

ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 3: Maitland, 31 August – 1 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions NGOs conveyed to ACWA relating to the PSP Reform at an agency visit and an additional informal meeting with a second service provider. Participants were asked to rank the priority of need relating to each to the PSP. This information was gathered on Thursday 31 August and 1 September from 2 different agencies representing a statewide service and an agency based primarily in New England. The participants comprised of a diverse cross section of workers including senior agency or program managers, both foster and residential caseworkers, team leaders, house leaders, recruitment, communications and assessors. No Aboriginal controlled agencies were interviewed. The feedback gathered from participants will inform a statewide survey aimed at refining information already gathered on the needs of the NGO sector relating to the PSP reform.

<p>1. The critical needs in caseworker practice, skills and capabilities</p>	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to start work with birth family at earliest opportunity (e.g. from time of removal or before) to strengthen connection and build relationships as well as the ability to challenge unnecessary removals • Frontline caseworkers need skills in assessing safety/risk assessment • Training also need to assist carers to successfully engage with birth families • Skills to work with new systems e.g. ChildStory • Training needed in legal report writing – especially Section 82 reports- to ensure consistency and benchmarked standards • Need training on intake assessments - identifying and assessing short term carers • Restoration, preservation and investigative interviewing techniques • Cultural care case planning • Assistance to work with and empower Aboriginal families and communities • Safety planning • Working with birth families at the time of removal
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	<p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent therapeutic practice across the sector • Permanency Coordinators roles need to be clarified • Need comprehensive information sharing – this is currently not occurring • Need detailed training on Chapter 16A of the Act • Need to understand FACS view of program integration – service system framework and how component fits and works together • Clarification needed regarding children and young people already in the system (OOHC) in comparison to children entering system now – will they be considered differently - together or separately? • Need clarification on outcomes based measures • Clarity needed on different supports available for adoptions such as guardianship and adoption and how different forms of support can be accessed (e.g. can the Intensive Foster Care allowance be provided to Guardians?) • Clarity needed on how children and young people’s needs be assessed and reviewed <p>Additional needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support needed to provide innovative and effective models of care with continued support • Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms need to be adequately funded and utilised early to ensure less people come into care • Need the ability to update genograms – currently only provided as a pdf. format • Follow up support once permanency goal has been achieved, no matter what has been achieved (e.g. restoration, guardianship, adoption etc.) • Need support and training for carers (train the trainer) • Need template and examples of policy and reports – online clearing house
<p>2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed</p>	<p>1. Permanency work in order of priority – e.g. working with birth families, restorations, guardianship, adoption etc.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Up skilling of Legal work 3. Carer training 4. Clarity of PSP roles and responsibilities
<p>3. What you think the possible support solutions are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using mechanisms already established (e.g. FACS training) to be open it up to NGOs, because they already have robust training and it would not have to cost anymore. This would also help facilitate good relationships and networks within the sector. • Joint FACS/NGO Training • Giving NGOs appropriate time to change their practice and resisting any reactionary policy shifts.