

## Family Preservation Recommissioning Update - Sector Forum 9 October 2024

## Key points:

- We are committed to ambitious reforms for Family Preservation, and importantly, that DCJ develops and delivers these reforms in partnership with the Sector.
- We acknowledge that providers need more information on both:
  - the detail of the new design of the Family Preservation system following from the Discussion Paper, *Redesigning Family Preservation in NSW*, and
  - the timing and approach of procuring models for Family Preservation – including the new Families Together and Aboriginal Family Preservation frameworks, and the existing models of Multisystemic Therapy – Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN), functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare (FFT-CW) and Nabu.
- We acknowledge that clarity is needed so that:
  - Children and families can continue receiving high quality services;
  - Staff can understand what commissioning means for them, and the opportunities they will have in future; and
  - Providers can plan and prepare for the future and lead their teams through change.
- We appreciate that it is a difficult time for the sector, and apologise for the lack of information at this point in time.
- We are working to settle an approach and share information with you as soon as possible via email and the [Family Preservation microsite](#).
- We encourage providers to re-familiarise themselves with the Discussion Paper in advance of additional information being shared and in advance of procurement.
- Please reach out to your peaks for further support and to ensure your views are able to be reflected back to DCJ.  
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- Please contact the [Family Preservation mailbox](#) if you have further questions.

## Additional information:

- We appreciate the sector is keen to hear more information about the final design of the family preservation system, and that it is preferable that that information be shared ahead of procurement commencing so providers can best understand the future direction and prepare for procurement.
- We anticipate that more information on the design will be shared with the sector by way of a short paper, outlining where design has evolved in light of feedback from the Discussion Paper. Timing of this is to be determined.
- We are also developing program specifications which will, at the latest, be shared when tenders go live.

- While we have not determined the procurement approach, we recognise that best practice is a 6 week tender process which we would consider applying for Families Together, and 8 week process for Aboriginal Family Preservation. Timings and approaches for other models is to be determined.
- We have previously committed to commencing procurement in the first week of November.
- While this remains our current position, and is reflected on our website, we are conscious that the ability to deliver against this timeframe is increasingly difficult and there is a strong desire from the sector for more information on design and procurement approaches before tenders open.
- We are developing alternative scenarios for when procurement may take place. This may be before Christmas (this is increasingly less likely as time progresses) or after Christmas/the summer break (which is increasingly more likely as time progresses).
  - If procurement commences before Christmas/summer break, we are conscious that providers will have limited staff availability, and that tenders will need to be open for a longer period to accommodate this.
  - If procurement takes place after the Christmas/summer break, we note that most providers will have limited staff availability in January, and that February would be a better time to commence procurement.
- We note that providers have staffing and rostering challenges over the Christmas/summer break, which they are working through now. Clarity on the timing of procurement would be appreciated as soon as possible so organisations and staff can plan leave and availability accordingly.
- As outlined in the Discussion Paper,
  - We will be commissioning Families Together, Aboriginal Family Preservation, MST-CAN, FFT-CW and Nabu. Families Together and Aboriginal Family Preservation are new approaches requiring new specifications and contracts.
  - We will no longer be commissioning Brighter Futures, Youth Hope, Resilient Families, Intensive Family Preservation (IFP), Intensive Family Based Services (IFBS) and Permanency Support Program (PSP) Family Preservation.
  - We have an ambition to deliver on Closing the Gap commitments to increase ACCO sector investment.
  - We need to invest in supporting implementation and continuous improvement, including practice development, data quality improvement and evaluation.
- Current family preservation contracts run until 30 June 2025, and current providers and staff can continue to operate on the assumption that DCJ will honour the terms of those contracts.