

Position Description

Title	Senior Family Practitioner, <i>Keeping Connected</i> : Sibling Support Program
Business unit	Continuing Care – Out of Home Care
Location	Level 1/51 Princess Highway Dandenong 3175
Employment type	Full Time Maximum Term to 7 August 2024
Reports to	Team Leader, <i>Keeping Connected</i> Sibling Support Program

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

Keeping Connected: Sibling Support and placement service has been implemented as a part of Roadmap for Reform; Strong Families, Safe Children, to test new or strengthened approaches to better support for children and young people in out-of-home care service system. *Keeping Connected* focuses on building the capacity within the out of home system to better respond to sibling groups requiring placement together and for existing sibling groups in out-of-home care who are separated, to ensure that there are clear avenues for meaningful contact to occur.

Keeping Connected is delivered in partnership by Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania), Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and Alfred Health.

The service supports:

- All new sibling groups (first and second time entrants) to out-of-home care in the Bayside Peninsula and Southern Melbourne Areas.
- All children and young people in Out of Home Care in the Bayside Peninsula and Southern Melbourne Areas who are separated from their siblings in the Bayside Peninsula and Southern

Position Description

Senior Family Practitioner, *Keeping Connected*: Sibling Support Program

Melbourne Areas. Siblings are living in kinship care, foster care, residential care and/or at home.

The service uses a broad definition of siblings. It includes half-, step- and foster-siblings, and cousins (where a brother/sister relationship exists) and works with sibling groups in out-of-home care (kinship, foster or residential care) and can also assist to have siblings in out of home care remain connected with any siblings still at home.

2. Scope

Budget:

Nil

People:

- Nil
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3. Relationships

Internal

- Team Leader, Keeping Connected Sibling Support Program
- Manager, Out of Home care and Therapeutic Support Services
- Other Out of home care and Continuing care- Team Leaders and team members
- Co-located employees
- Uniting Vic Tas employees

External

- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
 - Alfred Health
 - Clients
 - Other professionals
 - Members of the public
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4. Key responsibility areas

Service delivery

- Family centred service provision that actively involves families in the development of plans and supports to sibling groups
- Family is broadly defined to include birth family and kinship carers
- Best Interest Case Practice Model provides a foundation for working with children, young people and families
- A Family Led Decision Making (FLDM) including Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making approach will underpin all family work.
 - Empowering families to make good decisions and plans in relation to the safety and care of their children

Role expectations (at a broad level)

- *Keeping Connected* model embeds family work so that siblings' groups entering the out-of-home care system have every opportunity of returning home to live with family.

Position Description

Senior Family Practitioner, *Keeping Connected*: Sibling Support Program

- Alfred Health play a key role in the delivery of this model component. Involvement includes consultation and direct support of all families receiving a family intervention.
- Expectations of this role include:-
 - Intensive scoping and family finding options are explored in partnership with Child Protection for all sibling groups entering the out-of-home care system
 - Intensive education and practical support is provided to families and sibling groups during the transition phase so that reunification can be achieved (where agreed to by Child Protection)
 - Intensive education and practical support is provided to families and sibling groups post Keeping Connected involvement to enhance parenting capacity which in turn strengthens the family unit and prevents re-entry into the out-of-home care system. This includes;
 - Parenting and behaviour management
 - Child Development
 - Routines and boundaries
 - Emotional regulation techniques
 - Healthy relationships
 - Effective communication
 - Healthy lifestyles and self esteem
 - Household management and budgeting
 - Assistance to navigate community and specialist services including broader mental health services
 - Actively seek out the voice of the children and young people and advocating for their voice to be heard

Role expectations (operational level)

- Work with families will commence at the beginning of the sibling groups involvement with Keeping Connected. Service intervention will continue for up to three months post keeping connected involvement.
- As part of this intervention, the Senior Family Practitioner will attend all Care Team Meetings that are arranged and will work alongside Alfred health and VACCA in undertaking family work
- Direct work undertaken will include:
 - Family Finding
 - In partnership with Alfred Health and VACCA, play a lead role in the transition of sibling groups home and/or to kinship arrangements. For sibling groups transitioning to kinship arrangements.
 - It will be critical to include the DHHS Kinship Team in the transition process. It will also be important to determine who is best placed to lead the transition process and also determine who is best placed to continue to provide direct support to these sibling groups.
 - In partnership with Alfred Health and VACCA, provide intensive education and direct practical support to families to enhance their parenting capacity and strengthens the family unit.
 - In partnership with Alfred Health, assess the health and wellbeing of families and ensure smooth and timely access to specialist supports including the broader mental health system.

People and teams

- Establish, lead, coach and inspire an engaged and productive team
- Lead the team in leading practices and effective process governance
- Provide support, guidance, coaching, leadership, and empowerment to the team including feedback through performance reviews and regular supervision.
- Undertake regular supervision and performance review with line manager, providing feedback to promote collaborative working relationships
- Promote and maintain a positive, respectful and enthusiastic work environment

Position Description

Senior Family Practitioner, *Keeping Connected*: Sibling Support Program

- Provide authentic team leadership and the highest level of professional conduct in alignment with Uniting's values.

Quality and risk

- Prepare program documents (risk assessments and closures) and maintain accurate and up-to-date case notes.
- Active participation in supervision sessions.
- Active participation in team meetings and team development sessions.
- Participation in program evaluation requirements.
- Adhere to the agency's mandatory reporting protocol.
- Assist with the data reporting requirements.

Personal accountability

- 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.
- 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

- Bachelor of Social Work or equivalent tertiary qualification in a relevant discipline.
- A current Victorian Driver's Licence

Experience

- A minimum of 3 years professional experience in the field of child, youth and family services.
- Experience working with DHHS Child Protection directly or in a community service setting would be beneficial.
- Demonstrated ability as a practitioner and case manager in the child, youth and family welfare field.

Position Description

Senior Family Practitioner, *Keeping Connected: Sibling Support Program*

- Demonstrated experience engaging with families and successfully providing outreach services, sometimes in a difficult or stressful context.
- Demonstrated experience working with men.
- Demonstrated ability to assess risk for children aged 0-17
- Demonstrated experience in facilitating group work.
- Knowledge of child development, trauma and attachment theories.
- Demonstrated understanding of the Best Interests Case Practice Model and Children, Youth and Families Act ('CYFA') 2005 and 2015 amendments
- Proven experience and skills engaging adolescents and their families to facilitate mediation and reconciliation.
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience working with adolescents who are facing issues such as family violence, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, psychiatric illness, homelessness and alcohol and drug abuse
- Proven experience working collaboratively and innovatively with families, staff and services to meet and achieve goals that facilitate safe, stable and nurturing environments for young people.
- Demonstrated understanding of child safety and experience assessing, identifying and responding to risk
- Experience in research, project management/development, and consultation.
- Experience in training and development of staff
- Well-developed inter-personal skills, in particular assertiveness, negotiation and ability to manage self and emotions in conflict situations.
- Well-developed written and verbal communication skills, with a capacity to communicate effectively and in a timely manner with a range of clients, staff, and other professionals.
- Demonstrated planning, organisational and time management skills
- Strong administrative skills, including data management and program reporting.

Core selection criteria

- **Values alignment:** ability to demonstrate and authentically promote Uniting's values.
- Demonstrated ability to provide safe environments for children and young people and protect them from abuse and neglect.
- The ability to work flexible hours to meet the needs of children, young people and families.
- A commitment to a family-centred approach and the family strengthening and empowerment models of practice.
- Demonstrated knowledge of practices to engage and assure the cultural safety of clients from a diverse range of backgrounds, including those from an Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or CALD background, or the LGBTI community.
- Personal Attributes:
 - Verbal ability: 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 co-operative and professional relationships.
 - Conscientious: Responsible, dependable, organised and persistent.
 - 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, and clear about purpose and able to set appropriate personal boundaries.

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

Position Description

Senior Family Practitioner, *Keeping Connected*: Sibling Support Program

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.
