Communities and Justice

EXTERNAL USE

Placements Needs Assessment – NGO Practice Tips

PSP NGO's supporting placement matching through high quality referral information.

As a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) with case responsibility of a child or young person, you may need to request a placement through DCJ if you're unable to source one within your agency.

A **Placement Needs Assessment (PNA)** accompanies the **Placement Request** to provide vital information about the child or young person, their current circumstances and any supports and professionals involved in their life. It is strengths-based and contextual to support placement matching.

The information recorded in the PNA allows DCJ to generate the **Client Information Forms** (CIF A, CIF B and Carer Information) which accompanies a Placement Request.

This record is unique to one child/young person and includes the following mandatory **10 elements**:

1. **Identifying Details**
2. **Personal Identity**
3. **Family and Significant Relationships**
4. **Placement Information**
5. **Contact Arrangements**
6. **Health**
7. **Education and Vocation**
8. **Emotional and Behavioural Functioning**
9. **Daily Living Arrangements**
10. **Other Services and/or Supports**

Consider the following tips when creating a Placement Needs Assessment in ChildStory Partner:

- Each element must be completed to finalise the PNA and allow DCJ to generate the Client Information Forms (CIFs).
- Some information auto-populates in the PNA from information already recorded in ChildStory. Wherever possible, update these areas prior to commencing a PNA as these fields cannot be manually completed via the assessment. The areas include:

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  - Person Details.
  - Person Data - such as Names and Identifiers e.g. Medicare Card number, Health Care Card number.
  - Person Properties - such as Cultural Affiliation, Health, Education, Immunisation.
  - Person Relationships - parent and sibling relationships transfer automatically.
- The PNA can be paused and **resumed** to be completed at a later stage.
- Once the PNA is completed it can **no longer be edited**, however, you can create **Placement Assessment Related Items** which allow you to add additional information only in relation to the following:
  - Current placement
  - Contact arrangements including person's the child/young person should not have contact with
  - Court orders
  - Education, employment and training
  - Health - Allergies, health condition, hospital admission, immunisation, medication
  - Other supports & services
  - Places the child or young person is not to frequent.
- DCJ can change the status of the PNA to **incomplete** so further amendments can be made.
- You **cannot** submit a Placement Request without a PNA, for this reason it is best practice to complete the PNA first.
- If the child/young person's parents and/or siblings do not display in the assessment, contact DCJ to update Person Relationships. Once updated, they automatically display in the Placement Needs Assessment. There must be at least one relationship in the assessment to submit the assessment for approval.
- A **Person Service Request** needs to be submitted via ChildStory to DCJ to create any missing relationships to the child or young person. Once completed, the relationship/s become available to add in the PNA.

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Placement Needs Assessment Elements Snapshot

1 **Identifying Details**

The child or young person's narrative is their story of their challenges, successes, needs and hopes. It gives an introduction to who they are and how best to support them.

2 **Personal Identity**

Personal details of the child or young person creates a sense of them as a whole person. It offers opportunities to support their placement, transition and engagement with carers.

3 **Family and Significant Relationships**

Knowing who is in a child or young persons network and how they are supporting them can alter the care needs of a placement or carer.

4 **Placement Information**

The history and journey of a child and young person in care means that it is critical to secure a placement and carer that offers stability, meets their needs and will nurture them.

5 **Contact Arrangements**

Maintaining connections is crucial for children and young people, considerations such as resources, location and relationships need to be supported by a placement and carer.

6 **Health**

Health needs and supports are important to be maintained or possibly transferred, a placement and carer will need to have the resources to support these arrangements.

7 **Education and Vocation**

Current education and vocation needs must be considered for accessibility and alternatives when matching a placement and carer.

8 **Emotional and Behavioural Functioning**

The needs of a child and young person are important to carefully match to a placement or carer that has the ability and resources to meet them.

9 **Daily Living Arrangements**

The details of the everyday living routines, needs and supports allows for matching with placement and carer skilled and resourced to assist them.

10 **Other Services and/or Supports**

The other details of services and supports that are a part of the child or young persons story assist with understanding the care and support that will benefit them most.

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To create high quality placement requests, consider the following when completing the assessment:

- In most elements, casework **prompts** display **on the left side** and provide practice guidance on how to complete applicable questions.
- Ensure as much **strength-based and contextual information** as possible is included to assist with placement matching.
- Talk to the child about potential placements to find out their preferred option.
- Talk to the parents and extended family about potential placement options and ask for their views.
- If the child identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, arrange for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander consultation to determine the most culturally appropriate option based on known placement options.
- If the child has a migrant or refugee background, arrange for a community consultation to determine the most culturally appropriate option based on known placement options.
- Caution must be used when citing health conditions without evidence. It is the caseworker's responsibility to know diagnosis details.
- The level of information disclosed to the parents and significant others must match the current S149B-K/S163 Placement Assessment.
- Talk to the child/young person about the ways they cope and manage any emotional or behavioural concerns. Capturing these strategies help others support them in the way they need.

Placement Matching

A PNA supports placement matching, it is an assessment compiling known information about a child or young person across the elements of their experiences and needs.

Placement matching relies on the PNA and CIF Part A & B. Neither the PNA nor the CIF forms replace professional judgement regarding placement matching. Rather, they help the DCJ and PSP providers make informed decisions based on a structured assessment of the child or young person's needs.

Support

Providers should contact their relevant local DCJ contact i.e. CFDU, or CAU with any queries.