the matter will be escalated to a Priority Response.

This response may be a co-response with ASC or other appropriate service. The ASC may assess the needs of the family and offer the family the opportunity to link with supports and services to address their needs and resolve issues.


The Standard Response will be operationalised by Child Safety Assessment Services (currently Investigation and Assessment Services).

### **Priority Child Protection Response (Priority Response)**

The Priority Response allows a Child Safety Officer to assess whether a child subject to a notification has suffered harm and whether they are in need of protection. It is a timely and rigorous assessment and is closest to the current investigation and assessment response. This response is intended for notifications where immediate action is required to address imminent safety issues, including severe neglect, significant physical abuse and sexual abuse.

This response includes purposeful information gathering and analysis, interviews of children and parents to form a professional assessment about whether a child has been significantly harmed,





the severity and likelihood of future risk of harm to a child, and whether there is a parent willing and able to protect them from harm. This response will continue to utilise our partnerships with police, health and education as well as specialist services such as domestic and family violence services.

The Priority Response will be operationalised by Child Safety Assessment Services (currently Investigation and Assessment Services).

#### **4. Who is responsible for advising a parent that child protection concerns have been received?**

The Enhanced Approach supports the principles of transparency and provides increased clarity for families by advising them when child protection concerns have been raised, also providing the opportunity for families to be connected with support services.

Under the Active Support Response, Safety and Support Response, Standard Response and Priority Response, Child Safety is required to contact families and advise them that child protection concerns had been raised.

However, the RIS can still record a child concern report without the knowledge of the family and refer families directly to Family and Child Connect (FaCC) or FWS without the knowledge or consent of the family.

#### **5. What happens when a parent does not consent to a referral?**

If a parent does not consent to receiving support under the Active Support Response, the case will be closed and there will be no further action by Child Safety.

If a parent does not consent to engaging with a service provider under the Safety and Support Response, Child Safety will proceed instead with a Standard Response.

In situations where a parent initially provides consent to Child Safety for a referral for a Safety and Support Response but then chooses not to engage with this service, the service provider will provide this information back to the RIS, along with any other relevant information. The RIS will then determine the appropriate response type for the child and family.

#### **6. What will be the information sharing process?**


Unify functionality will enable more automated and streamlined information sharing between Child Safety and the secondary family support services. Child Safety and the secondary family support services will continue to adhere to information sharing legislation. Place-based communication arrangements will continue to occur at a local level.

#### **7. What is the referral process for service providers?**

The Enhanced Approach provides for more targeted referrals to secondary family support services as well as direct referrals from Unify to FaCC, Intensive Family Support (IFS), FWS, ASC and Family Participation Program (FPP).

For all referrals to secondary family support services under the Enhanced Approach, there will be a single referral form created in Unify which is then sent to the service provider. (More information on the referral form process in Unify will be provided prior to commencement of the Enhanced Approach.)

Unify will provide a portal for secondary family support services to access. The portal will allow users to access real time information in Unify to assist in their work with families. The portal will also allow users to communicate directly with Child Safety to request further documentation. Unify



will directly integrate with ARC to enable the outcome of the families' involvement with the service to be shared with Child Safety.

## **8. What is the process for a facilitated referral?**

The Enhanced Approach provides more opportunity to Child Safety staff to contact parents, offer help and support and provide facilitated or warm handovers to service providers. This may involve additional communication between Child Safety, the family and service providers to support the referral process and encourage greater engagement.

## **9. What timeframes apply to an Active Support Response and a Safety and Support Response?**

For an Active Support Response, there will be a 7-business day timeframe to allow time for families to be contacted initially via telephone, or if they do not have telephone access to receive an email or letter and offer of support.

For a Safety and Support Response, there will be a 10-business day timeframe after the service provider receives the referral, to confirm with Child Safety that the family is suitable for the service and for the service to engage with the family. Once this confirmation has been received, the intake will be closed by Child Safety. (Noting that a referral under a Safety and Support Response is dependent on the service provider advising they have capacity to accept the referral).

## **10. What is the process when a secondary family support service provider identifies new child protection concerns?**

Where a service provider has new child protection concerns, they will continue to report these as per operational policy guidelines and Child Safety will in turn determine the most appropriate response.

If a service provider is no longer able to provide a service under a Safety and Support Response, due to new child protection concerns, the service provider may contact the PCPP and/or invoke an escalation process by contacting Child Safety who will decide if a Standard Response or a Priority Response is required.

## **11. What is the process when secondary service family support providers reach capacity and are unable to take additional referrals?**

When making a decision about a referral, Child Safety will consider service capacity and waitlist timeframes in the context of the family situation and assessed risk.

For an Active Support Response, Child Safety will make referrals directly to a service provider and may not always be aware of the service provider's capacity to take referrals.

For a Safety and Support Response, Child Safety will confirm the service provider's capacity to accept a referral before making a referral. If there is no service provider with capacity to provide a Safety and Support Response, Child Safety will instead undertake a Standard Response.

## **12. Will there be a Child Safety Officer allocated for service providers to liaise with for the Safety and Support Response?**

The Enhanced Approach creates opportunities for Child Safety to develop localised approaches with secondary services such as ASC and FWS to better coordinate responses for children and families. Decisions regarding place-based communication protocols will occur at the local level.



### **13. In a co-responder model will Child Safety Officers visit families in their homes with Assessment and Service Connect staff?**

Although ASC may engage with families independently of Child Safety when they are providing Safety and Support Responses, Child Safety will co-respond with ASC for Standard Response and Priority Response pathways. At times this may include ASC engaging with families without Child Safety present to assess the family's needs.



# Extended Post Care Support (EPCS)

## Information for Carers

In June 2022, the Queensland Government announced a funding commitment for young adults leaving care to ensure they are better supported to transition from care.

Three EPCS initiatives came into effect on 1 July 2023:

1. **New services** being rolled out across Queensland to deliver culturally appropriate, proactive and practical support **to young adults leaving care** from their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday up to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
2. **Extension of the care allowance** for young adults who continue living with their former carer or guardian (carer) from 19 years old up until their 21st birthday. The care allowance is provided to the young adult's carer to meet the everyday living costs of the young adult and is provided at the full base rate.
3. **Financial support of up to \$16,000** per year being available to young adults leaving care to live in their own housing arrangements as independent adults. The financial support is available from their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday up until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and will assist in meeting their everyday living costs.

## Who is eligible for EPCS?

Type of support	Who is eligible
Support from the new Extended Post Care Support Services	<p>All young people <b>turning 18 from 1 July 2023</b> who were subject to either a (interim or finalised):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the chief executive</li> <li>• child protection order granting long-term guardianship to a suitable person</li> <li>• permanent care order.</li> </ul> <p>Young people who are subject to a supervision order or a directive order <b>are not eligible</b> for EPCS.</p>
Provision of care allowance	Young adults whose foster or kinship carer, long-term guardian or permanent guardian was receiving the care allowance at the time they turned 18.
Financial support (\$16,000 per year)	Young people turning 18 from 1 July 2023 and leave care to live in their own housing arrangements as independent adults.

## How about young adults who turned 18, 19 or 20 before 1 July 2023?

Young adults who turned 18, 19 or 20 before 1 July 2023 **will not be eligible** to access the new EPCS services or the financial support of up to \$16,000 per year. These young adults are still eligible to access support through Next Step Plus, Youth Housing and Reintegration Services, Transition and Post-Care Support program, and a Support Service case through Child Safety.



## What will the new EPCS services provide?

### Support to young adults

Culturally appropriate, proactive and practical support will be provided to eligible young adults and will include ongoing active assistance with:

- accessing and maintaining safe, secure and affordable housing as a priority
- connecting or maintaining connections to family, culture, Country and community
- accessing education and training opportunities and finding employment
- learning budgeting and other independent living skills
- accessing stable income or financial support that meets their cost of living
- improving health and wellbeing
- facilitating referrals and advocating for young adults to access other resources and services, including specialist services for young adults with complex support needs
- linking young adults to opportunities that promote independence.

EPCS service providers will work directly with young adults and provide practical support – for example, taking young adults to appointments and connecting them to formal or informal support networks (mentors or other safe members of the community) – to help them in their journey to living as independent adults.

### Support to the carer household

Support to the 'carer household' will be provided for the young adults to continue to live with their carers, recognising it as an enabling factor for their transition from care and into adulthood.

The service response will focus on assisting carers to support young adults through their transition to adulthood. This may include the provision of information and referrals that support the former carers' wellbeing and/or other practical assistance to support the young adult's changing needs. Support can also include helping the young adult and carer develop mutually agreed financial plans in relation to the provision of the care allowance to the household.

### Administration of the financial support to young adults


Up to \$16,000 per annum is available to young adults from their 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays if they leave care to live in their own independent housing arrangements. The provision of financial support is a key component of the EPCS service model and will be provided to young adults as part of the broader support available through the new EPCS service providers.

The financial support will meet young adults' basic needs, such as living in safe, stable and secure housing, enrolling in education and training, finding employment and accessing culturally appropriate services to support their health and wellbeing.

## Extension of the Care Allowance

### Purpose

- To support young adults to remain living with their carer after they have turned 18 years, if this is their preferred arrangement.
- To provide the Care Allowance to carers to enable young people to experience consistent, stable living arrangements and be supported as they transition to adulthood.



### **Do I need to apply for the extended Care Allowance?**

**No.** If it is agreed between you and the young person that they will remain living in the household after they turn 18, then you need to advise Child Safety. These discussions should occur as part of the transition to adulthood planning with the young person's Child Safety Officer. It is important that you are involved in some of these planning processes if the young person is continuing to live with you once they exit care.

Once you inform the Child Safety Officer, or the Child Safety Service Centre the young person is assigned to, the care allowance will be extended until the young person turns 21 or to the agreed time that the young person is going to live in the household.

### **Do I need to renew or maintain a valid carer certificate to receive the Allowance?**

**No.** You are not required to renew or maintain a valid carer certificate to receive the Care Allowance when only supporting a young adult aged 18 years and over.

### **What should the extended Care Allowance be used for?**

The care allowance must be used to meet the young adult's basic needs first and foremost. This will include, but is not limited to:

- board and rent and support to contribute to direct care costs for the young adult
- general wear and tear on household items
- pro rata costs for utilities and appliances, including access to mobile phone and internet
- basic medical needs, including medication costs and support to access any private health insurance products as an ongoing dependent of the carer
- food for the young adult
- household goods for the young adult including furniture (e.g. bed, wardrobe), linen / towels and bedding
- reasonable personal care and hygiene consumables, toiletries and haircuts; reasonable clothing expenses
- general travel, including carer provided travel or support to access public transport (e.g. bus and train fares); travel and other accommodation support for ongoing connection and/or re-connection with family
- support to obtain a driver's license, including supervised driving hours with the carer's vehicle and purchasing driving lessons
- general day-to-day employment and secondary and tertiary education costs relating to travel and uniforms, if required.


Where a young adult is in receipt of a wage, Commonwealth or State Government benefit, they will not be expected to contribute to household costs while the carer is receiving the care allowance.

### **Do I need to provide any evidence of expenditure?**

**No.** You are not required to produce receipts or other evidence of expenditure of allowances to receive the extended Care Allowance.

### **Does the extended Care Allowance include any other allowances?**

**No.** The extended care allowance is provided at the base rate as per the [Queensland Government Website](#). It does not include access to regional and remote loading, Start-up or Establishment Allowances, Additional Care Allowance, or Dual payment for care allowances.



The Care Allowance is indexed annually on 1 January each year, based on the movements in the Brisbane Consumer Price Index.

### Do I need to tell Child Safety if the young adult moves out?

**Yes.** You are required to notify Child Safety if the young adult ceases to live at your home permanently. There may be times where the young adult goes away for a couple of weeks – you do not need to advise Child Safety about this if it is expected that they will be coming back home.

However, when they cease to live with you permanently it is your responsibility to inform the Child Safety Service Centre that the young adult was previously assigned to. If there is an EPCS service supporting the young adult, they will also inform child safety of the change in circumstance so that funding can be redirected to support the young adult to live independently.

If you do not inform Child Safety of the date the young adult moves out it may result in an overpayment of the care allowance. If an overpayment occurs, you will be advised as soon as possible to determine a suitable repayment strategy.

### Can I still access support from the foster and kinship care services?

**No.** These services are funded to support you in your role as a carer for children and young people under a Child Protection Order. Once the young person turns 18, they are no longer in care.

Support to the carer household will be provided for the young adults to continue to live with their carers recognising it as an enabling factor for their transition from care and into adulthood.

### How many new EPCS services are there?

The department has funded 18 new EPCS services across Queensland.

Region	Location	Supplier	Contact details
Brisbane and Moreton Bay	Moreton Bay	<a href="#">Jabani Jinna Indigenous Corporation</a>	Phone: 3063 1368 Email: <a href="mailto:admin@jabanijinna.org.au">admin@jabanijinna.org.au</a>
Brisbane and Moreton Bay	Brisbane	<a href="#">Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service</a>	Phone: 3240 8900 Email: <a href="mailto:brighterfutures@atsichsbrisbane.org.au">brighterfutures@atsichsbrisbane.org.au</a>
South East	Logan and Bayside	<a href="#">YFS Ltd</a>	Phone: 3826 1500 Email: <a href="mailto:nextstepplus@yfs.org.au">nextstepplus@yfs.org.au</a>
South East	Gold Coast	<b>YFS Ltd</b> delivered through <a href="#">Gold Coast Youth Service</a>	Phone: (07) 5572 0400 Email: <a href="mailto:intake@gcys.org.au">intake@gcys.org.au</a>
South East	Logan, Bayside and Gold Coast	<a href="#">Jinndi Mibunn - BHDC Ltd</a>	Phone: (07) 3807 0901 Email: <a href="mailto:admin@bhdc.org.au">admin@bhdc.org.au</a>
South West	Ipswich, Toowoomba and Southern Downs	<a href="#">Life Without Barriers</a>	Phone: 1800 935 483 Ipswich - 3432 7800 Toowoomba - 4616 3100 Email: <a href="mailto:nextstepreferrals@lwb.org.au">nextstepreferrals@lwb.org.au</a>



South West	Roma and Far West	<a href="#">Goolburri Aboriginal Health Advancement</a>	Phone: (07) 4637 9953 Email: <a href="mailto:Intake@goolburri.org.au">Intake@goolburri.org.au</a>
South West	South Burnett	<a href="#">South Burnett CTC Inc</a>	Phone: (07) 4162 7788 Email: <a href="mailto:nextstep@sbctc.com.au">nextstep@sbctc.com.au</a>
Sunshine Coast and Central	Caloundra and Maroochydhore	<a href="#">REFOCUS</a>	Phone: 1800 733 628 Email: <a href="mailto:EPCS@refocus.org.au">EPCS@refocus.org.au</a>
Sunshine Coast and Central	Gympie	<a href="#">Anglicare Southern Queensland</a>	Phone: 5480 4700 or 0439 915 554 Email: <a href="mailto:NextStepPlus@anglicaresq.org.au">NextStepPlus@anglicaresq.org.au</a>
Sunshine Coast and Central	Bundaberg and Fraser Coast	<a href="#">Central Queensland Indigenous Development</a>	Phone: Bundaberg - 4313 1194 Hervey Bay - 4313 1195 Email: <a href="mailto:nsp.referrals@cqid.com.au">nsp.referrals@cqid.com.au</a>
Sunshine Coast and Central	Gladstone	<a href="#">Nhulundu Health Service</a>	Phone: 4979 0992 Email: <a href="mailto:nextstepplus@nhulundu.com.au">nextstepplus@nhulundu.com.au</a>
Sunshine Coast and Central	Rockhampton and Emerald	<a href="#">Central Queensland Indigenous Development</a>	<i>Rockhampton</i> Phone: 4920 0000  <i>Emerald</i> Phone: 4987 4792 Email: <a href="mailto:nsp.referrals@cqid.com.au">nsp.referrals@cqid.com.au</a>
Sunshine Coast and Central	Rockhampton and Emerald	<a href="#">Anglicare Central Queensland</a>	Phone: 1300 769 814 Email: <a href="mailto:enquiries@anglicarecq.org.au">enquiries@anglicarecq.org.au</a>
North Queensland	Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday	<a href="#">Life Without Barriers</a>	Phone: 4965 4800 or 1800 935 483 Email: <a href="mailto:nextstepreferrals@lwb.org.au">nextstepreferrals@lwb.org.au</a>
North Queensland	Townsville	<a href="#">Churches of Christ</a>	Phone: (07) 4740 1333 Email <a href="mailto:transitiontoadulthoodreferrals@cofcqld.com.au">transitiontoadulthoodreferrals@cofcqld.com.au</a>
North Queensland	Mount Isa	<a href="#">Churches of Christ</a>	Phone: (07) 4740 1333 Email <a href="mailto:transitiontoadulthoodreferrals@cofcqld.com.au">transitiontoadulthoodreferrals@cofcqld.com.au</a>
Far North Queensland	Cairns and surrounds, Cape and Torres Strait Islands	<a href="#">Youth Empowered Towards Independence</a>	Phone: (07) 4051 4927 Email: <a href="mailto:referrals@yeti.net.au">referrals@yeti.net.au</a>

## Who can I ask if I have more questions?

Please send an email to [YouthInvest@cyjma.qld.gov.au](mailto:YouthInvest@cyjma.qld.gov.au) if any further questions arise.