

Statement of Intent

Document Number # QH-GDL-426:2015

Statement of Intent regarding the prioritisation of health services for children and young people in the child protection system

1. Purpose

This Statement of Intent outlines Queensland Health's commitment to addressing the health needs of vulnerable children and young people including those who are:

- at risk of entering the child protection system (0 – 18 years of age);
- currently in out of home care (OOHC) (0 – 18 years of age);
- transitioning to independence following a care experience (15 – 21 years of age).

Queensland Health's commitment to these vulnerable children and young people is demonstrated by prioritising access to health services wherever possible.

2. Context

In 2012, the Queensland Government established the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry (the Carmody Inquiry), to review the Queensland child protection system. The Commission's report, *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection* (the Report), detailed 121 recommendations which were accepted (or accepted-in-principle) by the Government.

A key message in the reforms is that child protection is a community wide responsibility and that everyone has a role to play to ensure that Queensland children can grow up in a nurturing and safe environment.

Key tenets in the Report and its recommendations are that:

- It is better for the child to stay at home when it is safe to do so
- Parents should be better supported in their parenting role;
- Efforts should be refocussed around early intervention to avoid overreliance on the child protection system;
- The non-government sector plays a critical role in the delivery of child protection services
- There is an urgent need to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

3. Commitment

Queensland Health in its role of providing public hospital and health services:

1. Is committed to:
 - the health and wellbeing of all Queensland children and young people
 - working with parents, carers and families to enhance their parenting skills
 - referring parents and children (with their consent if required) to appropriate support services where it has been identified that parents are in need of support to provide a safe environment for their children and young people
 - working in partnership with other government departments, non-government agencies, private health care providers and communities to ensure a coordinated and collaborative response to the protection, safety, health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families
 - ensuring that health professionals in Queensland who work with children and young people have access to contemporary information regarding their legal and ethical obligations regarding the protection and safety of children and young people
 - maintaining key positions within the Department of Health and in all Hospital and Health Services to provide support to frontline staff to ensure children, young people and their families in the child protection system are provided with the best possible service response
 - supporting the implementation of the State Government's response to the recommendations detailed in *Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection* report.
2. Acknowledges that:
 - children and young people at risk of entering the child protection system (0 – 18 years of age); in the child protection system, and those young people with a care experience transitioning to independence (aged 15 – 21 years), have specific and unique health care needs. These additional needs are taken into consideration when providing health services to these children and young people
 - Queensland Health staff play a vital role in service delivery, and ensuring that children and young people in the child protection system, and young people with a care experience transitioning to independence (aged 15 – 21 years), are provided with access to responsive, comprehensive and coordinated health services.
3. Reaffirms its commitment to the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 - 2020.

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4. Scope

This Statement of Intent provides information for all employees, contractors and consultants within Queensland Health and commercialised business units.

5. Target population

The target population includes children and young people at risk of entering the child protection system (0 – 18 years of age); in the child protection system (0 – 18 years of age), and young people with a care experience transitioning to independence (15 – 21 years of age).

6. Key elements of priority access to public sector health services

6.1 Clinical urgency is the dominant consideration in the prioritisation of referral, access to, and provision of health services

6.2 Following consideration of 6.1, and any other relevant information, health services should consider the prioritisation of children and young people (0 – 21 years) who are:

- at risk of entering the child protection system (0 – 18 years of age);
- currently in OOHC (0 – 18 years of age); or
- transitioning to independence following a care experience (15 – 21 years of age).

6.3 Eligibility may be determined in a number of ways including a letter from a Family and Child Connect service or Intensive Family Support service; a letter from the Department of Child Safety Youth and Women case manager; a copy of the current child protection order; self-identification of a care experience; a letter from an After Care service, or other appropriate information.

7. Review

This Statement of Intent is due for review: 01 June 2020

Date of Last Review: 01 June 2018

Supersedes: - Nil

8. Business Area Contact

Strategy Children and Families Unit, Strategic Policy and Legislation Branch, Strategy, Policy and Planning Division

9. Definitions of terms used in the policy and supporting documents

Term	Definition / Explanation / Details	Source
Out- of-home care (OOHC)	A term used to describe a range of living options for	http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/661437/Chief-Psychiatrists-guideline-priority-access-for-out-of-home-care_WEB.pdf

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Term	Definition / Explanation / Details	Source
	children and young people up to 18 years of age who are unable to live at home with their parents due to a range of issues, usually related to child abuse and neglect	
Child	For the purposes of this document, a child is 'an individual under 18 years of age'	s.8 <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>
Family and Child Connect (FaCC)	Family and Child Connect is a local, community-based service that helps families to care for and protect their children at home, by connecting them to the right services at the right time.	https://www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/family-child-connect/
Intensive Family Support (IFS)	These services work with vulnerable families who have more complex needs to ensure they receive the necessary support before Child Safety intervenes.	https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/reform-and-renewal/child-and-family/supporting-families-earlier
After Care service	These services work with young people up to 21 years old who have transitioned from OOHC to develop their educational opportunities and job-ready skills, strengthen their self-reliance and independent living skills, and enable them to acquire and maintain stable and suitable accommodation.	https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/gateway/reform-and-renewal/child-and-family/improving-out-of-home-care-and-post-care-for-children-and-young-people

8. Approval and Implementation

Policy Custodian:

Manager, Strategy Children and Families Unit, Strategic Policy and Legislation Branch

Responsible Executive Team Member:

Deputy Director-General, Strategy, Policy and Planning Division

Approving Officer:

David Harmer, Senior Director, Strategic Policy and Legislation Branch

Approval date: 1 June 2018

Effective from: 1 June 2018

Version Control

Version	Date	Prepared by	Comments
1	14.05.2015	Joanna Gurd	Initial version
2	8 July 2015	Deb Pratt	Incorporating feedback from consultation with HHSs
3	22 July 2015	Deb Pratt	Incorporating feedback and further refinement
4	29 July 2015	Deb Pratt	Further refinement
5	17 August 2015	Deb Pratt	Incorporating feedback from final consultation
5.1	28.05.2018	Joanna Gurd	Final - periodic review