

Position Description

Title	Family Preservation & Reunification Senior Practitioner
Business unit	Child, Youth and Family Services
Location	185 Mount Dandenong Road, Croydon, Victoria 3136
Employment type	Full time Ongoing
Reports to	Family Preservation & Reunification Team Leader

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 FPR Senior Practitioner role is critical in implementing a wrap around, evidence informed case management approach for the most complex challenging families. The Family Preservation and Reunification (FPR) team will work in close partnership with the identified partner agencies. The FPR Response will be culturally safe and utilise a relational approach that is adaptable and responsive to family and individual needs and key case management frameworks. The work 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, and support for teams.

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The Senior Practitioner will work closely with the Team Leader to provide support and live coaching to FPR Practitioners in cases that are high risk, present multiple demands and when FPR Practitioners identify as needing additional support. The Senior Practitioner will also undertake Higher Duties during the Team Leader's leave.

2. Scope

Budget:

Nil

People:

Nil

3. Relationships

Internal

- Team Leader
- 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

- Delivery of the Family Preservation and Reunification Response providing a rapid, intensive, wraparound response to meet the safety and developmental needs of children/young people and support the needs of parents.
- Delivery of intensive case management based on the FPR Response Guidelines and Best Interest Principles as defined under the Child, Youth & Families Act 2005 with an understanding of how this is integrated within evidence-based programs.
- In conjunction with the Team Leader provide live coaching and support for FPR Practitioners in outreach activities, care team meetings and complex tasks in cases that are high risk, have multiple needs and when FPR Practitioners identify they need additional support.
- Undertake Higher Duties as requested
- Work within a culturally safe framework in partnership with family members, specialist and universal service providers utilising principles of the Aboriginal family led decision making and self-determination.
- Work within the prescribed relational model of connecting and linking families to build safety and empower and create meaningful opportunities that build upon their strengths utilising a range of evidenced informed intervention strategies including the Common Elements
- Work intensively with children, young people and families to support family preservation and reunification in line with the Child Protection case plan and Care Team
- Demonstrate assertive outreach and creative engagement solutions with hard-to-reach families; provide outreach at flexible times with families based on their needs
- Maintain effective risk assessment to regularly assess child safety concerns and engage with other professionals to support the safety planning for children and family members.
- Establish and lead care teams in line with the agreed action plan.

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- Strengthen the family's connection to community by meaningful engagement with community supports that will sustain the family over time and be culturally appropriate.
- Access and utilise specialist resources and evidence informed frameworks that address the complex needs of family members including Family Violence, Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health, Disability and the impact of Trauma.
- Work collaboratively with Child Protection
- Provide families with practical and emotional support, advocacy, coaching, skill building and connection to social and economic resources
- Prepare reports, service documents and maintain accurate and up-to-date client records and case notes
- Actively seek out the voice of the child and young people, advocating for their voice to be heard
- Identify opportunities for financial assistance and brokerage for families
- Other duties as required

Quality and Risk

- Participate in regular supervision with Team Leader
- Undertake designated training in the Response model and contribute to implementation of service delivery models in conjunction with the Team Leader.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date case notes, family care and action plans and data
- Participate in relevant meetings, panels and consultations
- Support and participate in the Agency's continuous quality improvement process.
- Participate in team reflective practice
- Participate in the development of individual Performance Development Plans
- Ensure the highest quality of service provision through a commitment to organisational values, policy and procedure adherence, and maintenance of positive relationships with key stakeholders.

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

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Qualifications

- A degree in Social Work, Psychology or a related tertiary qualification relevant to child and family welfare
- Current driver's licence valid in Victoria

Experience

- Demonstrated ability as a senior level practitioner in the child, youth and family welfare field
- Experience in working with vulnerable children and families in a community services setting is preferred
- Demonstrated experience in engaging with families successfully and completing assertive outreach
- Demonstrated ability to assess and appropriately respond to risk for children and young people
- A commitment to the family-centered approach and the family strengthening and empowerment models of practice
- An 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

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.
- **Leadership:** demonstrates authentic leadership as a senior worker within the team, committed to supporting practitioners with complex challenges
- **Consumer centeredness:** demonstrates an awareness of and prioritises the needs of consumers; focus on optimal outcomes for consumers
- **Communication:** well-developed written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to prepare for and conduct meetings, and implement agreed actions; open, honest, articulate and flexible approach to communication – written and verbal, and 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 and time management skills; good computer literacy skills including demonstrated experience in Microsoft Office

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.