



# Permanency Coordinator role scope

What's in scope? What's not in scope?

## Overview

The Permanency Support Program (PSP) supports safety, wellbeing and positive life outcomes for children and young people. It supports children and young people in the child protection and out-of-home-care system in NSW.

The PSP aims to give every child and young person a loving home for life whether that be with parents, extended family or kin, through open adoption, guardianship, or long term care.

Permanency Coordinators are permanency consultants, advocates and advisors to Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and Non-Government Organisation (NGO) staff. They help embed a culture that values and prioritises relational, physical, cultural and legal permanency for children and young people.

Permanency Coordinators provide consultation and support to DCJ and NGO casework teams when considering different permanency pathways and how they can be achieved.

### Permanency Coordinators adopt an approach that ...

- Views permanency on a continuum.
- Regularly reviews permanency decisions based on the changing circumstances of children, young people, parents and carers.
- Focuses on permanency for children and young people when providing advice and supporting decision making.
- Negotiates the complexity of permanency for children at risk of or entering care, and children already in care, including long-term care. They do this with sensitivity, empathy and a sound knowledge of relevant legislation, policy and contractual requirements.
- Advocates for collaborative decision-making between DCJ, NGOs, children, young people, families and carers.
- Appreciates the importance of working from both DCJ and NGOs offices. This helps strengthen relationships and supports permanency for all children and young people.
- Provides advice and facilitates respectful discussion to support a culture of collaborative decision making about the best permanency goal for children and young people.
- Drives a culture of critique when decisions, perspectives and practice are respectfully challenged.

# What's in scope?

## Permanency Consultations

Permanency Coordinators provide both formal and informal permanency consultations for children and young people case managed by both DCJ and NGOs. Consultations are provided across the care continuum.

If a **NGO has primary case responsibility**, permanency consultations **occur** as outlined below.

- When considering a change in the permanency goal of a child or young person in care, including long term care.
- Prior to commencing legal action and when considering short term court orders to achieve permanency.
- When significant change in circumstances arises for a child or young person, or there are complexities in progressing permanency.
- When requested by caseworkers or managers.
- On a case by case basis when a risk of significant harm (ROSH) report is received by DCJ for a child in care and the Permanency Coordinator and/or caseworker requests a consultation.

Permanency Consultations can also occur for children managed by both DCJ and NGOs when identified as necessary as part of DCJ cohort reviews of children in long term care. They can also occur when children or young people have a goal of family preservation. This is to support DCJ and NGO casework teams in considering referrals for PSP Preservation Packages or other preservation / intensive support services.

If **DCJ has primary case responsibility**, permanency consultations **may occur** as outlined above. Permanency Coordinators are often consulted by DCJ staff following a child's entry to care, when changing a child's goal or on complex issues related to achieving the permanency goal of a child. Permanency Coordinator involvement in DCJ cases is often determined through discussions with Managers Practice and Permanency, Managers Casework, Permanency Coordinators or district executives in line with district processes.

## Permanency Goal Reviews

Permanency Coordinators undertake Permanency Goal Reviews for all children where primary case responsibility is with a NGO.

They are completed regularly to monitor and support progress towards achieving permanency for a child or young person within two years of setting their case plan goal.

PSP packages are also reviewed to ensure children and young people continue to receive the tailored support they are entitled to.

The minimum frequency for reviews are outlined below.

Family Preservation	3 monthly
Restoration, Guardianship or Adoption	6 monthly
Long Term Care	12 monthly

Where permanency is unlikely to be achieved within two-years, or there are specific challenges requiring more support, reviews occur more frequently

- 1 monthly for family preservation
- 3 monthly for restoration, guardianship or adoption.

Permanency Coordinators can be involved in out-of-home care progress reviews for children case managed by DCJ, if required.

See the [Permanency Goal Review and Case Plan Goal Package Extension Policy](#) for more information.

### **Cohort reviews**

Permanency Coordinators may undertake cohort reviews of children in long term care. Through these reviews Permanency Coordinators may identify the need for a formal permanency consultation to consider the best permanency pathway for a child or young person. Permanency Coordinators will work collaboratively with DCJ and NGOs to consider the appropriateness of changing a child or young person's goal.

### **Upskilling caseworkers through Permanency Consultations and Permanency Goal Reviews**

Permanency Coordinators support culture change by upskilling and building the capacity of caseworkers and other staff during the consultation and review process. This is to help embed understanding and the importance of:

- permanency for children and young people and how this can affect their short, medium and long term wellbeing
- the PSP Packaged Care Service Model and how packages, including specialists packages, can be tailored to meet the individual needs of children and young people
- quality case planning, assessments and other casework responsibilities that need to be done to explore permanency options and achieve permanency for children and young people with goals of preservation, restoration, guardianship and adoption
- quality case planning, including leaving/after care case planning, ongoing review of permanency, assessments and other casework responsibilities for children and young people in long term care
- facilitating the stepping down of services for children and young people in Intensive Therapeutic Care
- policies and procedures, including the Permanency Case Management Policy, Aboriginal Case Management Policy, Permanency Goal Review and Case Plan Goal Package Extension Policy, and relevant practice mandates (for DCJ staff).
- achieving permanency within a two year timeframe
- the exceptional circumstances criteria that must be met and application process for extensions to case plan goal packages past two years
- finding and developing lifelong family connections and networks for children and young people
- family led decision making including the use of Family Group Conferencing
- quality cultural planning and ongoing cultural consultation
- viewing permanency through a cultural lens, especially for Aboriginal children and young people
- what documentation needs to be gathered and prepared to support court applications to achieve permanency outcomes

- Group Supervision as a way to arrive at a shared agreement, if there is disagreement between DCJ and NGOs on the permanency goal for a child that hasn't been resolved through other means
- collaboration between DCJ and NGOs, including each parties roles and responsibilities in supporting children and families to achieve permanency.

*For DCJ staff Permanency Coordinators focus on:*

- working collaboratively with NGOs during the Children's Court process following a child's entry to care
- how to embed permanency whilst upholding the principles, standards, approaches and values of the Practice Framework.

### **Training and workshops**

Permanency Coordinators deliver training directly related to the PSP Packaged Care Service Model, permanency policies, and broader permanency reforms as directed by the PSP Program Area.

Permanency Coordinators identify individual gaps in practice knowledge and themes for communities of practice and training. They may participate in joint training that other practitioners facilitate.

Permanency Coordinators identify broader training needs and link DCJ and NGOs to appropriate training sources. They participate where appropriate.

### **Advocacy and advice on referrals across the service system**

Permanency Coordinators have a strong knowledge of the service system. They have expertise in assessing which services will help achieve permanency for children and young people. Permanency Coordinators work with caseworkers to determine the most appropriate services, based on availability. They make recommendations for services and connection with other appropriate supports.

### **Advocacy for and participation in Group Supervision**

Permanency Coordinators are advocates of using Group Supervision to facilitate respectful conversations about children and young people, especially in complex situations.

Permanency Coordinators organise and participate in Group Supervision when the purpose is permanency decision-making for a child. They may be invited to attend other Group Supervision sessions. Attendance will depend on availability and competing priorities.

### **Partnering with DCJ staff to raise individual and systemic issues with NGOs**

Permanency Coordinators work closely with DCJ Contract Managers, DCJ casework teams and NGOs to help identify emerging issues, gaps in practice and other concerns. Other concerns may include where providers are not considering or achieving permanency.

They also partner with NGOs, Child and Family Units and Contract Managers when considering PSP Packages and applications for specialist packages i.e. Complex Needs and post permanency.

Permanency Coordinators work with DCJ Contract Managers to identify service gaps and/or other issues with services to meet the needs of children and young people in their local area. They also work with other districts when a NGO works across multiple districts.

### **Attendance at local NGOs Contract meetings, CSC meetings and state-wide forums**

Permanency Coordinators have an active voice across relevant forums to embed the value of their role and drive cultural change in respect to permanency.

They may attend:

- NGOs contract meetings, in some cases the Manager Practice and Permanency will attend
- DCJ local / district Practice Leader meetings and any relevant unit or operations meetings
- any relevant NGOs team/unit meetings
- quarterly Permanency Coordinator and other stakeholder forums.

### **Record keeping**

Permanency Coordinators have a responsibility to record key information relating to their role, including uploading this to ChildStory. This includes documenting consultations, permanency goal reviews and other permanency discussions.

Permanency Coordinators maintain local recording systems relating to PSP. This includes recording permanency goal reviews and consultations to meet minimum data set requirements set by the Program Area.

Managers Practice and Permanency provide regular reporting to the PSP Program Area and any district or Office of the Senior Practitioner reporting requirements. This may include the Quarterly Business Report.

Permanency Coordinators identify recording issues related to PSP service packages and critical placement information affecting provider payments. They liaise with NGOs or CFDU staff to request this be fixed.

## **What's out of scope?**

### **Legal, cultural or specialist consultations**

Permanency Consultations are focussed on permanency outcomes for children and young people. They do not replace other consultations such as a legal, cultural or specialist. Whilst a number of coordinators are Aboriginal, a permanency consultation does not replace an Aboriginal consultation.

Aboriginal Advisory or Consultation Panels are established in many DCJ districts. They are used to provide further cultural consultation for Aboriginal children and young people. In some districts, Group Supervision for Aboriginal children and young people being considered for adoption is convened by the Office of the Senior Practitioner and an Aboriginal consultant. Permanency Coordinators also attend.

### **Approving changes to case plan goals for children care**

Permanency Coordinators make recommendations to caseworkers and managers about the most appropriate permanency goal for a child or young person. They are not the delegated decision-maker.

Exception: South Western Sydney District is piloting Permanency Coordinators as the delegated decision maker. Under the pilot, Permanency Coordinators in the District can approve changes to case plan goals for children managed by NGOs.

### **Casework and preparing court documents**

Permanency Coordinators do not undertake casework or case planning. This includes chairing annual case plan meetings or taking minutes. In most circumstances Permanency Coordinators do not attend case plan meetings with children and families. Their role is focussed on being a consultant to DCJ and NGO staff.

Permanency Coordinators do not:

- complete 16A requests for information

- draft court documents
- conduct leaving care case planning.

The above work is the responsibility of caseworkers and managers. In DCJ this is supported by the Manager Client Services and Casework Specialist.

### **Specialist practice advice**

Permanency Coordinators will point to areas of casework that need attention for the progression of a particular case plan goal. However, they do not provide specialist child protection or clinical casework support. In DCJ, Casework Specialists foster the implementation of quality casework practice and provide direct practice based professional support and development to DCJ staff.

### *Specialist adoption advice*

Permanency Coordinators can offer general adoption advice when staff are considering setting or changing a case plan goal to adoption. However, specialist advice is to be provided by DCJ Adoption Caseworkers. Specialist advice can also be provided by an adoption specialist within an Accredited Adoption Service Provider (AASP).

Caseworkers from DCJ and non-Accredited Adoption Service Providers should contact the DCJ Adoption Caseworker for assistance with:

- specific questions in relation to the process of progressing a case
- complex adoption decision making, including advice in relation to legislation and practice
- the preparation and management of applications for OOH adoption in the Supreme Court.

A Permanency Coordinator will help you link up with an Adoption Caseworker.

### **Referral liaison**

Permanency Coordinators do not complete referral processes to services. They do not follow up on the progress of referrals, or quality check application information. This is completed by the allocated caseworker.

### **Formal assessments for restoration, guardianship or adoption**

Formal assessments are undertaken by caseworkers, Independent Assessors or clinical experts.

Permanency Coordinators do not complete referrals or make arrangements for formal assessments. This is to be completed by the allocated caseworker. Permanency Coordinators will however recommend when a formal assessment should occur and advise on the process.

### **Group supervisions when permanency is not the purpose**

Permanency Coordinators do not need to attend Group Supervision when the purpose is not focused on permanency for a child.

### **Delivering specific practice or skill based training to DCJ or NGOs staff**

Permanency Coordinators may be consulted on training needs. However, Permanency Coordinators do not develop or deliver specific practice or skill based training. This is done by relevant experts, including independent consultants.

Training can also be accessed via each agencies internal mechanisms or via the PSP Learning Hub, ACWA, or AbSec.

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### ChildStory data remediation

Permanency Coordinators help embed the importance of accurate recording of critical information in ChildStory. Permanency Coordinators can also link staff to ChildStory support.

Keeping children's placement and case plan information up to date is the responsibility of the caseworker or other relevant staff member. Permanency Coordinators will help identify remediation issues and bring them to the attention of staff.

### Solving disputes

Permanency Coordinators are not responsible for handling complaints or resolving issues outside of the scope of their role. They are not responsible for resolving contracting disputes or for performance management. While Permanency Coordinators will often bring matters to the attention of Contract Managers the actual performance management is the role of DCJ Contract Managers

## More information

For more information relating to the Permanency Support Program or the role of Permanency Coordinators please see:

- [Permanency Goal Review and Case Plan Goal Package Extension Policy](#)
- [Permanency Case Management Policy; Practice Rules and Guidance](#)
- [Aboriginal Case Management Policy; Practice Rules and Guidance](#)
- [DCJ Permanency Support Program web page](#)
- [Permanency Support Program Learning Hub.](#)