



## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Caseworker - Out of Home Care, Uniting

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**Your position:** Caseworker – Out of Home Care, Uniting  
**Your classification:** Classification 51  
**Your department:** Out-of-Home Care  
**Where you'll work:** Various locations

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**You'll report to:** Coordinator – Out of Home Care, Uniting  
**Your direct reports:** None  
**Your key relationships:** Uniting carers, Children and young people in Uniting's OOHC programs, birth families, FaCS caseworkers and managers.

#### Facility/Service description:

Uniting Burnside (Burnside) has been providing services for disadvantaged and vulnerable children, young people and families for more than 100 years. Unfortunately, many children are unable to live with their birth families and need the care and support of foster carers. We work to provide secure, stable and safe home environments for these children and young people.

The Foster Care programs focus on ensuring the emotional, physical and educational needs of children and young people are met and their positive well-being and individual development are supported and promoted. The types of care we provide include:

#### Short-term care/ Planning Placements

Ranging in duration from weeks to months, short-term care is required for a number of different reasons. Short-term foster carers provide a temporary secure, stable and safe home environment for children, while decisions are made about their future.

#### Long-term Care

Children who cannot return to their birth families require long-term care, often until they reach at least 18 years of age. Our foster carers tell us guiding young people into adulthood is one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives.

#### Intensive Care

Intensive care is for children assessed as having complex and high support needs. Our foster carers are provided with additional support and training to assist them under these circumstances.

Created by	Page 1 of 10	_Position Description
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## Respite Care

Children already in long-term care may need a regular or occasional break from their daily routines. Respite care offers them different experiences, and expands their support network. Making a difference in a child's life can take just one weekend a month.

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## WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

**Our purpose:** To inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

**Our values:** As an organisation we are imaginative, respectful, compassionate and bold.

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## ABOUT THE ROLE

You'll be responsible for the overall case management and case coordination; advocacy; and monitoring of placement quality for children & young people in out of home care.

Child related role	Yes	WWCC required
Mandatory reporter	Yes	Mandatory Reporters are those employees that deliver services <u>directly</u> to children and young people or who supervise employees who deliver these services. However, <u>all</u> employees have responsibility to apply the Protecting Children and Young People Policy

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

### Position Specific Responsibilities:

#### Placement case management supervision and casework responsibilities:

The caseworker is responsible for providing comprehensive case management and support to children and young people in out of home care, their carers and the child/young person's birth family, ensuring that the child has a safe and secure environment whilst maintaining family and cultural connections and identity.

Caseworkers' responsibilities in relation to placement supervision, support and casework include:

- Actively participate in appropriate placement of children and young people, aged 0 to 18 years according to their needs, including the matching process for care.
- Review referrals for placements on the Referral Management System (RMS) from Community Services and match with current available carers. Propose placements on the RMS when an appropriate match is likely.
- Facilitate and prepare the placement for a child/ young person as appropriate.
- Develop and implement transition plans for children and young people transitioning to a new long term placement. Regularly review this plan to ensure that it is progressing in an appropriate and positive manner for the child.
- Plan annual case review meetings for all children on their caseload including developing and circulating an agenda/ invitation to relevant parties.
- Prepare for the case review meeting by completing the consultation forms with the child/ young person, carers and birth family to obtain any feedback or additional items to be raised at the meeting
- Develop individual case plans and cultural plans for each child on their caseload at the annual case review meeting or at an earlier time as appropriate in consultation with the child/young person, their carer(s), birth family and other relevant stakeholders
- Prepare six monthly reviews for IFC children.
- Ensure that each case plan is endorsed and approved following the annual case review meeting. Any areas of disagreement to be thoroughly documented
- Where appropriate, provide copies of approved case plans to the child / young person, the carer, birth family and the person or agency legally responsible for the child / young person (e.g. Community Services) and any other involved stakeholders preferably within 5, but no more than 10 working days of an annual case review
- Ensure that all parties understand the content of the plan
- Implement, monitor and review individual case plans for each child on their caseload to ensure that the plan continues to meet the child's needs.
- Conduct regular home visits with the carers and the child/ young person to monitor the placement and progress of the child/ young person to ensure their safety and wellbeing. At a minimum this is to occur monthly or as otherwise approved by the Coordinator.
- Provide support and guidance to the child/ young person to assist them in resolving any fears, concerns or issues that may arise for them.
- Provide support and advice to the carer (and his/her family members as appropriate) to assist them to care for the child/children in their care.
- Provide further support to carer when they are subject to current investigations due to reportable conduct.
- Participate in the development of a cultural case plan for all Aboriginal and CALD children and ensure that the cultural plan is updated as part of an annual case review.

- Inform and assist the carer to obtain any and all financial benefits to enable them to meet the needs of the child/young person.
- Advise the carers of relevant training opportunities and identify training needs of carers in consultation with the carer recruitment team.
- Where required, participate in and support the recruitment and training of carers and keep authorised carers up to date with any relevant training opportunities in consultation with the carer recruitment team.
- Where required, support the transfer of children and their carers from Family and Community Services to Burnside
- Conduct risk and safety assessments of children's placements where there is a likelihood of a placement breakdown and, if necessary, develop an action plan to address any placement concerns that may impact on the child's ongoing care and protection and placement stability.
- Conduct safety and risk assessments for children/young people who have self-placed in an unauthorised placement. Develop an action plan to assist the child to return to their placement and/or remain safe in their current placement.
- In collaboration with the carer, facilitate, and where necessary supervise, contact with the children's birth family in accordance with the child's court orders and/or case plan
- Regularly review contact arrangements to ensure that they continue to meet the child's needs and remain a positive experience for the child.
- Conduct risk assessments of contact to ensure that any contact plan maintains a child's emotional and physical safety.
- Regularly provide the child/young person's family with information on the child/young person's progress in accordance with s149.
- Work collaboratively with carers to facilitate life story work with the children in their care and encourage them to record relevant developmental milestones
- Advocate on behalf of the child, carer and the child/young person's family with the child/young person's best interests being paramount.
- Work collaboratively with relevant service providers to develop and implement an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each child who is of school age.
- Where necessary, develop and monitor Behaviour Management Plans for individual children/ young people in accordance with Burnside's OOHC Policy and Procedures.
- Where applicable, complete thorough assessments and written reports to support a child/ young person's long term plan including restoration, contact, adoption and any other outstanding court proceedings.
- Participate in the development of a work plan for adoption together with the FACS Adoption Caseworker. Implement, monitor and review this work plan to ensure the timely progress of adoption.
- Work collaboratively with all relevant government & non-government agencies to ensure the educational, physical, social & emotional needs of children and young people on your caseload are met.

- Identify any child protection concerns for a child/ young person and make a mandatory notification if applicable.

## Leaving Care and After Care

Caseworkers are responsible for ensuring that a young person in out of home care is prepared for leaving care and supported through after care. The caseworker's role is to:

- Provide information on leaving care to all children turning 15 years old and their carers
- Ensure appropriate referrals are made to NDIS for children with a disability when they turn 15 years old
- Develop and implement a leaving care plan for each young person on your caseload in consultation with the young person, their carer and/or their birth family and any other relevant agencies.
- At least 12 months prior to a young person on your caseload leaving care regularly discuss, monitor & record their progress towards developing their independent living skills and aftercare goals.
- Effectively resource young people leaving care to enable them to make a successful transition to independent living. This includes providing information about financial supports, sustainable accommodation, vocational training and or employment support.
- Ensure the final leaving care plan is completed and forwarded to FACS, Community Services for sign off and approval at least 6 months prior to the YP turning 18 years.
- Provide after-care support to young people who have left Burnside's care as required

## Restoration

Caseworkers have a vital role in supporting the restoration of a child to their birth family by ensuring that any restoration is viable and will provide for the safety and wellbeing of the child/ young person. A caseworker's role is to:

- Facilitate restoration of children and/ or young people to their birth family as directed by Family and Community Services following the making of a Children's Court order
- Develop and implement a restoration plan in consultation with Family and Community Services for the safe restoration of the child to their birth family
- Monitor birth family progress throughout the restoration process, which includes but is not limited to: home visits to the birth parents, monitoring the birth family's engagement with support services and progress of contact
- Refer birth family to appropriate support services as required, including but not limited to AOD services, restoration services, family support services, counselling and child care

- Monitor the quality and progress of contact during the restoration period to ensure that restoration is proceeding appropriately and in the best interests of the child
- Interview and discuss issues with families to assess needs and determine or recommend a course of action to promote safe and adequate care and protection of a child being restored to their care.

## Legal

The caseworker is responsible for participating in the court process for a child or young person in Out of Home Care with Burnside. The caseworker's role in relation to the legal aspects includes:

- Prepare affidavits as evidence for cases with current legal intervention. This may include children on interim court orders or as a result of a S90 application.
- Write assessment reports to the court which may include placement progress updates during interim orders or S82 and S76 reports following final orders as required.
- Be cross-examined in court on any evidence provided to the court.
- Explain the court outcomes to the child, carer and birth family as appropriate
- Participate in the development of the care plan for the children's court with FACS
- Attend a dispute resolution conference (DRC) as required
- Prepare a submission to FACS requesting a S90 application be submitted to the court to vary or rescind a current court order.

## Program Responsibilities

- You'll undertake the administrative functions associated with the work performed to ensure the maintenance of current and accurate records in CDIS and paper files and compliance with the OOHC standards, legislative requirements and Burnside's policies and procedures.
- Maintain an up to date working knowledge of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* and the NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care
- Participate in a 24/7 on-call roster system in accordance with relevant policy and procedures.
- Fulfil the requirements and tasks as a duty person on a roster basis ensuring that all urgent matters are attended to on the same day and responding to carer enquiries in a timely manner.
- Assist with planning and coordinating special program functions including, but not limited to Foster Care week activities, Kids Christmas party and Kids Activity days
- Be prepared to work flexible working hours especially in times of placement breakdown, after hours contacts and crisis incidents

- Support Uniting Practice and Quality to conduct investigations of reportable conduct involving carers in the program. This may include interviewing children and providing documentation as required.
- Work within the Therapeutic Care Practice Framework
- Undertake other duties as required by the Program Manager

## Organisational Responsibilities

- You'll communicate and act in ways that are consistent with Uniting's Core Values of **Integrity, Respect, Hope** and **Courage**.
- Communicate and act in ways that reflect the Service Group's commitment to strengths-based practice.
- Contribute positively to the operations of the Service Group and the realisation of our Strategic Plan and policies.
- Display a commitment to applying work procedures and practices in line with the Diversity Policy.
- Read, sign and abide by the Service Group Code of Conduct.
- Develop a thorough knowledge of the Service Group Strategic Plan.
- Develop a thorough knowledge of your program specific and Service Group policies and practices.
- After consultation, be willing to undertake additional duties, transfer to another equivalent position or assume higher duties when required.
- Take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of people at the workplace by complying with the Work Health and Safety Act 2012. Report and monitor safety procedures, including acting on reports of injuries and incidents, in line with the agency-wide and program specific OHS policies.
- Accurately complete your timesheet daily and submit to your supervisor fortnightly along with relevant medical certificates.

## Professional Responsibilities

- Contribute positively to the development of your program's Operational Plan and the realisation of the program's goals.
- Under direction liaise with service providers, community groups, other Service Group programs and Government Departments in relation to your service users and your position.
- Work as a member of a team and provide positive support to other team members.
- Actively and constructively participate in regular team meetings, planning and staff development opportunities.
- You'll engage in professional development and set and fulfil development goals
- Agree with your supervisor the frequency of regular supervision for your role and actively participate in this supervision
- Use the Service Group Library and other resources to remain knowledgeable about practices and other developments relevant to your position.
- Actively participate in your annual performance review within 2 months of its due date

- Demonstrate leadership in the active development of research and other papers and their presentation

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Operational processes:

- All stakeholders in your area of responsibility are constantly communicated with and remain informed and involved in appropriate aspects
- Regulatory compliance as per the OCG NSW Child Safety Standards for permanent care.

### Client management:

- Client feedback indicates their respect for your services (work) provided and a good working relationship
- Effective client relationships are in place and stakeholders indicate high levels of satisfaction with service delivery
- Client files are updated regularly in line with Uniting policy and procedure.
- Client notes are accurate and in accordance with OOHC policy

### People management:

- Feedback from your line Manager confirms your contribution as a member of the OOHC team
- Feedback from colleagues and their teams confirms your contribution to an integrated Uniting
- Standards of professional behaviour demonstrate alignment with the Uniting values and are effectively role modelled in all workforce interactions

## THE IMPORTANT DETAILS

### Qualifications:

- Relevant tertiary qualifications (minimum Diploma) and minimum 2 years working in an equivalent position in the community sector

### Your experience ticks the following boxes:

- Demonstrated casework/case management skills
- Experience in managing challenging situations within a strengths-based approach
- Demonstrated engagement, interpersonal, negotiation, mediation, consultation and written communication skills
- Demonstrated assessment and analytical skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with Government and non- Government agencies
- Sound knowledge and understanding of child and adolescent behaviour and development.





- Willingness and ability to work flexible hours to meet service user needs (as directed and required)
- Medium level proficiency in MS Office (particularly MS Word and Excel); ability to utilise email functions
- Understanding of EEO, WH&S and cultural issues
- Current driver's licence, and willingness to transport families and children

**Even better:**

- First Aid certificate

## ABOUT UNITING

At Uniting, we believe in taking real steps to make the world a better place. We work to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

Our services are in the areas of aged care and disability, community services, and chaplaincy and we get involved in social justice and advocacy issues that impact the people we serve.

As an organisation we celebrate our diversity and welcome all people regardless of lifestyle choices, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.

<b>Employee Name:</b>		<b>Managers Name:</b>	
		<b>Title</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>	

ACCOUNTABLE POSITION/S	WHS ACCOUNTABILITIES (ACCORDING TO WHS ACT 2011)	ACTION DEMONSTRATING ACCOUNTABILITY
<p><b>WORKERS (EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, CONTRACTORS, STUDENTS)</b></p>	<p><b>While at work, all workers must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety</li> <li>• Take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other people</li> <li>• Comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by Uniting to allow the organisation to comply with this Act</li> <li>• Co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure of Uniting relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers</li> </ul>	<p><b>All workers must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Uniting WHS policy and programs to safeguard the health and safety of people at work and to understand your personal responsibilities for WHS</li> <li>• Attend safety-related training including induction, emergency preparedness</li> <li>• Comply with WHS instructions from your supervisor/manager, training information, safe work procedures and wardens during an emergency evacuation preparedness and program specific training (e.g. visiting clients at home)</li> <li>• If performing new or unfamiliar work, you must seek information, instruction or training and supervision from your supervisor where necessary so that you perform your duties safely without risking the health, safety and wellbeing of yourself or others</li> <li>• Use equipment that has been provided for your health, safety and wellbeing</li> <li>• Report all hazards, incidents and injuries or WHS concerns to your supervisor/manager/team leader</li> <li>• Participate in discussions/consultation about workplace or job task/practice changes that could affect WHS risks</li> <li>• Wear clothing, footwear and personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for the work being done</li> <li>• Do not put other people at risk of their health, safety and wellbeing by your action or inaction</li> </ul>