

<p>STATE GOVERNMENT POLICIES APPLICABLE TO CHILDREN DISPLAYING SEXUALLY HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR, INCLUDING A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON PREVENTION</p>

1. Information and related documents detailing current Western Australian Government's policies applicable to children with harmful sexual behaviour. This includes:

1a. Existing policies, guidelines and guidance

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support's (the Department's) Casework Practice Manual (CPM) incorporates relevant legislation, policies, practice guidance and related resources to guide assessment and responses to wellbeing concerns for children. Relevant chapters include:

CPM Chapter 3.8 Sexually Active Young People

This chapter (Attachment 1) guides child protection workers on how to respond to children that the Department has a role with who are or may become sexually active. It clarifies the legal age and issues of consent and when a child protection assessment is required. Child protection workers are directed to apply the guidance in Chapter 4.1 *Assessment and Investigation Process* and Chapter 4.4. *Child Sexual Abuse* (see below) in conjunction with this guidance if there is a concern that child sexual abuse has occurred or is likely to occur.

CPM chapter 3.9 Young Offenders – Including Children in the CEO's Care

This chapter (Attachment 2) informs child protection workers of their responsibilities when a child in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support or a child who may be involved with the Department but not in care, is appearing before the Children's Court. This may be in relation to criminal matters, and/or where the Department has provided a Responsible Person Undertaking (Bail) or the child is in detention.

A related resource in this chapter is the *Reciprocal Policies and Procedures between the Department and the Department of Corrective Services, September 2011* (Attachment 3) which outlines the case management responsibilities and the referral/contact procedures of each agency including:

5.1 Provision of information by Department of Corrective Services upon referral to Department for Child Protection

When Department of Corrective Services (DCS) refers a child to the Department, DCS should provide information including,

significant details on the child's past offending that will be relevant only in determining an appropriate placement for that child (duty of care disclosure) – specifically if the child has offences of a sexually abusive nature, or previous violent offences; and

in addition, DCS should provide information about the child's offending where there may be a risk to the safety of other children or other duty of care issues.

5.3 Requests by the Department for Child Protection for information from the Department of Corrective Services

If Youth Justice Service have information that would indicate that the child to be placed may pose a risk of harm to other children in the proposed accommodation the information should be released regardless of consent being obtained from the child and/or parent/caregiver.

CPM Chapter 4.1 Assessment and Investigation Process

The *Policy on Assessment and Investigation Process* (Attachment 4) and related practice guidance (Attachment 5) promotes consistency across districts when assessing and responding to concerns for a child's wellbeing and allegations of abuse and neglect.

CPM Chapter 4.4 Child Sexual Abuse

The *Child Sexual Abuse Policy* (Attachment 6) and related practice guidance (Attachment 7) promotes a consistent child centred approach to assessing and responding to concerns of intra-familial and extra-familial child sexual abuse, in line with the Department's role. This chapter includes specific guidance on assessing and responding to child sexual abuse by a child to a sibling or another child.

Related resources in this chapter include:

- *Prompts for assessing and responding to child sexual abuse when the alleged perpetrator is a child* (Attachment 8);
- *How to intervene in sexual behaviours* (Attachment 9);
- *Responding to concerning sexual behaviours in children and young people - a learning resource for carers and staff*, developed by the Department together with the National Framework Implementation Working Group (Attachment 10);
- *Sexual behaviours of children that are age appropriate, concerning and very concerning* (Attachment 11);
- *Treatment needs for children and families affected by child sexual abuse* (Attachment 12);
- *Holly-ann Martin's Protective Behaviour parenting tips* (Attachment 13).

CPM Chapter 6.8 Secure Care Arrangements

The Department's *Policy on Children Entering Secure Care* (Attachment 14) promotes a consistent understanding of the role and functions of therapeutic secure care staff. Chapter 6.8 Secure Care Arrangements (Attachment 14) has procedures and approval processes involved in making a secure care arrangement. A practice requirement concerning the placement of a child in secure care is:

For the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to place a child in a secure care facility, the legislative threshold for a secure care arrangement under section 88C of the Children and

Community Services Act 2004 (the Act) must be met. That is, the CEO must be satisfied that:

- *there is an immediate and substantial risk of the child causing significant harm to him or herself or another person, and*
- *there is no other suitable way to manage that risk and to support the child to receive the care he or she needs.*

CPM Chapter 7.7 Supporting Foster Carers

This chapter (Attachment 15) has procedures and guidance on working with carers as part of the care team to provide children in the CEO's care with safe, stable and nurturing care arrangements and improved life outcomes.

Practice requirements include:

Department staff must provide carers with full information on the child in care and their family (where available) to enable them to protect the child, their own children, other children in their care and themselves, and

Department staff must provide carers with the support and resources they require to meet the needs of the child in their care (as outlined in the child's care plan).

The Foster Carer Handbook for Foster Families (January 2017) is a related resource in this chapter and is also available on the Department's public website. A copy of this handbook (Attachment 16) is provided to all foster carers. It is developed and published by the Foster Care Association of WA in consultation with the Department. It includes the following section:

- 19.0 Safety and wellbeing concerns related to foster carer households. This includes encouraging children to report any behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable and speaking to the Department case manager about age appropriate ways of talking to children about protective behaviours. The following guidance is provided on 'inappropriate sexualised behaviours':

Some children, particularly those who have been sexually abused, may demonstrate inappropriate sexualised behaviours towards a foster carer or another family member. Be aware of your own reactions to this behaviour. Remind yourself that this behaviour arises out of the child's experience and your job is to provide safety. The child should be gently, yet firmly dissuaded from inappropriate behaviours of this nature. This behaviour must be discussed with the child's case manager including appropriate management strategies to use.

CPM Chapter 7.19 Residential Care Services

This chapter (Attachment 17) provides information for child protection workers regarding the procedures and approval process involved in placing a child in a Residential Care Service.

The Department's residential care services comprise residential group homes (metropolitan and country) and non-government family group homes (metropolitan and country).

The Department's residential care staff must apply guidelines in the Residential Care Practice Manual in conjunction with relevant CPM policies and practice guidance. Relevant sections (Attachment 18) of the Residential Care Practice Manual include:

- *3. Confidentiality and information sharing* – provides guidance on the expected standards of confidentiality, professional integrity and judgement expected when disclosing or sharing information about another residential care worker or child.
- *18. Individual safety plans* - provides guidance on developing Individual Safety Plans for children in their care. This lists “sexualised behaviours or a history of sexual assault against other children and adults” as a risk factor that should trigger the development of a safety plan. The guidance also covers urgent placements of children who pose a risk to others.
- *23. Critical incidents* - provides guidance on keeping children and staff safe before, during and after a critical incident. This includes an allegation of sexual abuse.
- *35. Bed checks* - provides information on levels of supervision required for the safety of all children living in residential care. It includes providing more frequent bed checks for children with particular risk factors, including sexualised behaviour.
- *37. Physical contact* - provides guidance to residential care workers for meeting a child's needs for physical contact in an appropriate and safe manner for all. A specific practice requirement relates to children who demonstrate sexualised behaviours towards residential care workers and other children.
- *41 Absent without permission (absconding)* - provides information on procedures workers must follow when a child has absconded or is absent from the home without permission.
- *43. Transporting children and young people* - provides guidance on the safe transport of children in vehicles, including providing additional supervision if the child is deemed to pose a risk for staff or others.

CPM Chapter 7.14 Safety and Wellbeing Assessment – Safety and Wellbeing Concerns Regarding Children in the Care of the CEO

This chapter (Attachment 19) details procedures to be followed by child protection workers when assessing and responding to child protection concerns for children in the care of the CEO of the Department. This includes all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect.

CPM Chapter 8.10 Care Arrangements for Children Considered a Risk to Others

This chapter (Attachment 20) guides child protection workers in making appropriate care arrangements for children in the CEO's care who are considered at risk to others. This includes considering sexualised behaviours or a history of sexual assault against other children and adults and offending against other children.

CPM Chapter 10.10 Needs Assessment Tool

In 2016, as part of Out of Home Care Reform Action 9 (Attachment 21), the Department implemented a 'Needs Assessment Tool (NAT) (Attachment 22) for all children in the care of the CEO of the Department. This is a case management tool that assists the child's care

team¹ to identify, assess and review child's needs to inform case planning decisions, including the allocation of resources to meet the child's needs.

One of the NAT questions is '*In the last 12 months has the child displayed any of the following sexualised behaviour?*' Responses are either:

- (a) age appropriate
- (b) behaviour that places them or others at some risk
- (c) behaviour that places them or others at moderate risk
- (d) behaviour that places them or others at significant risk, or
- (e) unknown.

The information elicited in this area can be used in a variety of ways including how to identify where referrals to child sexual abuse therapeutic or other services may be appropriate and what resources are required to support the child to access and benefit from these services.

CPM Chapter 11.7 Consent for Police Interviews for Children in the CEO's Care

This chapter (Attachment 23) informs child protection workers of their role and responsibilities when a child in the care of the CEO is suspected of criminal offending and is requested to participate in a police interview or consent to DNA evidence collection.

Other CPM chapters and relevant information

There are a number of other CPM chapters that discuss service provision for children. These include the CPMs entries relating to psychological services and access to private practitioners for assessment and therapeutic intervention.

Psychology services support carers to increase their knowledge and understanding of the impact of abuse and neglect and the associated trauma, to help build their capacity to manage challenging behaviours and make care arrangements a healing experience for children.

Psychologists in residential care provide assistance to develop therapeutic plans for residents and support referrals to external support and therapeutic services where appropriate.

For children in care, responses to Viewpoint² and care planning (Attachment 24) across the nine dimensions of care will identify service and supports required for individual children. The nine dimensions of care are:

¹ Every child in Out of Home Care will have a 'care team' comprising of a group of people important to the child and their carer. The care team can include the child, parents and family members, carers and their family members, significant others, child protection worker, residential care staff, specialist staff in the Department, other service providers. It should be mostly people who are part of the child's family and community.

² Viewpoint is an international comprehensive, interactive computer assisted self-interviewing tool that has been robustly evaluated as an effective methodology for engaging with and eliciting information from children and young people in care. The information on Viewpoint is then reviewed by a senior officer of the Department. This provides a further avenue for children in care to alongside their participation in discussions, visits and meetings to voice any concerns.

1. Safety
2. Care arrangements
3. Health
4. Education
5. Social and family relationships
6. Recreation and leisure
7. Emotional and behavioural development
8. Identity and culture, and
9. Legal and financial.

The Department provides carers with all known information about the child to enable the carer to provide for the child's needs.

Where appropriate and in consultation with Department psychologists, child protection workers may also refer adolescent sexual offenders and their families to specialist private clinical psychologists for therapeutic intervention targeted to the child's needs.

The Department has access to a range of expert advice and assistance through the Department's Service Delivery Practice Unit, Departmental psychologists and partner agencies such as Princess Margaret Hospital Child Protection Unit and WA Police's Child Abuse Squad and Online Child Exploitation Squad.

1b. Efforts to address the issue of children with harmful sexual behaviours which are not recorded in formal policy

The Department's efforts to address the issue of children with harmful sexual behaviours all sit within its policy frameworks and are either discussed above or below in the answers to question 2.

1c. Information on the extent of inter-agency and multi-systemic policy responses to children with harmful sexual behaviour

Information on inter-agency and multi-systemic cooperation to address concerns of children who have experienced or are at risk of child abuse and neglect has been provided to the Royal Commission previously in the following sections of the *Witness Statement of Emma White, 17 February 2015*:

- Intra-governmental and interagency cooperation (sections 202–210, pages 49 – 51) ;
- Parkerville George Jones Advocacy Centre (section 316, page 72); and
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (sections 317-318, page 72) (Attachment 25).

Additional interagency and multi-systemic policy responses to children with harmful sexual behaviours are outlined below:

Early Intervention and Family Support Strategy (EIFS)

The Department's EIFS (Attachment 26) is an approach aimed at diverting high risk families from the child protection system and/or prevent children from entering the Department's

care. It encompasses the following programs where staff will work with families to address a range of concerns that could include understanding and managing children's problem sexual behaviour and/or facilitating referrals to child sexual abuse treatment services where appropriate.

- Family Support Networks (FSN) engages high-risk families with the aim of diverting them from the child protection system. The service includes case management and coordination of appropriate government and non-government services for the family. The FSNs currently operate in three metropolitan and one country district. A planned expansion will enhance referral pathways and service provision to the most vulnerable families and include an additional FSN in the metropolitan area.
- FSN agency can refer child protection concerns to district offices for assessment where appropriate. FSNs are delivered by, or in partnership with, an Aboriginal community controlled organisation where possible.
- Aboriginal In-Home Support involves the provision of practical 'hands on' parenting support by staff in contracted Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations with a whole of family focus. The primary aim of this program is to prevent children from entering the care of the CEO. Contracted services will be closely aligned with the FSNs and are due to start operating in January 2018.
- At Risk Youth services will be redeveloped to better target high risk families and include a greater focus on case management of vulnerable young people with links to family support services.

District Leadership Groups

District Leadership Groups are comprised of senior officers from government agencies providing services (e.g. health, housing, policing) to at risk children and young people and their families. These agencies will work together to identify the most at risk children, young people and families in their district and link them into appropriate Early Intervention and Family Support programs. District Leadership Groups will work closely with local agencies including Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations.

Operation RESET

Operation RESET is a joint initiative established by the Department and the Western Australia (WA) Police in 2009. The model aims to proactively target the systemic issues associated with the under-reporting of child sexual abuse in targeted remote communities. Communities chosen to participate in RESET have particular high risk factors for abuse, such as family violence, teenage pregnancy, violent crime, substance use, or poor parental supervision, along with other indicators of child sexual abuse.

Agencies such as WA Health and Department of Education may undertake joint visits to enable comprehensive and holistic service responses to the issues being faced by the community.

The operation is underpinned by three key principles:

- the responsibility for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse requires a collaborative, proactive approach between community and government;
- any model for responding to child sexual abuse must address underlying causes and wider contextual issues; and
- children's overall safety and wellbeing is to be enhanced through services that strengthen and empower families and communities.

To date, RESET has been implemented in the Murchison (where there is now a locally-based, permanent team), Roebourne in 2009 (Operation LEEDS), Goldfields in 2010 (Operation DEAGON) and Kalumburu in 2012 (Operation RESET). It is currently being implemented in the Fitzroy Valley (Operation RESET) in the Kimberley region.

Kimberley Regional Initiative

The Kimberley Regional Initiative sets out a range of initiatives to respond to family violence and child abuse in the Kimberley region. Additional police officers and child protection workers, based at Kimberley District Police Office in Broome, are working closely with Aboriginal families and communities to increase the safety and wellbeing women and children. The initiative was launched in October 2015 and includes the following components:

- *Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan 2015-2020 (Attachment 27) (the Kimberley Plan)*;
- a joint response to child abuse involving the Department and Western Australia Police (the Kimberley Joint Response); and
- interagency training and skills development to strengthen mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse.

The initiative is overseen by the Kimberley Child Safety Directors Group, chaired by the Department's district directors in the Kimberley and comprises senior officers from relevant state agencies. In addition, WA Police Superintendent and Department district directors meet every six weeks to review progress and provide a coordinated response across services for vulnerable children and their families.

Proactive Kimberley Joint Response strategies include:

- community engagement and consultation;
- increasing knowledge and skills in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse;
- coordinating agency responses to reports of child sexual abuse; and
- building the capacity of communities to increase safety for children and respond to victims of child sexual abuse by working with community representatives, government and non-government organisations.

The Kimberley Joint Response has recently expanded their work to cover Derby and remote Aboriginal communities not previously targeted in the West Kimberley, including Balgo and Mowanjum. Current efforts/initiatives include:

- responding to mandatory reports and reports of concern for children, including assessing child protection concerns;
- working with staff in local schools to increase their capacity to deliver protective behaviours to students;
- working with non-government agencies to include therapeutic support and preventative education as part of child protection responses. This is limited to areas with agencies that have appropriately skilled workers available to do this work;
- delivering Cyber Sex and Cyber Safety workshops, and
- seeking to understand the triggers for early onset sexual activity, inappropriate touching and the use of pornography by children in remote Aboriginal communities.

WA Children's Commissioner Convened Interagency Meeting on "Problem Sexualised Behaviour"

In November 2016, the Department attended an interagency meeting on problem sexualised behaviours in children and young people convened by the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia. Other participant agencies included:

- WA Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service;
- WA Health, Child Protection Unit based at Princess Margaret Hospital;
- Department of Education;
- Associate of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA); and
- Catholic Education.

The purpose of this meeting was to explore what is working well and what else is needed to address the issue of problem sexual behaviours in WA Schools and other organisations.

The information elicited at this meeting will be used by the Commissioner to inform ongoing implementation of the Child Safe Organisations project and related resources.

Discussion highlighted that there is some valuable work being undertaken in the state and a range of resources available to assist people who work and care for children with problem sexualised behaviours. It also highlighted the need for agencies and services to continue working together to identify issues and gaps in services and to achieve consistent and integrated responses across systems.

It was agreed that any future meetings should include other relevant agencies and non-government services.

2. Information and related documents detailing programs and services administered and/or funded by the WA Government that aim to help people prevent and identify sexual abuse by children of other children, including education and training

2a. specifically aimed at preventing children from engaging in harmful sexual behaviours;

The Department

The Department's Learning Development Centre regularly delivers *Responding to Concerning Sexual Behaviours in Out of Home Care Settings* in the metropolitan region, the Great Southern, South West and Pilbara regions. This training focuses on preventing and identifying sexual abuse by children of other children and is available to all Department staff (including residential care workers) and anyone in the community working with children and young people with concerning sexual behaviours.

The course content includes:

- determine how concerning sexual behaviour or abuse differs from normal sexuality;
- family and child risk and protective factors associated with concerning sexual behaviours;
- adult and adolescent sexual offending theories;
- the impacts of sexual offending on a child or young person;
- the support of normal sexual development of children and young people;
- responding to concerning sexual behaviours of young people;
- developing protective strategies with children;
- responding to disclosures of sexual abuse in residential or carer settings;
- traumatic sexualisation and trauma re-enactment;
- professional responses to allegations of abuse by children to children;
- developing safety plans for children in care; and
- legal processes for children and young people charged with sexual offences.

Evaluations: Training participants give consistently positive feedback that the training is very relevant to their workplace needs. Participants have rated the training as 9.5/10 as being useful to their work role, and very much appreciated the currency and comprehensive knowledge, the opportunity to develop their understanding and confidence in managing concerning sexual behaviours, and the quality of the training program overall.

Department funded Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS)

The Department funds 13 Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS) and two Indigenous Healing Services across the state. Their service contracts provide for undertaking counselling/treatment services to young people responsible for, or who are at risk of, sexually abusing other children. At present, approximately three services have specialist counsellors available to undertake this work.

Information about the services was supplied to the Royal Commission in the *Western Australian submission on Therapeutic Treatment Services or Programs, Attachment A: Agency Responses*, dated 29 July 2015. A list of the Department funded

child sexual abuse treatment services and the Standards for the Delivery of Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services is attached (Attachment 28).

The CSATS listed below have information on specific programs, education and/or training workshops services have advertised and resources available on their websites:

- UnitingCare West (metropolitan area)

The service provides a resource on its website explaining its services and what the counselling can achieve (Attachment 29).

- Parkerville Children and Youth Care (Inc.) Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Service (metropolitan area and the Wheatbelt area)

The agency's website offers a range of links to information and the following resources (Attachment 30) on:

- What is child abuse;
- 10 signs of child abuse;
- Children's experience of abuse;
- Take action to prevent child abuse; and
- Impact of child abuse.

- Anglicare Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Service (metropolitan area and country areas of Albany, Katanning and Manjimup)

The Anglicare WA website offers a range of training and professional development workshops to develop the workforce and sector. The workshops offered relating to the current topic include:

- Working therapeutically with children;
- Working with children and adolescents after sexual abuse;
- Child abuse and neglect; and
- Dealing with Sexually Disinhibited Behaviours.

A resource sheet explaining the service, sexual abuse and inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviours is posted on their website (Attachment 31).

- Waratah (Bunbury, South West)

As well as working therapeutically with children and young people, the agency provides training programs including:

- Respectful Relationships – provides interactive sessions to young people on developing health relationships;
- Healthy Responses to Children – provides interactive sessions to help parents develop skills and assist their children who have experienced trauma;
- Protective Behaviours; and
- Understanding the Impacts of Trauma on Children's Behaviour.

The agency's website offers information sheets (Attachment 32 a-e) on:

- *Problem Sexualised Behaviour* - identifies 'problem sexualised behaviours' in different age groups of children and how to respond to these behaviours;
 - *Information for parents and caregivers whose children have been sexually abused*;
 - *Surviving Child Sexual Abuse Fact Sheet*; and
 - *Practical strategies for supporting someone who has been sexually assaulted or disclosed abuse.*
- Yaandina Family Centre (Pilbara region)

Yaandina provides culturally appropriate support to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people and their families in Karratha. Its community education includes teaching children and young people protective behaviours, linked to *Safe Children Make Stronger Children* protective behaviours program.

The service's website states that it also has a role in preventing further sexual abuse in families by assisting individuals and families to develop knowledge and skills to keep themselves and/or their family safe.

- Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation (metropolitan area)

Yorgum describes its child sexual abuse therapeutic services as having a culturally sensitive framework, which allows Yorgum's counsellors to reduce sexual abuse and the effects of sexual abuse on children. The framework encompasses:

- cultural security and cultural context by following cultural protocols;
- Nyoongar Sociology and Kinship;
- Nyoongar psychology acknowledging and encompassing spirituality;
- protective behaviours mainstream practices adapted for Aboriginal ways of working with children;
- narrative therapy using language;
- art therapy using a range of mediums;
- visualisation;
- sand play therapy;
- healing of self be it physical, emotional, mental or spiritual;
- Aboriginal language or slang (predominantly Nyoongar); and
- recovering and rebuilding of self, family and community.

The effect of applying this framework is to reinforce the child's rights and the family responsibilities by reconnecting to the identity/self-identity, language, and kinship structures to enable cultural meaning and validation to their story.

- 2b. which is not targeted specifically at children with harmful sexual behaviours, but could be reasonably expected to contribute to the prevention of such behaviour**

THE DEPARTMENT'S CASEWORK PRACTICE MANUAL

Within the Casework Practice Manual, guidance and resources in the following chapters could be reasonably expected to contribute to the prevention of harmful sexual behaviour:

CPM Chapter 4.4 Assessing Child Sexual Abuse

This chapter is referred to in question 1 (a) and has related resources that may contribute to the prevention of harmful sexual behaviours:

- A copy of Holly-ann Martin's (2016) *Parents' and Carers' Guide to Child Protection Education: how to teach kids body safety and abuse prevention* (Attachment 33) is provided along with the Foster Care Handbook for Foster Families.
- Carers of children who have sexually abused other children require specific information. The Department has used the resource: *Responding to concerning sexual behaviours in children and young people – a learning resource for carers and staff*, developed by the Department together with the National Framework Implementation Working Group (Attachment 10) to provide carers with knowledge and skills.

CPM Chapter 7.12 Overnight stays and other activities

This chapter clarifies when Department approval is necessary for overnight stays and activities such as school excursions, travel and recreational activities. Department consent is required for regular overnight stays at other people's homes.

As part of Out of Home Care Reform Building a Better Future Action 20 (Attachment 21), the Department is developing additional guidance and tools that will assist carers and child protection workers to consistently assess and manage risks to children when they are or wish to spending time with people in their natural support networks (e.g. family members and friends of the child and/or carer). This will further emphasise the importance of supporting children with protective behaviours.

CPM Chapter 7.18 Identification of children

This chapter (Attachment 34) provides guidance to child protection workers on measures that must be taken to protect the identity of children and young people in the CEO's care, or any person who has previously been in the CEO's care. It identifies some of the challenges of protecting the vulnerable children's identity, at a time when social networking websites and mobile phones are popular and widely used tools for children, and strategies to manage this with them.

CPM Chapter 7.19 Residential Care Services

This chapter (Attachment 17) provides information for child protection workers regarding the procedures and approval process involved in placing a child in a Residential Care Service.

The Department's residential care services comprise residential group homes (metropolitan and country) and non-government family group homes (metropolitan and country).

The Department's residential care staff must apply guidelines in the Residential Care Practice Manual (Attachment 18) in conjunction with relevant CPM policies and practice guidance. Relevant sections (Attachment 18) of the Residential Care Practice Manual include:

- 31. *Mobile phones, the internet and electronic media* – computers, other devices, DVDs and music. This includes guidance on selecting and accessing appropriate media for children, the appropriate use of mobile phones by children and the use of cameras and recording devices.
- 43. *Transporting children and young people* – provides guidance on the safe transport of children in vehicles, including providing additional supervision if the child is deemed to pose a risk for staff or others.

CPM Chapter 7.7 Supporting Foster Carers

This chapter (Attachment 15) has procedures and guidance on working with carers as part of the care team to provide children in the CEO's care with safe, stable and nurturing care arrangements and improved life outcomes.

The Foster Carer Handbook for Foster Families (January 2017) is a related resource in this chapter. A copy of this handbook (Attachment 16) is provided to all foster carers and is available on the Department's public website. It is developed and published by the Foster Care Association of WA in consultation with the Department. It includes relevant information and guidance under the following section:

- 14.4 Overnight stays and other activities- guidance includes that foster carers must talk to their Department case manager if there are any concerns about an event (such as an overnight stay or activity), and whether it presents a risk to the safety of the child. Each situation needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis and, in all circumstances; the potential risk to the safety of the child needs to be considered. If foster carers are unsure about a particular situation, they should to seek guidance from the Department case manager.
- 14.5 Babysitting- guidance includes that when foster carers are choosing a baby sitter they should take the age, behaviours and development of the child into account as well as relevant history of abuse and/or neglect.

THE DEPARTMENT'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE: RELEVANT TRAINING PROGRAMS

Specific learning programs offered by the Department that are not targeted specifically at children with harmful sexual behaviours, but could be reasonably expected to contribute to the prevention of such behaviour are described below:

Identify and respond to children and young people at risk of harm

This training is for Department staff, service sector and carers provides information, resources and networks to identify and respond to children and young people at risk of harm.

The course includes:

- an overview of the Department's role;
- the indicators of harm, neglect, abuse or risk of harm and the consequent impact
- the nature, context and impact of abuse;
- the application of models and frameworks supporting effective assessment and response to harm;
- the dynamics of sexual abuse –the offender profile, grooming process, child sexual development, the victim and safe carer; and
- processes and strategies that contribute to resilience.

Evaluations: training participants consistently give high scores - 9/10 average score with positive comments about materials and program.

Orientation Program 1: Child Protection and Signs of Safety

This five day program provides child protection workers with essential knowledge and skills for assessing child abuse and neglect using the Department's *Signs of Safety Child Protection Practice Framework*. Day 4 focuses on assessing and responding to child sexual abuse and includes content on:

- an introduction to child sexual abuse - indicators; responding to and assessing sexual abuse;
- identifying a range of sexual behaviours;
- the ages and stages of development; and
- what is considered normal to concerning sexual behaviour.

Protective Behaviours

This training for Department staff provides an overview on the content, themes, core concepts and strategies of the protective behaviours program including:

- issues relating to child abuse and child abuse prevention;
- the benefits of preventative interventions for children and families;
- simple practical strategies, themes and concepts, designed to increase children's and families personal safety;
- problem solving and assertiveness skills for children and adults; and
- train the trainer skills for presenting the program.

Evaluations: Training participants consistently give high scores - 9.7/10 average score – with positive comments such as "very well received" and "excellent resources".

A copy of the Learning and Development learning program calendar for 2017 with training available to Department staff, foster carers and partner agencies is attached (Attachment 35).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Refer to the *Witness Statement of Emma White, 17 February 2015*, Training and resources overview, sections 73 – 107, pages 18-25 (Attachment 25) for information previously provided on training accessed by child protection workers, Department carers, residential and secure care workers and carers and employees of Department contracted Out of Home Care providers.

2c for parents, caregivers and those in child related roles, including those in out-of-home care services

THE DEPARTMENT'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE: RELEVANT TRAINING PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

- eLearning - *Introduction to Child Protection*, (45 minutes duration) is available for Department staff, carers and non- government agencies providing general sexual abuse information including:
 - grooming and coercion;
 - child sexual abuse and harm; and
 - possible indicators of child sexual abuse.
- Resources for foster carers include:
 - *Responding to concerning sexual behaviours in children and young people – a learning resource for carers and staff*, developed by the Department together with the National Framework Implementation Working Group (Attachment 10).
 - *Sexual behaviours of children that are age appropriate, concerning and very concerning* (Attachment 11).
 - *Child development and trauma guide* (Attachment 36).

See also, examples of training provided by the Department listed in response to 2b.

THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE

The Department's public website provides for community access to a broad range of information relating to the work of the Department. In particular, the public has access to links to the Casework Practice Manual, as well links to all services funded by the Department. These two links are:

- [DCP home](#) > [Services in the community](#) > Services by type. Access to information on and contact details of services available, including the ; Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services; and
- [DCP home](#) > Child Protection > Child abuse and neglect. Access to Department casework practice guidelines and information. The Casework Practice Manual's index enables the reader to seek the information on child abuse and neglect they require.

2d. designed to raise community awareness of the issue of children with harmful sexual behaviours.

A participant's resource book, *Responding to concerning sexual behaviours in children and young people*, developed by the Department together with the National Framework Implementation Working Group (Attachment 10). Parts of this resource could be used in a community setting to raise awareness of the issue of children with concerning sexual behaviours. This learning resource includes:

- a participants resource book, guidelines for a safe and healing home; and

- a guide to dealing with disclosures; and a checklist of safe behaviours to prevent sexual abuse.

3. Information and related documents detailing evaluations of education and training, as referred to in item 2.

Evaluations of Department training programs outlined in 2b are noted in that section. All participants at the training are requested to provide feedback and evaluate the training provided in terms of its usefulness to their work role, the currency and comprehensiveness of the information provided, the extent to which the training developed their understanding and confidence in managing the matters covered in the training.