

ACWA NGO Sector Permanency Support Program (PSP) Needs Analysis

Report 7: Wollongong, 20 September 2017

This report identifies the critical needs and solutions an NGO conveyed to ACWA relating to the Permanency Support Program (PSP) reform at an agency PSP planning day. Participants were also asked to rank the priority of need relating to each of the needs. This information was gathered on 20 September from 25 people working in the SWS and Southern Districts. The participants included a diverse range of job roles from across the agency’s OOHC programs including, executive and middle management, carer recruitment and support, caseworkers and specialist clinical staff. 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"> • How to develop strong/clear case plans in context of PSP. • Recruiting, support and training carers – especially short term carers • How to quickly build constructive relationships between foster carers and birth families • Working through section 90s in the context of permanency goals (esp. guardianship) • How to work with a child therapeutically as well as the biological parents / carers with good attachment has occurred • Knowledge about what services are available to work with restoration/permanency plans • Assessment tools to assess level of appropriateness of permanency pathway (SARA) (SDM) and the process must be systemic • Caseworker training on legal work and documentation and need more legal support throughout the decision making process • Crisis placement and related case management expertise • Risk assessments – e.g. understanding levels of risk related to removals • Therapeutic work, life story work and understanding/identifying when the time is right for children and young people to deal with trauma. • Difficult conversations relating to permanency • Legislation relevant to permanency
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation skills • Being critically and analytical • Increasing the carer pool • Educating the wider community/carers about this reform • Joint case management – what will this look like? • NGO’s involvement in development of care/case planning process for changing plans • Family finding training • Understanding how care orders work and what needs to happen before they expire <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with birth families – casework practice shifts and conversations around permanency – supporting restoration/preservation and potential mentor to biological/adoptive parents. • Effectively communicating the needs of the child or young person to FACS • Working with Aboriginal carers/children/agencies • Ability/time for adequate communication between all stakeholders involved (NGO, FACS, carers etc.) • Early information sharing between all parties involved • Understanding the new funding mechanisms e.g. how to get appropriate funding for children’s needs? • Working with FACS and clearly understanding the different roles between FACS and NGOs • Ongoing monitoring of child’s health needs - how will this be work once PRM is removed? • Developing a big picture understanding of how PSP is going to work. • Understanding how the relationship between FACS and NGOs is going to work • Information sharing between FACS and NGOs • Identification and understanding of cases where permanency pathways are not appropriate and mechanisms to resolve disagreements in views between FACS and NGOs • Caseworkers understanding new funding packagers (and the ‘outcomes’ based model) • Trouble shooting during role out
<p>2. How you rank them in priority to be addressed</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with birth families – casework practice shifts and conversations around permanency 2. Recruiting, support and training of carers

	3. Legal work
3. What you think the possible support solutions are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the same resources to FACS • Joint training with FACS and other NGOs • Clear ongoing messaging about PSP • Hubs to troubleshoot PSP issues as they emerge • Clearly articulated facts sheets on NGO and FACS casework roles and responsibilities. • Mapping the current service system across all PSP initiatives • Access to government database to find family members