

Position Description

Title	Family Group Conference Specialist
Business Unit	Child, Youth and Family Services
Location	Across various Uniting sites with FPRR programs (Regional and Metro)
Employment type	Full Time Maximum term to 30 June 2025
Reports to	Family Group Conferencing Coordinator

About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church. We’ve 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’re 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’re 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

This position delivers the Victorian Family Preservation and Reunification (FPR) Response as an evidenced based response working collaboratively with children and families to provide a rapid, intensive and sustained intervention aimed at preventing at risk children entering or re-entering care. The response will link to and build upon existing child and family services within the broader system providing an enhanced continuum of care, provide better support, and achieve measurable outcomes.

The Family Group Conferencing Specialist is a contracted position that will provide a service within the FPR Response, which is grounded within a Family Group Conferencing model. The Family Group Conferencing position will be responsible for promoting and facilitating Family Group Conferencing within the FPR Response, as well as training FPR Practitioners in the FGC model across Uniting. This will require the FGC Specialist to travel and work from various locations of Uniting within Victoria (Regional and Metro).

Family Group Conferencing is a family centred, strengths orientated, culturally sensitive and community based approach to family decision making and case planning. It helps to engage and empower families to make decisions that protect and support their children.

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Family Group Conferencing is based on the belief that, given the right resources, information and empowerment, a family group will make safe and appropriate decisions for their children. The role of professionals are critical, to assist the facilitation of decision-making, by providing information, resources and expertise to assist the family group in this process.

The FPR Response is a wrap around, evidence informed case management approach for the most complex challenging families. The FPR team work in close partnership with the identified partner agencies. The FPR Response is culturally safe and utilises a relational approach that is adaptable and responsive to family and individual needs and key case management frameworks. The Response is strengths based, child and family centred, integrating intensive assessment, care team planning, safety and risk planning and parenting strategies to promote resilience and self-determination.

The Response will provide staff training to build capability and ensure model fidelity. This will involve online training, coaching sessions, support for teams.

2. Scope

Budget: Nil

People: Nil

3. Relationships

Internal

- Manager
- Senior Manager
- Group Manager
- Other Uniting professionals

External

- DFFH Child Protection
 - Community services
 - Child & Family Alliance
 - Other key stakeholders
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4. Key responsibility areas

Service delivery

- Facilitate and co-facilitate Family Group Conferences for The FPR Response staff.
- Establish contact with family members in the lead up to the conference to provide information of the Family Group Conferencing process and all possible outcomes. This can be done through Hybrid modes (online or in person)
- Foster an environment in meetings to promote working out a safe and practical plan and ensure that focus is on the current situation and planning for the future.
- Facilitate constructive and outcome oriented processes.
- Provide training to new staff and ongoing mentoring to existing staff to deliver a skill set that facilitates the process of collaborative planning through Family Group Conferencing
- Embed the principles and theoretical perspectives underpinning Family Group Conferencing to promote good practice within Placement Prevention and Reunification

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- Actively seek out the voice of the child and young person in the Family Group Conferencing process.
- Lead the enhancement of Uniting VicTas profile, branding and reputation through effective liaison with external stakeholders.
- Advocate for and with service users and community groups.
- Promote Uniting's values, mission and vision within all programs.
- Create opportunities for communication across Uniting VicTas through meeting forums, practice forums, training, and other organisation wide events and processes.
- Other projects and duties, as required
- 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 immediately

Program Training & Reflection

- Contribute to the development and achievement of Uniting's operational priorities, growth and direction by:
- Assisting practitioners in the FPR Response to develop skills in Family Group Conferencing
- Running formal training in the FGC Model
- Holding reflective practice sessions for practitioners to build their skills in the FGC Model
- Understanding and identifying key client issues and needs to deliver professional, effective and efficient levels of service and technical expertise
- Providing advice and guidance to colleagues and senior management in areas of professional expertise that will enhance operational management and planning
- Contributing to program development and implementation based upon research, evaluation and strategic goals and needs identified.

Program administration

- Identify and manage or escalate risk issues, around for example client confidentiality, case management and record keeping
- Ensure effective systems, processes and procedures are implemented and monitored to enable and drive positive program outcomes
- Collect evaluation data from Family Group Conference participants contributing to ongoing quality improvement
- Prepare annual Family Group Conferencing reports and provide statistical data as required
- Address client complaints and issues effectively and monitor progress and improvements
- Manage task allocation according to strategic and operational priorities and individual workload
- Other duties, as requested.

Continuing professional development (CDP)

- Attendance at professional development programs, seminars and workshops to enhance knowledge, expertise and networking
- Ensure knowledge and skills are continuously updated

Personal accountability

- Proactive awareness of current industry and legislative developments and trends.
- Compliance with Uniting's values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.
- 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 and collaborative workplace.

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- 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

- A degree in Social Work, Psychology or a related tertiary qualification relevant to child and family welfare

Experience

- Demonstrated understanding of Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Demonstrated knowledge of working with Child Protection
- Demonstrated understanding of Community Services Organisations (CSO's)
- Experience in facilitating Family Group Conferences within the Child Protection sector
- Demonstrated understanding of the principals that underpin Family Group Conferencing
- Proven knowledge of the relevant legislation, regulations and Acts relevant to the role
- Demonstrated understanding of quality and standards frameworks
- Demonstrated ability to supervise staff and work as an effective team member
- Demonstrated ability to provide mentoring to staff
- Demonstrated analytical skills with a proven ability to identify emerging issues and risks
- Highly developed problem solving and solution focussed skills
- Strong administration skills, including data management, program reporting and budget analysis
- Demonstrated understanding of Microsoft Office program
- Knowledge of Family Journey CMS is preferred
- Highly developed communication skills (both verbal and written), with a capacity to communicate effectively and in a timely manner with a range of clients, staff, other professionals and advocacy/stakeholder groups
- Innovative, creative and a flexible approach to managing changeAn understanding of the 'Best Interests' Case Practice Model and Children Youth and Families Act (CYFA) 2005 and 2015 amendments
- Advanced knowledge of child development, trauma and attachment theories
- Well-developed written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to prepare for and conduct meetings and implement agreed actions
- Demonstrated organisational and time management skills
- Computer literacy

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

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- **Leadership:** Demonstrates authentic leadership as a senior worker within the team, committed to supporting practitioners with complex challenges as required
 - **Consumer centeredness:** Demonstrates an awareness of and prioritises the needs of consumers; focus on optimal outcomes for consumers
 - **Communication:** Open, honest, articulate and flexible approach to communication – written and verbal. The ability to actively listen.
 - **Interpersonal focus:** strong interest in people and respect for others. The ability to suspend judgement.
 - **Cooperative:** Demonstrates team behaviours striving for cooperative and professional relationships
 - **Conscientious:** High level self-awareness, with the ability to admit mistakes, as an opportunity for reflection, learning and development.
 - **Professionalism:** Professional, confident focused and clear about purpose and able to set appropriate personal boundaries.
 - **Administrative skills:** Excellent organisational skills; good computer literacy skills including demonstrated experience in Microsoft Office
 - Current driver's licence valid in Victoria
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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.

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