

Permanency Support Program Foster Care Placement Priorities



Policy statement

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring vulnerable children and young people have placement options available to meet their needs.

Permanency Support Program (PSP) Providers are the preferred providers of foster care when a new or immediate placement for a child is needed (where a relative or kinship family member cannot be identified):

- Placement referrals for foster care placements for non-Aboriginal children are made to PSP Providers in the first instance
- Placement referrals for foster care placements for Aboriginal children are made to PSP Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (PSP ACCOs) in the first instance.

DCJ is the preferred provider of relative/kin care for non-Aboriginal children. Non-Aboriginal children who enter out-of-home care are case managed by DCJ where they are able to be cared for by a relative or kin. DCJ will not seek authorisation of a relative/kin carer, or transfer case management of non-Aboriginal children in relative or kin placements, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is to ensure vacancies with PSP Providers remain available for immediate foster care placements.

During the course of case management where children or young people are transitioned to relative or kin care by a PSP Provider, the Department will not seek to transfer case management back to DCJ.

Children placed with a DCJ emergency carer may transfer to a PSP Provider only in circumstances where a relative or kin carer is unable to be identified and a suitable long term carer has been matched from within an NGO's carer pool. Where a DCJ emergency carer seeks to provide longer term care for the child/ren in placement consideration as to permanency should be prioritised and progressed by DCJ.

Approval is required for any exceptions transfer. An exceptional circumstance may include uniting siblings under one case managing agency.

Placement priority when filling PSP Provider foster care vacancies

Foster care vacancies with PSP Providers must be filled in the following priority order:

1. New entries to out of home care (OOHC), or foster care placement following a breakdown
2. Transition of children from High Cost Emergency Arrangements to foster care or relative / kinship care placements

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3. Transition of an Aboriginal child managed by a non-Aboriginal provider to an ACCO
4. Stepping children down from Intensive Therapeutic Care or residential care to foster care or relative / kinship care.

Approval is sought prior to any work commences to transfer primary case responsibility of

- a) a non-Aboriginal child from DCJ to a PSP Provider, or
- b) an Aboriginal child from DCJ to a PSP Provider who is not an ACCO.

Delegation for approval of an exceptions placement or transfer

Approval is required for an exceptions placement or transfer from the relevant DCJ delegate to ensure vacancies with PSP Providers remain available for immediate foster care placements.

- Approval from the Executive Director Child and Family is required for any exceptions transfer of a DCJ managed child and their carer to a PSP Provider
- Approval from the relevant Executive District Director is required for an exceptions placement (a provisional or full authorisation assessment of a relative or kin carer) by a PSP Provider for a child who has recently entered OOHC.

Approval from the Executive Director Child & Family or Executive District Director is not required to request an immediate foster care placement from a PSP Provider.

Note: Approval to place an Aboriginal child with a non-Aboriginal carer or non-Aboriginal PSP Provider is given in line with district processes and Executive Director Child and Family approval is not required.

Managing foster care contract volume

DCJ districts, in collaboration with Partnerships Directorate closely monitor contract volume of PSP Providers. DCJ contract managers actively manage and seek approval to adjust the level of individual service provider placements. It is expected all non-Aboriginal providers will maintain a 3% contingency to allow them to accept immediate placements in line with the above placement priorities. Partnerships Directorate (in collaboration with the program area) will continue to oversight the contract volume and any requests for contract variations.

DCJ process for seeking approval for an exceptions placement or transfer

Requests for approval for an exception to the placement priority policy are completed by DCJ. Requests must be supported with sufficient evidence to warrant approval.

Approval must be sought *before* a Case Management Transfer meeting or authorisation assessment of a carer commences.

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DCJ will continue to monitor vacancies with PSP Providers. DCJ reserves the right to revisit approvals that have not progressed.

Completing the exceptions application form

When completing the exceptions approval form the owning district must outline:

- The exceptional circumstances that require an exception to the placement priorities policy being approved (for example whether the provider can provide a more culturally responsive service; or enabling case management of siblings across one agency).
- Future permanency goals for the child or young person.
- Confirmation that the Lead Contract Manager has been consulted and endorses the request.
- Assurance that the placement/transfer will not undermine the service provider from later accepting an immediate placement.
- Current capacity and changes over time of the nearest CSC where a referral is proposed to a PSP Provider in lieu of the local CSC.

Where the child is Aboriginal and a transfer to a non-ACCO is sought:

- Carers and agencies must be aware all Aboriginal children and their carers will transfer to ACCOs over time and consideration given to the impact (on the child, carer and agency) of multiple assessments/transfers must be given.
- Where an ACCO is locally based significant effort must be taken to actively promote transfer of the child/carer and casework undertaken to overcome any barriers.
- Transfers will only be approved in extenuating circumstances.

Submitting the exceptions application form for approval

DCJ districts submit completed exceptions application forms to permanency.support@facns.nsw.gov.au for review and approval.

More information

Please contact permanency.support@facns.nsw.gov.au