

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE:		Family Services Case Worker			
POSITION NO:		100457	CLASSIFICATION:		Band 5
DIVISION:		Community Wellbeing			
BRANCH:		Family, Youth & Children's Services			
UNIT:		Family Services			
REPORTS TO:		Team Leader Family Support			
POLICE CHECK REQUIRED:	Yes	WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK REQUIRED:	Yes	PRE-EMPLOYMENT MEDICAL REQUIRED:	No

Yarra City Council is committed to being a child safe organisation and supports flexible and accessible working arrangements for all.

This includes people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse people, young people, older people, women, and people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer.

We draw pride and strength from our diversity, remain open to new approaches and actively foster an inclusive workplace that celebrates the contribution made by all our people.

POSITION OBJECTIVE

- To undertake intake, referral and case work in line with the Strategic Framework for Family Services in line with the North East Child and Family Information Referral and Support Teams, the Orange Door (community based intake), *The Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)* and *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)*.
- To provide case management support to families experiencing parenting, social and financial difficulties affecting their capacity to meet their children's needs.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The Municipality is committed to efficiently and effectively servicing the community to the highest standards; protecting, enhancing and developing the City's physical and social environment and building the population and business base.

The City of Yarra has a long and respected history in the provision and support of Family, Youth and Children's services. Yarra is an inner city municipality with an

extremely diverse and sometimes polarised community. Community expectations and needs in regard to planning for Family, Youth and Children's services are varied and often complex relating to economic, social / community and political considerations. The Family, Youth and Children's Services Branch consists of the following units:

- Children's Services (Long day care, Kindergarten, Central Registration, Occasional Care, Pre School Advisor and Quality Liaison)
- Family Services (Family Support, Playgroups, Family Programs and Inclusion, Immunisation, Maternal and Child Health and Enhanced Maternal and Child Health)
- Service Planning and Development (Strategic planning, service enhancement, quality assurance processes, professional development & training, policy development and resource and support services across the municipality)
- Youth and Middle Years Services (Planning and provision of a range of supporting, developmental and skill based services for children and young people).

North East Orange Door

The legislation *The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* and *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* created a new regulated capacity within registered community child and family services (Family Support Services) to accept child wellbeing referrals and related provisions to consult with a range of designated organisations, including child protection, in determining an appropriate response to family services referrals. The provisions established a range of new requirements and pathways in family services and between these services and the statutory child protection service and the broader service sector. The legislation ensures that Family Services works and supports families and children that are at risk and vulnerable.

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 specified Integrated Family Services (known in Yarra City Council as Family Support) must have a visible single point of intake. As a result of this, Child FIRST was established in the North East Metropolitan region.

The state-wide specifications for Child FIRST North East included wide ranging roles extending from initial screening through to active holding, short term responses, outreach to families and network and community development. In 2018, the Orange Door was rolled out as one of the recommendations from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence to replace Child FIRST. The North East Orange Door was the third to be opened.

The core function and purpose of the Orange Door is to provide a central intake point for family violence support and for families referred for family services casework support on behalf of the Integrated Family Services agencies.

Yarra City Council Family Services is a partner agency in collaboration with Uniting (Kildonan), CoHealth, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Anglicare, Berry Street, Kids First and VACCA to provide family services to families living in Yarra. These agencies operate within the North East Catchment (comprising Yarra, Darebin, Banyule, Nillumbik and Whittlesea) of the North West Metropolitan Region.

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

Position reports to: Program/Team Leader - Family Support

Position supervises: Nil

Internal Liaisons:	Family, Youth & Children's Services and other Council departments.
External Liaisons:	The Orange Door, Family Services Organisations, Department of Health and Human Services, Pre-schools, Schools, Child Care Centres, Hospitals and Community Health Centres, Neighbourhood Houses, Community, legal and Government agencies.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

Operational

1. Case Work

- Use a range of therapeutic techniques and approaches to engage with children and families that are reluctant or ambivalent about using support services.
- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of families which includes both a child development and strengths based perspective.
- Develop and regularly review case plans with each family that will form the basis of long term case management and therapeutic interventions.
- In conjunction with the Program Leader inform and consult with Child First and Child Protection in assessing and addressing risk levels in line with the Best Interest Principals.
- Assist with problem solving, exploration of options and the making of informed choices.
- Assist with issues relating to managing children's behaviour and development and where possible provide parenting skills development and support for children.
- Consult with, refer to and link families to, other services for assistance.
- Identify and appropriately respond to 'at risk' parents and children.
- Initiate and participate in case conferences when required.
- Assist in meeting the service agreement and organisational key performance indicators as set out in the Yarra City Council Service Profile – Family Services.

2. Group Work

- Participate in the planning, development and implementation of community development/education programs.
- Provide evaluation reports upon completion of the group work/programs to the Program Leader.

3. Provision of Family Support Service

- Liaise with other Council staff and relevant community agencies and government departments.
- Work closely with council's Maternal and Child Health and Enhanced Maternal & Child Health nurses to provide appropriate support services to families.
- Work closely with council's Family Services Intake Worker and other services in the Family & Children's Services Branch to provide appropriate support services to families.

- Undertake joint casework with professional and other agencies involved with the family.
- Assist families to obtain goods and services that are necessary for their ongoing viability as a family unit.
- Attend relevant local and sub-regional planning and policy meetings as required.
- Participate in client, group and service evaluations.
- Participate in professional development and training that develops understanding of therapeutic approaches and strategies relevant to working with families, including monthly supervision with Family Services Team.
- Perform any other duties relevant to the role and responsibilities of the position.

4. Quality Service and Continuous Improvement

- Actively participate to identify and act on opportunities for improvement within own work practice, operational and quality policies.
- Own practice demonstrates awareness and understanding of the organisations aims and objectives by adhering to organisations policies and procedures at all times
- Uses the organisation's strategic goals and objectives to focus and prioritise improvement activities
- Uses a proactive approach in own practice to maintain a high standard of client service delivery
- Participates in quality activities if required

5. Administration

- Maintain effective, accurate and up to date case notes of family records and files using the IRIS software system.
- Attend intake meetings with the Program Leader.
- Attend and participate in staff meetings relevant to the functioning of the Family Support Service.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND EXTENT OF AUTHORITY

- The Family Services Case Worker works under the supervision of the Program Leader and is accountable for providing support and assistance to designated families in accordance with a case plan. The freedom to act is subject to close supervision and clear guidelines.
- In conjunction with the Program Leader the Family Services Case Worker has regular supervision and is expected to discuss concerns especially those of a protective or at risk nature.
- In conjunction with the Program Leader the Family Services Case Worker is to formulate an agreed case plan with clearly defined and negotiated goals.
- Contribute to the review and improvement of policies, services, processes and procedures.

Safety & Risk

- Minimise risk to self and others and support safe work practices through adherence to legislative requirements and Council policies and procedures.
- Report any matters which may impact on the safety of Council employees, community members, or Council assets and equipment.
- Yarra City Council is committed to prioritising and promoting child safety. We adhere to the *Victorian Child Safe Standards* as legislated in the *Child, Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)* and have robust policies and procedures in order to meet this commitment.

Sustainability

- Embrace the following Sustaining Yarra principles through day to day work:
 - Protecting the Future
 - Protecting the Environment
 - Economic Viability
 - Continuous Improvement
 - Social Equity
 - Cultural Vitality
 - Community Development
 - Integrated Approach

Yarra Values

- Behave according to the following values which underpin our efforts to build a service based culture based on positive relationships with colleagues and the community:
 - Accountability
 - Respect
 - Courage

JUDGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING

- The Family Services Case Worker is expected to inform the Program Leader of the progress made with families and of behaviour and incidents that are of concern.
- Most of the work performed in family homes is without direct supervision and, at times, requires independent decisions to be made. Decisions will be based on guidelines, professional knowledge and/or previous experience.
- The position requires problem solving skills and the ability to interpret and make judgments in assessment, intake and group work. Problems may be complex and require some creativity and originality.
- The Family Services Case Worker will be expected to be able to identify families with children 'at risk' and respond appropriately.
- The Family Services Case Worker is required to write and sign letters, reports and general correspondence on behalf of Family Support Service as delegated.
- Guidance and advice is usually available within time to make a choice.

SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the Best Interest Principles within *The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* and *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.
- Understanding of the importance of adhering to policies, regulations and precedents in delivering a service to the community.
- Demonstrated group-work skills and a sound understanding of group dynamics.
- General casework skills and an ability to provide information, parenting strategies and resources to vulnerable families and children.
- Ability to offer options strategies and resources to assist people to make informed choices.
- Ability to deliver parenting skills development programs.
- Ability to advocate on behalf of clients.
- Demonstrated ability to work with families of diverse socio-economic and cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Conflict resolution skills.
- Knowledge of child and adolescent development.
- Knowledge and skills in working with a wide range of professionals including Child Protection and Maternal and Child Health.
- Competency in the operation of Microsoft Office and IRIS software system.
- Ability to understand the long term unit goals and the appreciation of the wider organisational goals.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Ability to manage time effectively, setting appropriate priorities, planning and organise relevant activities and one's own work
- Ability to write appropriate reports, maintain up-to-date factual client files and collect accurate service statistics.
- Ability to achieve specific objectives with in the available resources and timeframes.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Excellent verbal and written communication and liaison skills and ability to write reports and prepare appropriate external correspondence.
- Ability to gain cooperation and assistance from clients, other employees and members of the public in delivering family support.
- Ability to be flexible, energetic, creative and take initiative where appropriate.
- Non-judgemental attitude and an ability to work responsively with people.
- Commitment to working effectively within and contributing to a multidisciplinary team.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

- Degree or diploma in Welfare, Social Work or Psychology.
- Experience in and knowledge of family dynamics, child and youth development, community activities and health education.
- Experience in working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Experience in developing and delivering community development / education programs.
- Current driver's licence essential.
- Experience in working with diverse communities including newly arrived refugees and other migrants.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Consult and engage effectively with parents and caregivers from many and varied backgrounds and experiences.
2. Understand, prioritise and demonstrate the needs of the clients. Aims for the best outcomes for clients, continuously strives to improve the clients experience, is strength based and outcome focused.
3. Contribute to the team effectively, add value to team activities and encourage a supportive team environment.
4. Respect and value strength and diversity in all its forms. This will include working with families of diverse socio-economic and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities inclusive of newly arrived refugees.
5. Understand the importance of working with a child centred approach within a family support services. Sound understanding of the social context of child abuse and neglect, and experience in using current theoretical approaches to support positive outcomes for children. This includes the supervision of casework, Child Protection requirements, the Best Interest Principles outlined within the *Child, Youth and Families Act 2005*, and oversight of risk assessments.
6. Communicate effectively both verbally and in writing, seeking clarification if necessary if the communication is unclear.
7. Demonstrated knowledge and expertise in the following:
 - strength based work with families
 - utilising relevant intervention strategies and frameworks
 - children's development needs,
 - drug and alcohol issues,
 - crisis planning,
 - trauma and family violence,
 - working with families of diverse socio-economic and CALD communities