**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Casework Specialist 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, through guardianship or quality long term care. 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 advising and implementing best practice approaches for our most complex children and young people with an emphasis on trauma informed care and managing challenging behaviour while also prioritizing outcomes for permanency and restoration. In this role you will need to meet funding, performance and practice requirements, ethical and professional standards as well as community and stakeholder expectations within PSP.

# ROLE KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

* In partnership with the Manager be responsible for ensuring that team members have the necessary capability to deliver culturally appropriate, holistic, high quality case work for children and young people with complex needs.
* Support the team with practical ways of considering a child or young person’s needs through cross functional lenses focusing on developmental needs, education needs, therapeutic needs and cultural needs. Promote and embed case planning which doesn’t occur in isolation but at all times, views the child or young person and their needs holistically.
* Empower Caseworkers to use evidenced based approaches and tools such as Structured Decision Making, risk assessment and safety planning to identify and manage possible risks and incidents for children and young people, carers and families, and to recommend and implement corrective actions or controls.
* Collaborate with the Caseworkers and support staff, and Carer Engagement and Support teams to build and lead a PSP culture that supports data integrity, ensuring effective data management training for staff, and regular monitoring of data management.
* Lead case management and planning of tasks that progress permanency and restoration targeted case plan goals for children and young people.
* Lead collaboration between all stakeholders in a child or young person’s network for life, including family, extended kin and carers, facilitating building the capacity of parents and carers for all types of placements, to provide care that allows a child or young person to thrive.
* Consider a child or young person’s needs through cross functional lenses focusing on health and wellbeing needs, education needs, therapeutic needs and cultural needs. Ensure case planning never occurs in isolation and that at all times, a child or young person and their needs are viewed holistically.
* Understand PSP key performance indicators, compliance and probity obligations and strive to achieve these to a high standard.
* Positively contribute to the development and implementation of practice improvements to ensure the delivery of a high quality and safe service to children and young people. Actively use resources such as SharePoint to support these activities.
* In your practice obtain and document the essential evidence required for decision-making in the best interest of children, youth and their families.
* In your daily practice, actively contribute to a culture that values the voices of children and young people to have a say in decisions that affect them and their futures.
* 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.
* Actively engage and participate in the Uniting Continuous Conversations development framework and clinical supervision sessions so as to enable ongoing learning and development.

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

**Therapeutic Case Work**

* Lead intensive therapeutic casework services for children and young people with complex needs based on the principles of trauma informed care and best practice for managing challenging behaviours.
* Collaborate with PSP staff, psychologists, therapists, families, carers and children to provide the therapeutic support on the ground to best meet the needs of complex children including planning, implementing and evaluating this support.
* Mentor other caseworkers and carers in therapeutic case management using your in-depth knowledge of trauma informed practice and dealing with challenging behaviours.
* Role model best practice casework to other caseworkers and carers using your in-depth knowledge of all aspects and tools of complex and holistic casework.
* Advise the leadership team, other caseworkers and carers about how best to support the needs of individual children and young people using your experience, skills and sound judgement.
* Lead child and young person and family centric case planning, using principles of therapeutic care.

Ensure teams are supported and coached where necessary, to adhere to all policies and procedures (organisational and PSP specific) including attending home visits and other field work.

* Provide guidance to ensure appropriate placement matching, placement review and placement transition plans for children and young people aged 0-18, with carers who can meet their safety, wellbeing, therapeutic and permanency outcomes. This includes both initial entry to and exit from Uniting and transferring between placements once a child is under Uniting case management responsibility.

**As the Casework Specialist in PSP you will also be required to do the following with a reduced caseload**

* Develop case plans that prioritise permanency and undertake casework tasks for children and young people and hold a caseload of children and young people
* Monitor case plan actions, child and young person safety and wellbeing and placement supports through regular ongoing home visits (minimum monthly or as approved by the coordinator, in line with case plan goals), individual discussions with child or young person, their parents/family, carers and care team professionals.
* Monitor placements for child/young person safety and wellbeing, identifying and reporting incidents and child protection concerns through internal and external mechanisms as per Uniting policy and procedure.
* Participate in the assessment of ROSH reports with DCJ, including investigation, consultation and feedback.
* Develop and implement safety plans as part of risk assessments to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is prioritised as child protection concerns are identified, during investigations or in response to incidents where risk assessment may be a required response.
* Use evidenced based tools for capturing accurate information, for example Structured Decision Making tools to support children and young people’s safety and wellbeing.
* Perform all tasks related to correct record keeping in a timely and appropriate manner, including case notes and relevant child or carer related documentation
* Review permanency case plan goals regularly and as appropriate, prioritising restoration, kinship care, guardianship, adoption as per Uniting’s’ policies and procedures
* Collaborate with children, carers, family and the Uniting Family Engagement Consultant to ensure children and young people have a network for life
* Provide additional support to children and young people during investigations of any kind, ensuring they are safe and their voice and participation is encouraged and recorded.
* In collaboration with your colleagues in the Carer Engagement and Support Team, provide additional support to carers who may be subjects of allegations during Reportable Conduct allegations and investigations.
* Collaborate, coordinate and participate in any identified actions with the Investigations Unit, Carer Engagement Support team and other stakeholders during an investigation. Develop strategies for carer support and provision of timely and accurate information and updates during the process.
* Collaborate with DCJ on appropriate permanency outcome as part of regular case plan reviews
* Collaborate with external adoption consultant where case plan goal is adoption to ensure progress through assessment and completion of adoption orders
* Perform 16a request for information in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people as part of ongoing case management and case planning
* Perform tasks related to the safe supervision of family visits and monitor the effectiveness and safety of non-supervised visits and visits supervised by carers or other agencies
* Develop visitation plans, ensuring minimum court-order requirements are adhered to, in consultation with family, carers and CYP and implement according to the plan, reviewing at least annually in relation to child or young person’s needs and case plan goals
* Undertake provisional authorisation assessments where person is known to the child or young person and placement is considered in child’s best interest, ensuring children and young person’s participation in the assessment. Ensure Manager / Coordinator endorsement is secured for all assessment documentation.
* Implement medication management protocols as per relevant procedures with the carer, child and young person and other relevant stakeholders such as respite carers, birth families, paediatrician, schools, allied health professionals, NDIS providers etc
* Develop a Leaving Care (including financial) Plan that is completed, sent to DCJ for approval *at least* 6 months prior to young person turning 18. Ensure the voice of the young person is clearly reflected in the finalised Plan through their active and positive participation in their own planning and goal setting.
* Work collaboratively with other relevant stakeholders (internal and external) to support a child or young person in the development and implementation of a Cultural Plan. Ensure the voice of the child or young person is clearly reflected in the finalised Plan. Support carers to understand the need for, and requirements to implement, a Cultural Plan.
* Where a child or young person has a disability, work collaboratively with other relevant stakeholders (including Uniting Disability) in ensuring their access to the NDIS is secured and any NDIS plan meets the needs of the child or young person. Support carers to understand the NDIS Plan and to be able to implement it in a timely way.
* Participate in the PSP After Hours Emergency Roster so that all duty of care requirements for children and young people and their carer’s and families are met.

Adhere to policies and procedure both organisationally and internally for PSP. Staff are to ensure they work within, and contribute to, the PSP Continuous Improvement Framework.

* Ensure you understand and follow policy and procedure in relation to all legal case plan requirements in consultation with DCJ as appropriate.
* Complete Court work as required including S82 and S76 reports, writing affidavits, completing case plans in consultation with DCJ.

**Restoration Casework**

* Develop and record restoration documentation, including the use of structured decision making tool and associated evidence for use in court outcomes related to changes in parental responsibility.
* Collaborate with DCJ for accountabilities; during initial referral and placement for restoration, during restoration case work and post restoration when a child or young person has returned home
* Collaborate with family, children, family networks of support and other stakeholders to develop and implement Family Action Plans to increase a parents capacity to provide safe care and facilitate assessment of restoration
* Collaborate, develop, implement and monitor restoration case plans every 3 months; ensuring children and young person’s safety and wellbeing needs are being met in an out of home care placement, incorporating restoration SDM structure, quality Family Time and Family Action plans .
* Review Restoration permanency goal, using SDM decision making structure and in collaboration with stakeholders; changing permanency goal to guardianship, adoption, kin care or long term care where restoration is no longer an appropriate option.

**Guardianship and Adoption Casework**

* Ensure you follow case plan review in line with the timeframes
* Ensure carers applying for guardianship or adoption can meet the relevant criteria within the specified timeframes.

# 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 | * Partner to support holistic, practice responses for complex children and young people |
| Quality Improvement Specialist | * Actively partner to drive a culture of continuous improvement, to address audit gaps and to drive higher quality case work outcomes |
| PSP Psychologist | * Collaborate to ensure the delivery of timely and high quality Behaviour Support Plans * Access support to clinical planning for complex children and young people |
| PSP Manager | * Keep informed, advise and receive instructions |
| PSP Coordinator | * Collaborate to ensure the voices of children and young people are central to decision making and actions * Partner to ensure PSP teams’ safety and wellbeing is supported |
| PSP Caseworker team | * Lead and collaborate with on decisions regarding how each person’s role contributes towards the PSP outcomes |
| Carer Engagement Support Team | * Ensure active information exchange and openness between teams * To 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**

None

**Essential requirements**

* Relevant tertiary qualification in the social sciences or equivalent sector experience
* A minimum of 3 or more years field experience in complex case management
* Current NSW drivers licence
* Demonstrated in depth knowledge of trauma informed care and managing challenging behaviours
* Demonstrated understanding of child protection issues and the ability to identify them
* 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 young person is heard and valued
* Comply with NSW Working with Children Check and National Police History Check requirements
* Ability to work on-call 24 hours a day 7 days a week on roster basis
* Computer literacy including a sound level of competency with Microsoft Office platforms and client management systems

**Even better**

* Understanding of the Permanency Support Program (PSP) and its guiding principles including a commitment to family finding, restoration and permanency.
* Case management experience in a PSP setting.
* Knowledge and experience in restoration practices, working with families through the restoration process and the Structured Decision Making (SDM) model.

**Capabilities for the role**

| 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 an 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 and be able to receive, frank and honest feedback/advice |
| **Communication**  Communicate Effectively | * Actively listens to others * Writes fluently in a range of styles and formats * Acknowledges and respects culturally affirmative communication | * Create opportunities for others to be heard * Share information to effectively deliver integrated and coordinated responses to ensure a collaborative and successful outcome |
| **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 * 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 * Be willing to seek out input from others and share own ideas to achieve best outcomes | * Take responsibility for delivering on intended outcomes * 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 dangers and risks, assessing and mitigating and re-evaluating as a matter of practice * 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 | * Models exemplary WHS practices by working through issues and identifying solutions to ensure the wellbeing of customers and employees * Proactively holds duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of others in the workplace |
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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  Reflective practice | Demonstrate a high level of integrity and ethical conduct  Create opportunities for children and young people to tell their stories and share their opinions  Challenge situations where others voices are substituted for those of children and young people | * Applies data analytics to identify practice improvement opportunities and actions * Seeks immediate support to create reflective practice opportunities to manage complex clinical situations, and then implement action plans as directed |