**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Family Engagement Consultant, Permanency Support Program (PSP)

# **ABOUT UNITING**

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

**Our values:** As an organisation we are **Imaginative, Respectful, Compassionate** and **Bold**.

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 focus is always on the people we serve, no matter where they are at in their life.

Our services are in the areas of aged care, disability, child and family, 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 diversity and welcome all people regardless of disability, lifestyle choices, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation or gender identity. We commit to respecting children and take action to keep them safe.

Uniting is the services and advocacy arm of the Uniting Church NSW & ACT and as such Uniting leaders understand, support and can express the mission and purpose of the Uniting Church.

# **ABOUT THE ROLE**

**Role Purpose**

The Permanency Support Program (PSP) aims to give every child/young person a loving home, whether that be with parents, family, extended family, guardianship or adoption. We provide culturally supported placement options for children and young people 0-18 years of age. PSP also provides a ‘light touch’ Aftercare service for young people 18-25 years who have left foster care. This role is responsible for identifying and engaging with a child or young person’s network, with the goal of supporting the development of a sustainable network for life of caring and significant people in their life. This role is a specialist position making a significant contribution to the case work team in regards to permanency planning, leading the implementation of the integrated approach for Family Finding model and coordinating aftercare light touch across the region.

# ROLE KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

**As the Family Engagement Specialist in PSP, your role specifically will:**

* Be an integral team player and work in partnership with PSP Caseworkers and Carer Engagement and Support Consultants to support the permanency goal of the young person.
* Work with the Casework and Carer Engagement and Support teams to promote Family Finding principles such as:
  + All children have family members, and people significant to them who can be found.
  + Children have a right to know their family and their family’s whereabouts and build relationship with them as part of their network for life.
  + Children and young people experience greater sense of wellbeing, the best opportunity to heal and thrive and have better life outcomes when they have well established long term networks.
  + Engage the child’s extended family, community and tribe to provide the child with the opportunity of relationship, and open the door to healing and permanence
* Work collaboratively with PSP leadership to explore and develop protocols for placing the child’s ‘network for life’ within casework practice; to share decision making and to provide protective factors for brain development and supporting adults who provide placements sustained by love, affection, acceptance for the child or young person.
* Using the Family Finding methodology to actively research/search for and engage with, a child or young person’s network to identify potential members of the child’s ‘network for life’ to support the child or young person. Ensure the child or young person’s right to privacy is maintained during this process.
* To identify possible kinship carers or respite carer options, only when it will not endanger ongoing relationships for the child or young person’s ‘network for life.’
* Work in partnership with key stakeholders, key professional networks, direct family members and other significant connections. This includes working closely with the casework team and manager to identify high priority cases.
* Respond to unforeseen issues, crisis management, seek creative solutions and support for the child or young person with the goals of generating options for network members, kinship placement or respite care.
* Actively implement the process of Lifetime Network meetings and collaborate with external agencies as required.
* Participate in other family finding activities or projects as required eg STRIVE, etc.
* Actively engage and participate in the Uniting Continuous Conversations development framework and clinical supervision sessions so as to enable ongoing learning and development.
* Contribute to a safe and supportive working environment that is inclusive of all staff through celebrating their nationality, cultural background, LGBTI status, abilities, gender and age.
* Perform all tasks related to correct record keeping in a timely and appropriate manner, including updating in-house and government IT systems.

# Key relationships

| Who | Why |
| --- | --- |
| **Internal\*** |  |
| **Head of** | * Keep informed of broader Uniting and PSP specific changes and requirements |
| **Operations Manager, PSP** | * Advise and collaborate with as required |
| **Practice Lead, CYF** | * Collaborate with to ensure a contemporary, permanency and restoration focused PSP Practice * Collaborate to ensure fidelity to the Family Finding model and implementation of the relevant practice change |
| **Quality Improvement Specialist** | * Actively partner to drive a culture of continuous improvement, to identify targets for audit, identify gaps and to drive higher quality outcomes for ‘networks for life’ |
| **PSP Psychologist** | * Collaborate to ensure the best therapeutic approach to children and their families is implemented. |
| **PSP Manager** | * Keep informed, advise and receive instructions. |
| **PSP Coordinator** | * Escalate issues, keep informed, advise and receive instructions. |
| **PSP Caseworker team** | * Collaborate with about decisions regarding how each person’s role contributes towards the PSP outcomes |
| **Carer Engagement Support Coordinator** | * Collaborate and work with to achieve multiple teams business outcomes. |
| **Carer Engagement Support Team** | * Ensure active information exchange and openness between teams * Be clear on roles and responsibilities in supporting children, young people and carers |
| **External** |  |
| **Community Partners/Care and Service Providers** | * Maintain and monitor relationships with local NSW Department of Community and Justice Offices to ensure the PSP programs are able to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people. * Manage agency relationships and ensure professional standards and delivery of desired outcomes achieved |

**ROLE DIMENSIONS**

**Reporting line**

* This role reports to the Manager PSP.

**Direct reports**

* Nil

**Essential requirements**

* Relevant tertiary qualification (Diploma minimum) in the social sciences or equivalent sector experience
* Minimum of 2 or more years field experience and willing to continue to develop in your area of expertise
* Experience in managing challenging situations with a trauma informed and strengths based approach.
* Ability to work collaboratively with Government and non-Government agencies.
* A willingness to work in a new model which will require a capacity to influence others to adopt a paradigm practice shift
* Demonstrated understanding of child protection issues and the ability to identify them.
* Willingness to work proactively with birth families.
* Willingness to undertake Family Finding training.
* Demonstrated commitment to creating and maintaining an environment where the voice of the young person is heard and valued.
* Demonstrated commitment to creating and maintaining an environment where the voice of the family is heard and valued.
* Comply with NSW Working with Children Check and National Police History Check requirements
* Ability to work flexible hours to meet service user needs (as directed and required) and be included in an on-call roster.
* Current NSW drivers licence and willingness to transport families and children.
* Computer literacy including a sound understanding of Microsoft Office and in the use of client management systems.

**Even better**

* Knowledge and application of Family Finding model.
* Knowledge and application of trauma informed practice and attachment theory.
* Demonstrated ability to work creatively and proactively with a range of young people and their networks.
* Experience in change management and/or implementation science and effective implementation process

**CAPABILITIES**

| Your Key Capabilities | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Capability** | **Proficient performance looks like** | **Highly proficient performance looks like** |
| **People**  Develop and foster productive relationships | * Be flexible, show initiative and respond quickly when situations change * Set a positive example for others to follow * Raise and work through challenging issues | * Demonstrates the professional capability to support a culture of integrity * Develop and embed a PSP culture of achievement and acknowledge the input of others * Give frank and honest feedback/advice * Demonstrate an inclusive practice while you progress the model implementation whilst supporting partners who feel challenged |
| **Communication**  Communicate Effectively | * Actively listens to others * Utilise a range of ‘soft skills’ to influence change * Writes fluently in a range of styles and formats | * Create opportunities for others to be heard * Share information to effectively deliver integrated and coordinated responses to ensure a collaborative and successful outcome * Create opportunities for others to learn challenging ideas |
| **Relationships**  Work Collaboratively | * Work towards positive and mutually satisfactory outcomes * Utilise facts, knowledge and experience to support recommendations | * Demonstrates team inclusiveness by adopting collaborative practices * Finds opportunities to co-operate with internal and external parties to improve outcomes for customers * Encourage and supports a respectful culture through engagement and participation in a team environment |
| **Results**  Delivers on intended outcomes | * Use own expertise and seek others' expertise to achieve work outcomes * Take responsibility for delivering on intended outcomes | * Remain committed to completing the task in the face of obstacles and barriers * Work collaboratively with the team to deliver on expected goals and acknowledge success * Research and analyse information and make recommendations based on relevant evidence * Identify issues that may hinder completion of tasks and find appropriate solutions |
| **Safety**  Committed to a safe and healthy work environment | * Considers the care and wellbeing of others, including their emotional, mental, physical and cultural safety | * Demonstrate active and visible leadership in WHS risk management * Models exemplary WHS practices by working through issues and identifying solutions to ensure the wellbeing of customers and employees |
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| Practice Specific Capabilities  Practice specific capabilities focus on reflective practice to ensure quality decisions in complex service delivery situations and promote continuous improvement | | |
| **Capability** | **Proficient performance looks like** | **Highly proficient performance looks like** |
| **Person centred**  Elicit the child/young person’s voice | * Maintains an awareness and understanding of how change impacts on the PSP and the delivery of its services * Demonstrate a high level of integrity and ethical conduct * Create opportunities for children and young people to tell their stories and share their opinions * Create opportunities for family and others significant to the child to tell their stories and share their opinions * Challenge situations where others voices are substituted for those of children and young people or their family | * Applies and encourages reflective and culturally affirmative practice within the team to make quality decisions in complex situations * Applies data analytics to identify practice improvement opportunities and actions * Proactively holds duty of care for practice, practitioners and client safety and wellbeing * Manages complex clinical situations following comprehensive assessment |