Appraisal

Direction to staff

This document provides overarching principles by which Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) conducts its business. All staff must comply with it.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the term 'child' or 'children' also refers to 'young person' or 'young people'. The term 'children in care' refers to 'children in out of home care'.

Purpose of this document

This policy outlines the appraisal process for child protection reports. The appraisal process includes interviews of the child/ren, parent/s or carers and anyone else considered appropriate, in order to complete a comprehensive appraisal risk assessment.

At the conclusion of the appraisal, CYPS staff will determine whether or not the child has been, is being, or is at risk of, abuse/neglect/family violence (the substantiation decision) and also if there is a need for ongoing involvement by CYPS (in the form of family preservation response).

Scope

This policy applies to all staff within CYPS who receive, record and respond to Child Protection Reports proceeding to an Appraisal response.

In this document

This document contains the following topics.

Purpose of this document 1
Scope 1
Policy statement 2
Policy principles 2
Related materials 3
Legislation 3
Procedures and practice guides 3
Other documentation 3
Document information 4
Version history 4
Definitions 4

Policy statement

A care and protection appraisal is one of a range of options available to CYPS in responding to a Child Protection Report. An appraisal is a planned process of enquiry into a family situation in response to a risk assessment which indicates:

- That the subject child and/or their siblings may:
    - **have been**, or
    - **are being**, or
    - **are at risk of**, abuse and/or neglect and/or family violence, and
- The capacity of the parent/s to protect the child/ren from this abuse is **unknown** or **untested**.

An appraisal will also occur where a child may be in **need of care and protection** because of:

- Serious and persistent conflict between the child and the people with parental responsibility, or
- The people with parental responsibility for the child are dead, have abandoned the child or cannot be found after reasonable inquiry, or
- The people with parental responsibility for the child are sexually or financially exploiting the child or not willing to protect them from sexual or financial exploitation.

An appraisal response does not prevent the appraising case manager from also recommending strategies for addressing **need** such as referral to community support or arranging a case conference.

The Appraisal Risk Assessment begins with the commencement of an appraisal and does not conclude until all interviews and appraisal activities have been conducted.

Policy principles

When undertaking the appraisal process, CYPS will:

- Refer to the 'Risk Assessment Framework' and the 'Working with Families Affected by Domestic and Family Violence' guide to assist in developing an appraisal plan
- Recognise early intervention is better for children, young people and families and ensure linkage to services and supports as early as possible
- Either seek agreement or provide notification to the child's parent/s in accordance with the Appraisal Procedure
- Interview all children exposed to the same risk issue or risk environment
- Assess the child's entire environment, not just a single episode of abuse/neglect/family violence
- Interview both parents or people with parental responsibility for the subject child/ren
- Seek the advice of the Cultural Services Team where the child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Ensure the child is not at immediate risk during the course of an appraisal process
- Undertake interviews in collaboration with the police as described by the Appraisal Procedure
- Apply professional interview methods with respect and skill
- Use information gathered to form a professional analysis of the child's exposure to risk

- Record a clear rationale for all decisions and actions taken in the CYPS client management system in a timely manner
- Determine whether or not to substantiate the appraisal
- Identify a person believed responsible where substantiation has taken place
- Respond holistically to a child or young person's situation, appreciating the complexity of their situation and the context.
- Identify whether there is a need for ongoing CYPS intervention post appraisal, with a focus on family preservation
- ensure decisions and actions are consistent with the principles of the *Children and Young People Act 2008, Human Rights Act 2004* and CYPS practice standards.

Related materials

The following materials directly relate to this policy.

Legislation

- *Children and Young People Act 2008*
- *Human Rights Act 2004*
- *Information Privacy Act 2014*
- *Territory Records Act 2002*

Procedures and practice guides

- Procedure: Abuse in care allegation – Child and Youth Protection Services case managed
- Procedure: Abuse in care allegation – Out of Home Care provider case managed
- Procedure: Appraisal
- Procedure: Application Review Committee
- Procedure: Child Concern Report
- Procedure: Child Protection Report
- Procedure: Information sharing in child protection
- Procedure: Reportable conduct allegations
- Procedure: Safety planning
- Practice Guide: Classifying information at intake
- Practice Guide: Essential questions to callers making a Child Concern Report
- Practice Guide: Interviewing children
- Practice Guide: Interviewing parents and carers
- Practice Guide: Mandatory and voluntary reporting requirements

Other documentation

- Our Practice Standards CYPS
- Case Management Framework
- Risk Assessment Framework CYPS
- Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait and Torres Strait Islander families: Providing culturally responsive practice
- Working with Families Affected by Domestic and Family Violence guide

- Working with families affected by cumulative harm or neglect guide
- Working with families affected by physical abuse guide
- Working with families affected by sexual abuse guide

Document information

Authorising officer:	Senior Manager, Practice and Performance, CYPS
Effective date:	29/05/2019
Last reviewed:	May 2019
Next review date:	By 29 May 2021
Access:	Open access – Available to all staff and the public

Version history

The following table details the published date and amendment details for this document.

Date	Amendment details
29/05/2019	First publication of this policy.

Definitions

For definitions of terms used in this document, access the CYPS glossary.