

Position Description

Title	Senior Family Services Practitioner
Business Unit	Child, Youth and Families
Location	185 Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon, Victoria 3136
Employment type	Ongoing – Full time
Reports to	Team Leader Integrated Family Services

About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church. We have been supporting people and families for over 100 years. We work alongside people of all ages in local communities in Victoria and Tasmania. Our services reach to Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, the Wimmera region in the west, and across Tasmania.

We empower children, young people and families to learn and thrive. We are there for people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness. We support people with disability to live the life they choose. We assist older people to maintain their independence and enjoy life. We provide opportunities to access training and meaningful employment. We are proud to welcome and support asylum seekers to our community. We work to empower people with the information, skills and tools they need to live a healthy, happy life.

As an organisation, we work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia’s First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land. We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

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

Our values: We are imaginative, respectful, compassionate and bold

1. Position purpose

Uniting provide Integrated Family Services (IFS) from three locations in the Eastern Region, Croydon, Blackburn and East Burwood. The IFS program supports families experiencing difficulties that impact on parenting and family life. Working in partnership with alliance partners across the municipalities of Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Boroondara, Maroondah, Knox and Yarra Ranges, and other agencies including VACCA and Child Protection, the IFS program provides a range of supports to increase the life opportunities for children, young people and families most need.

The Senior Family Services Practitioner carries a case load and provides support to vulnerable children and their families with a higher level of complexity, through outreach case management informed by the Best Interests Case Practice Model. The position also undertakes coaching and mentoring within the Family Services Program, and assists with supporting staff practice and networking on behalf of the agency.

2. Scope

Budget: nil

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People: nil

3. Relationships

Internal

- Team Leaders – Child, Youth and Families
- Manager – Child and Family Services
- Child and Family Services teams and programs
- Community workers and volunteers – Emergency Relief Program
- Orange Door team

External

- Child Protection Staff
 - Members of the Inner East Family Services Alliance (IEIFS)
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4. Key responsibility areas

Service Delivery

- Support the Team Leaders in managing workflow and mentoring high level practice and professional maturity
- Work flexibly and collaboratively with Child Protection, VACCA and other agencies while providing a needs and risk assessment, and developing and implementing an integrated service response
- Provide outreach Family Services support to vulnerable children and families experiencing a diverse range of issues and increased level of complexity aligned with senior experience and skills
- Participate in local networking opportunities and attend relevant meetings as directed
- Actively participate in internal and/or external professional development opportunities as agreed
- Pro-actively lead and coordinate new initiatives or processes as requested
- Support emergency relief service delivery as identified with Team Leader
- Other projects and duties, as delegated

Quality and risk

- Maintain an individual case load and high standard of case file management including case notes and assessment documents within required timeframes
- Comply with relevant Occupational Health and Safety standards
- Comply with Uniting policies and procedures and ensure Child Safety at all times
- Raise and report any concerns about Child Safety/wellbeing immediately
- Raise and report any concerns identified on site and within emergency relief program delivery

People and teams

- Assist Team Leaders in the development and modelling of a positive team culture
- Support program objectives and staff when Team Leaders are unavailable or absent
- Provide case consultation, information, advice and guidance to colleagues in areas of professional expertise to enhance operational management and planning to other team members as agreed with Team Leaders
- Ensure that staff practice adheres to Uniting and Department of Health and Human Services policies and quality standards
- Promote a positive culture inclusive of volunteers and caseworkers

Personal accountability

- Compliance with Uniting's values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant

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- Cooperate with strategies to actively ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children who come into association with us
- Ensure appropriate use of resources
- Work collaboratively with Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) employees and external stakeholders in accordance with Uniting's values and professional standards of behaviour
- Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive a collaborative workplace.
- Identify opportunities to integrate and work collaboratively across teams.
- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and health and safety of others (to the extent required)
- Promote a positive safety culture by contributing to health and safety consultation and communication
- Promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to line management
- Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e. equal employment opportunity, health, and safety) and mandatory training specific to position.
- Declare anything that you become aware of through the course of your engagement which may impede your suitability to work with children and/or young people.
- Declare any potential or actual conflict of interest that you become aware of through the course of your engagement:
 - Based on a relationship with a current member of Uniting's workforce
 - Based on my ongoing work with another organisation

5. Person specification

Qualifications

- Tertiary qualifications in social work, psychology or equivalent area
- Valid Victorian driver's licence

Experience

- Excellent understanding of the legislative requirements of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (CYFA) as it effects family services particularly the "Best Interests" framework, information sharing provisions and child protection system
- Knowledge of and extensive experience in child and family services and child protection systems.
- Excellent knowledge of a range of theoretical approaches relevant to working with infants, children, young people and families, including but not limited to attachment theory, trauma informed practice and infant mental health
- Extensive knowledge and understanding of current issues facing families, children and young people
- Extensive knowledge and understanding of reflective practice and it's use within daily practice
- Experience in providing support and mentoring other workers, including supervising students
- Experience in building networking opportunities and representing organisational values at local meetings and forums
- Understanding of support for volunteers or experience in volunteering

Core selection criteria

- **Values alignment:** ability to demonstrate and authentically promote Uniting's values.
- **Child Safety:** demonstrated ability to provide safe environments for children and young people and protect them from abuse and neglect.
- **Interpersonal focus:** strong interest in people and respect for others, ability to suspend judgement, high level self-awareness, with the ability to admit mistakes, as an opportunity for reflection, learning and development.
- **Teamwork:** demonstrates team behaviours striving for co-operative and professional relationships.

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- **Conscientious:** responsible, dependable, organised, persistent and willing to work flexible hours
- **Open to experience:** high level self-awareness with the ability to admit mistakes as an opportunity for reflection, learning and development.
- **Professionalism:** professional, confident, focused, clear about purpose and able to set appropriate personal boundaries Ability to liaise and advocate respectfully with DHHS Child Protection in relation to addressing protective concerns for children
- **Initiative:** ability to work flexibly and creatively to meet the needs of families, children and young people
- **Relationship Building:** High level of ability to actively engage with families during the process of assessment and short term intervention, which may be crisis management
- **Leadership:** highly developed emotional intelligence and ability to mentor and support team members through positive role modelling and reflective practice; capacity to work independently in the development of assessments of need and risk and to provide support and guidance to peers in these areas as required
- **Computer skills:** Sound computer skills, literacy and familiarity with community services software packages.
- **Communication:** open, honest, articulate and flexible approach to communication both written and verbal; and the ability to listen actively
- **Problem solving:** well developed negotiation and problem solving skills

6. We are a child safe organisation

Uniting is a child safe organisation and is committed in everyday practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, at all times. As a child safe organisation, employment with Uniting is subject to a satisfactory national (and international where relevant) police check and relevant Working with Children Check (and NDIS Worker Screening Check where relevant) to your State prior to commencement of any paid or unpaid work and/or participation in any service or undertaking. It is a condition of employment that all eligible workforce receive the COVID-19 vaccination and supporting evidence may be requested in order to perform duties at any of Uniting's workplaces.

This position description is subject to review and may change in accordance with Uniting's operational, service and consumer requirements.
