



Care and Protection Services › Site Pages › Annual review process – application of Viewpoint
Care and Protection Services

Practice Guideline: Annual review process – application of Viewpoint

This guideline provides information for staff about the application of Viewpoint as a part of the annual review process for a child on a reviewable Care and Protection Order who is in an out of home care placement (care placement).

An annual review is a formal review of a child's circumstances and living arrangements conducted once each year (see separate Practice Guideline: [Annual review process](#)).

As part of the annual review process, as well as compliance with the Children and Young People Act 2008, 'Views and wishes of children and young people', staff are required to seek the child's views and wishes about their circumstances and living arrangements. Where a child is aged 5 years and above, and has been in a care placement for 3 months or more, they should always be offered the opportunity to use the Viewpoint program.

Viewpoint is a tool for exploring with the child, how they feel about their current care arrangements and what (if anything) they would like to change about their care plan. It creates consistency in the recording of specific information, about a child in care's life domains – health, education, emotional wellbeing, contact arrangements, recreation and safety. Successful application of Viewpoint requires that case workers give time and consideration to the creation of a 'safe' space for the child to participate in the program, and ensuring that immediate and appropriate follow-up of the child's responses takes place.

Use of Viewpoint by a child is purely voluntary. It does not replace the need for case workers (either Care and Protections Services (CPS) or out of home care workers) to spend time engaging with the child directly and participating in face-to-face conversation to obtain the child's views and wishes on a regular basis.

What is Viewpoint?

Viewpoint is an interactive computer program designed to deliver a questionnaire to children, in an interactive and engaging way.

Viewpoint has been designed to allow children to use the program in accordance with their age, wishes and abilities.

The Viewpoint program offers different sets of questions depending on a child's age and ability. 4 questionnaires are available (4-6 yrs, 7-9 yrs, 10-15 yrs and 16+) however it is generally understood that Viewpoint will only be effective with children aged 5 years and over.

Access to viewpoint

Staff should facilitate, or arrange for another agency worker or staff member to facilitate, the use of the Viewpoint program with the child four (4) months prior to the order anniversary.

The child's views about who they would like to assist them with the Viewpoint program, should be taken into account. In general, Viewpoint is delivered most successfully, when the child is familiar with the person who is assisting them to complete the program and feels comfortable to discuss their views and wishes.

Staff should determine whether or not the child would like the carer to provide support during the process of completing Viewpoint, in a manner which does not cause discomfort to the child. Alternatively it may be appropriate for Viewpoint to be conducted in the presence of another nominated support person for the child.

The limits to confidentiality in relation to use of Viewpoint, and what will be done with the completed Viewpoint questionnaire, must also be conveyed clearly to the child before they are asked to provide consent to the process. This is the responsibility of the person who is facilitating Viewpoint.

Discussing viewpoint with a child

Staff offering Viewpoint to a child must allocate sufficient time in the pre-arranged visit to allow a comprehensive conversation to take place with the child and their carers.

Prior to seeking the child's consent to use of Viewpoint, the person facilitating Viewpoint must address with the child:

- what will be done with the Viewpoint information (completed questionnaire);
- the scope of, and limits to 'confidentiality' in relation to the use and storage of this information;
- that Viewpoint can be completed by the child in total privacy, and the results may be kept confidential from their carer/s, as long as doing so is consistent with their 'best interests'; and
- the fact that use of Viewpoint is strictly voluntary and that they can choose to express their views and wishes in other ways, and may still expect to have them recorded and acted upon by their case worker and/or care team.

Age specific information sheets should be provided to the child to help them understand viewpoint.

All children should be provided with a copy of the Charter of Rights for *Children and Young People in Out of Home Care in the ACT*.

Discussing viewpoint with a carer

It is important to ensure that the carer/s of a child who may participate in Viewpoint, receives adequate information about the process and the use of the information, to assist them to provide support to the child and feel comfortable with the process.

The same information that has been provided to the child, should also be provided to the carer, including the possibility that information provided by the child might require an immediate response by CPS if there is reason to believe that a child may be in need of care and protection or otherwise at risk of harm.

The carer/s should be advised that they will be provided with as much information as the child themselves agrees to share with them (consistent with the child's 'best interests') and in a method also agreed by the child.

CPS has a legal responsibility to ensure families and carers understand care and protection procedures (including Viewpoint) and that they also have an opportunity to express and have a record made of, their views and wishes.

An information sheet designed especially for carers that explains the viewpoint process should be provided to the carer.

Pre-Viewpoint planning:

Before Viewpoint can be administered, either CPS or the out of home care agency case worker who is offering the program to the child, must consider:

- the best person to facilitate Viewpoint with the child should be determined in consultation with the child and other members of the Care Team. It should also be determined whether or not the child would like to complete Viewpoint in the presence of a support person (who may be their carer/s);
- the person offering Viewpoint to the child must provide sufficient information to the child (as described above) to allow them to make an informed decision about whether or not they would like to participate in the process;
- the person offering Viewpoint to the child must provide sufficient information to the carer (as described above) to ensure they are also comfortable with the process, aware of the procedures and have had an opportunity to ask questions and clarify issues as necessary;
- the child must provide consent before use of Viewpoint may be facilitated. This consent is recorded electronically, at the commencement of the Viewpoint questionnaire;
- the visit to facilitate viewpoint may require the coordination of several parties, including the out of home care agency, carer/s, CPS and child. Sufficient time for planning must be allowed.

Pre-Viewpoint administration:

- complete the separate Form: [Viewpoint Request to Create Viewpoint User](#) with reference to the separate Practice Tool: [Viewpoint Instructions to Complete a Request to Create a Viewpoint User](#)
- e-mail the "Viewpoint Request to Create Viewpoint User" form to cpsviewpoint@act.gov.au at least 48 hours prior to collecting Viewpoint from a child;
- a "User Details" form, which includes the child's unique log in will be e-mailed back to you;
- book an iPad for your visit using the iPad booking system, through Microsoft Outlook calendar. The iPads can be found at:
 - CPS 1 iPad 287996
 - CPS 2 iPad 287995
 - CPS 3 iPad 287994
 - CPS 4 iPad 287993
 - CPS 5 iPad 287992
- collect the iPad from Quality, Practice and Compliance (QPC) administration at the time it is booked for. Administration is outside of the ISS Directors office;
- all case workers using an iPad must sign an "Agreement for use of Corporate and Private Portable Electronic Devices" when collecting an iPad;
- iPads must be returned to administration at QPC and be handed to an administration worker;
- completed viewpoint questionnaires will be imported to CHYPS within a 48 hour period; and
- where the child is managed by an out of home care agency, the completed questionnaire will be imported to CHYPS by QPC administration within 48 hrs of the agency collecting Viewpoint.

Considering Viewpoint results

The person who has facilitated Viewpoint must discuss the results from the completed Viewpoint questionnaire with the child as soon as possible after completion, usually this will take place directly afterwards and in-person.

The Viewpoint summary should be discussed in detail with the child and the implications for care planning addressed in person. With the child's permission, information from the summary may also be shared with the child's carer/s and discussed in an appropriate way.

The child must be made aware that this information will also be used broadly to inform the completion of an Annual review report and a new Care Plan (if appropriate) and will be located on their CHYPS and paper files.

It is very important that the person facilitating Viewpoint takes the time to check out how the child is feeling after completion of the questionnaire, and if they have any support needs over the coming days.

Post-Viewpoint Tasks:

At the conclusion of the Viewpoint visit, the person facilitating Viewpoint must make sure they have completed the following tasks:

- ensure that the child has completed the questionnaire;
- check on how the child is feeling after completing the questionnaire; follow up with the carer and/or extra support as needed;
- ask the child if there is anything that he or she would like to discuss immediately;
- review the completed questionnaire to check for and respond to safety issues that need immediate attention;
- make a plan with the child about how and with whom the questionnaire's information can be shared. If the child or young person does not want the information from the questionnaire to be discussed with anyone, the reasons for this should be explored further and perhaps in a follow-up visit;
- provide the carer with some feedback. This does not necessarily have to be about how the child has answered the questionnaire, it can be more about how the child seems to have handled the process and to be feeling right now;
- provide the carer with some idea of what may happen next (when you will next be in contact, what might be done in response to the Viewpoint information provided etc); and
- provide the child with some idea of what may happen next.

Post-Viewpoint Administrative tasks:

- return the iPad to QPC within the booking time you have chosen;
- QPC will record the visit on CHYPS as Viewpoint collection service event including who the person was who facilitated the program (agency or CPS caseworker). The viewpoint questionnaire will be linked to this service event. A face to face event should also be recorded by the case worker if a CPS staff member visited the child to collect the information;
- comprehensively review the completed questionnaire and develop a plan of action;
- contact the agency worker to discuss the plan of action; and
- ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of the child are incorporated within the Annual Review Report (ARR).

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