



Communities  
& Justice

# Permanency Support Program (PSP) Away from Placement Policy

*Children away from their statutory OOHC placement  
in case responsibility of a PSP service provider*



# Document approval

This policy has been endorsed and approved by:

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# Document evaluation and review

This policy is reviewed bi-annually or as practice learning occurs and client outcomes become evident.

Advice and support in relation to this policy is available via the PSP mailbox – [permanency.support@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:permanency.support@dcj.nsw.gov.au).

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# 1. Purpose of policy

This policy supports PSP service providers exercising case responsibility for:

- children in statutory out-of-home care (OOHC) placements and
- young adults previously in OOHC, in semi-independent living (SIL) or therapeutic SIL (TSIL) placements.

It applies when a child or young adult has experienced an away from placement event that results in them being:

- away from their primary placement for a temporary period *or*
- not in a placement<sup>1</sup>, after their primary placement has closed.

It describes rules and practice guidance that enable service providers to:

- notify DCJ of an away from placement event
- continue to exercise case responsibility for the child or young adult away from, or not in placement
- maintain relationships between the child or young adult, their carer, parents, family/kin and casework practitioners they already know
- continuously manage risk, supported by consultation, practice advice and strong oversight
- facilitate ongoing case planning and review, with a child or young adult's meaningful participation in decision making
- maintain a strong focus on achieving permanency for children, or transition to independence by young adults.

# 2. Definitions

Term	Definition
ACA	Refer to Alternative Care Arrangement (ACA) <a href="#">overview</a> and <a href="#">flow chart</a> . Also see CCOBS.

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding young adults not in placement (after their SIL/TSIL placement has closed). These young adults continue to receive aftercare support.

Term	Definition
Away from placement event	<p>An away from placement event results in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a child being away from their primary placement for a temporary period – ‘away from placement’ or</li> <li>• a child being not in any placement for a longer period, after their primary placement has closed – ‘not in placement’.</li> </ul> <p>Refer to 6.1 for full definition.</p>
Care Act, the	The NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.
Carer	<p>A carer authorised by a designated agency under section <a href="#">137</a> of the Care Act.</p> <p>For the purposes of this policy, ‘carer’ is inclusive of authorised foster or relative/kin carers as well as residential care workers who provide care to children in placements other than foster care.</p>
Case responsibility	<p>Refers to <i>primary</i> case responsibility for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing residential care and control of a child in OOHC and supervision of the child’s placement</li> <li>• supporting authorised carers to exercise care responsibility for the child</li> <li>• making decisions about the child, including decisions about managing behaviour</li> <li>• achieving the child’s case plan goal of restoration, guardianship or adoption within two years, or providing long-term care.</li> </ul> <p>Or refers to primary case responsibility for achieving a child’s case plan goal of preservation within two years (not in OOHC). Or refers to primary case responsibility for supervising SIL/TSIL placements for young adults (previously in OOHC). Also see Secondary case responsibility, SIL, TSIL.</p>
Caseworker or Casework practitioner	See Practitioner.
CAU	<p>The Central Access Unit (CAU) acts as a centralised referral pathway for children entering or exiting ITC or being placed in other residential care. The CAU does not exercise any form of case responsibility.</p> <p>Also see ITC and Other residential care.</p>
Child	A child or young person under the age of 18 years, in OOHC.
CCOBS	<p>The Office of Deputy Secretary, Cross Cluster Operations Business Support (CCOBS) acts as a centralised referral pathway for children entering an ACA</p> <p>Also see ACA.</p>

Term	Definition
CSC	Community Services Centre.
DCJ or the department	NSW Department of Communities and Justice.
Designated agency	An organisation accredited by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian to provide OOHC services in NSW.
ICM	Refer to Interim Care Model (ICM) <a href="#">fact sheet</a> , <a href="#">service overview</a> and <a href="#">operations guide</a> . Also see ICRU.
ICRU	Statewide Services Interim Care Referral Unit (ICRU) acts as a centralised referral pathway for children entering ICM placement or other bespoke placement arranged by ICRU. Also see ICM.
IPA	Previously referred to as Out of Guidelines (OOG) placements, these placement are now referred to as Individual Placement Arrangements (IPAs). An IPA is an emergency and temporary arrangement for a child in OOHC, after every effort has been made to place them in an OOHC placement when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct care is predominately provided by staff of an OOHC provider accredited by the OCG to provide residential care and</li> <li>• the accommodation is stable and 'home-like' – such as a long-term serviced apartment or rental property.</li> </ul>
ITC	Intensive Therapeutic Care.
Local district	A DCJ district that is a designated agency. Also see Designated agency and Service provider.
MRG	NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide. See <a href="#">ChildStory Reporter</a> .
Nominated unit	A DCJ unit, for example a Child and Family District Unit (CFDU) or Community Service Centre (CSC), exercising <i>secondary</i> case responsibility for a child or young adult in case responsibility of a service provider. Also see DCJ unit, Case responsibility and Secondary case responsibility.
Non-PSP provider	A designated agency, contracted by DCJ, other than a PSP Provider, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrange and supervise OOHC placements and</li> <li>• exercise case responsibility for achieving children's case plan goals of preservation restoration, guardianship, open adoption and long term care.</li> </ul>
OOG	Refer to IPA.

Term	Definition
OCG	NSW Office of Children's Guardian
OOHC	Statutory out-of-home care
OOHC provider	A designated agency that does not exercise case responsibility, contracted by DCJ or subcontracted by a service provider, to arrange and supervise an OOHC placement (only). Also see Designated agency, non-PSP provider and Service provider.
Other residential care	Any other residential care placement, wherein a non-PSP service provider exercises case responsibility. Also see Non-PSP provider.
Other service	An agency contracted to provide any other service (excluding OOHC) on a fee-for-service basis. Also see Service provider and OOHC provider.
PCMP	Permanency Case Management Policy. Also includes rules and practice guidelines for how DCJ and PSP Service providers work together with a focus on achieving permanency for a child.
PLA	Program Level Agreement (a contract).
Placement	For the purpose of this policy, placement includes foster care placement, ITC placement, other residential care placement, a placement arranged under ICM, an IPA, an ACA and a SIL/TSIL placement.
Practitioner	Includes caseworker, senior caseworker, casework manager, team leader, casework specialist (and so on). A practitioner provides casework to a child in OOHC, their carer, parents and family/kin.
Primary case responsibility	See Case responsibility.
Primary Placement	An OOHC placement in which everyday care and control of a child in OOHC is exercised by an authorised carer (prior to an away from placement event). Or a SIL/TSIL placement in which a young person or young adult resides semi-independently (prior to an away from placement event). Also see SIL and TSIL.
PSP	Permanency Support Program. The PSP provides services to vulnerable children so they can grow up in stable, secure and loving homes.



Term	Definition
PSP service provider	<p>A designated agency contracted by DCJ to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrange and supervise OOHC placements and</li> <li>• exercise case responsibility for achieving children’s case plan goals of preservation restoration, guardianship, open adoption and long term care.</li> </ul> <p>Also see non-PSP provider, OOHC provider and Designated agency.</p>
Referral unit	<p>A DCJ unit that acts as a centralised referral pathway for children entering and exiting different programs. A referral unit does not exercise any form of case responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Access Unit (CAU) – manages referrals to ITC, other residential care or TSIL placements</li> <li>• Statewide Services Interim Care Referral Unit (ICRU) – manages referrals to ICM placements or other bespoke placement arranged by ICRU</li> <li>• Cross Cluster Operations Business Support (CCOBS) Placement Management Team – manages referrals to ACA or IPA arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>Also see ACA, CAU, ICM, IPA, other residential care.</p>
Regulations, the	<i>NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012.</i>
Residential care	See Other residential care
Residential care worker	See Carer.
ROSH	Risk of Significant Harm
Secondary case responsibility	<p><i>Secondary</i> case responsibility (as distinct from case responsibility), is responsibility for carrying out DCJ’s statutory role, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safety &amp; risk assessment (SARA) &amp; risk re-assessment</li> <li>• alternate assessment, to ensure a child’s safety in care</li> <li>• exercise of the residential aspect of parental responsibility, on behalf of the Minister.</li> </ul>
Service provider	A PSP service provider or non-PSP service provider exercising case responsibility.
SIL	Semi-independent living. See <a href="#">SIL fact sheet</a> .
SIL/TSIL placement	<p>A placement supervised by a PSP service provider, in which a young person (in OOHC) or young adult (previously in OOHC), resides.</p> <p>Also see SIL.</p>
TSIL	Therapeutic semi-independent living. See <a href="#">TSIL fact sheet</a> .

Term	Definition
TCA	See Permanency Case Management Policy (PCMP) Rules and Practice Guidance, <a href="#">Temporary Care Arrangement</a> .
Young adult	A young adult 18 years of age or over, previously in OOHC, residing in an SIL/TSIL placement. Also see Child.

### 3. Scope and application

This policy applies to:

- PSP or non-PSP service providers exercising case responsibility for children in statutory OOHC and
- PSP service providers exercising case responsibility for young adults who were previously in OOHC in SIL/TSIL placements.
- DCJ nominated units exercising *secondary* case responsibility for children in case responsibility of a PSP or non-PSP service provider. This policy also applies, even when a service provider has:
  - sub-contracted an OOHC provider to arrange and supervise the child’s placement
  - arranged placement under the Interim Care Model (ICM) or
  - put in place an Individual Placement Arrangement (IPA) or an Alternative Care Arrangement (ACA) or similar arrangement.

The policy does not apply to children in OOHC when DCJ exercises case responsibility.

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

#### 4.1 DCJ role

##### Assess child protection reports

As agency exercising statutory responsibility for child protection, DCJ conducts assessment of child protection reports concerning away from placement events that meet the ROSH threshold.

##### Oversight of children not in placement

As agency exercising parental responsibility for children in OOHC (on behalf of the Minister), DCJ oversees the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children that are not in a placement, through district complex needs panels.

## Contract governance

As agency commissioning the exercise of case responsibility by service providers, DCJ Commissioning and Planning responds to any away from placement event that impacts upon contract governance, including notification requirements and default events.

## 4.2 Service provider role

Service providers respond to away from placement events experienced by any child in OOHC for whom the provider:

- has arranged and supervises a placement (or sub-contracted the arrangement and supervision of a placement) and
- exercises case responsibility.

## Arrange and supervise placements

Service providers arrange and supervise OOHC placements:

- guided by the NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care issued by the NSW Office of Children's Guardian
- in accordance with statutory requirements set out in the Care Act and Regulations
- in compliance with the contractual requirements of their PSP PLA.

## Case responsibility

Service providers exercise case responsibility for children in OOHC:

- consistent with their statutory duties as mandatory reporters
- in accordance with the requirements set out in the PCMP
- in compliance with the contractual requirements of their PLA.

# 5. Legislation and policy framework

## 5.1 Legal framework

DCJ and service provider practitioners read this policy in conjunction with the:

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (the Care Act).
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 (the Regulations).

## 5.2 Policy framework

### DCJ practitioners

DCJ practitioners exercising secondary case responsibility apply this policy in conjunction with the Permanency Case Management Policy (PCMP) [Rules and Practice Guidance](#), the [Aboriginal Case Management Policy](#) (ACMP) and the [PSP Critical Events policy](#).

Practitioners also apply this policy in conjunction with the [NSW Practice Framework, Practice Framework Standards](#), relevant [casework practice mandates](#) and [practice advice](#) topics and the OCG [NSW child safe standards for permanent care](#).

Relevant DCJ (internal) practice mandates include the [Critical events](#)<sup>2</sup>, [Missing children and young people](#), [Administrative parental decisions for children in care](#) and [Responding to allegations about DCJ carers, employees and employees of other agencies](#) practice mandates.

Relevant DCJ (internal) practice advice topics include [Understanding trauma and resistance, Collaboration](#) and [Sharing Risk](#).

Practitioners assessing child protection reports associated with a critical event apply this policy in conjunction with Casework Practice (internal) mandates and practice advice topics, including the [Assessing Safety and Risk](#), [Safety in Care](#), [Reporting allegations of criminal offences to Police](#), [Identifying and recording POI and PCH](#) and [Supporting children and young people who are victims of crime](#) practice mandates.

### Service provider practitioners

Service provider practitioners apply this policy in conjunction with the:

- internal policies of their agency
- [Safety in Care](#) information and resources
- PSP [Program Level Agreement](#) (PLA) and other contractual arrangements
- PCMP [Rules and Practice Guidance](#)
- [PSP Critical Events policy](#)
- DCJ [Caring for Children](#) guide for foster, relative and kinship carers
- [Aboriginal Case Management Policy](#) (ACMP)
- OCG [NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care](#).

## 6. Policy statement

### 6.1 Away from placement

A child or young adult is away from placement when they leave their placement for a temporary period, is called an away from placement event.

#### What is an away from placement event?

An away from placement event includes any of the following circumstances.

##### Entry to custody

A child or young adult is remanded in custody; or a child is sentenced to a period of detention; or a young adult receives a sentence of imprisonment.

##### Self placement

Temporary self-placement of a child with a parent (or previous legal guardian); or person who is not an authorised carer.

Approved family time with a parent (or previous legal guardian) or other family/kin is not defined as self-placement, unless the child or young adult declines to return to their placement following expiry of the approved family time.

##### Hospitalisation

Hospitalisation or admission of a child or young adult to a rehabilitation program, for a period of greater than 2 weeks. Hospitalisation for any period of 2 weeks or less is not a defined Away from placement event.

##### Absence without carer permission

Temporary absence of a child or a young adult from their primary placement without their carer's permission for:

- over 24 hours and for a period of up to four weeks *and*
- for a single period, or repeated separate periods of over 24 hours, when the child or young adult returns to the placement between each period.

Absence for any period of less than 24 hours is not a defined Away from placement event.

Temporary absence without carer permission is limited to circumstances when their:

- carer or casework practitioner is in communication with the child or
- whereabouts are unknown and the carer or casework practitioner is not in communication with the child or young adult for a period of *up to* five days.



Temporary absence excludes circumstances when:

- the child or young adult's location remains unknown for a period of over five days and contact has not been established or media attention is likely
- a child or young adult is suspected to have been abducted or there are serious concerns for their immediate safety.

In these circumstances refer to the [PSP Critical Events policy](#).

### Notify an away from placement event

All away from placement events experienced by a child or young adult are notified to DCJ within one business day of the event occurring.

Specifically, notification of an [absence without carer permission](#) event is required:

- only once for repeated absences of up to four weeks
- a second time, if a child's repeated absences continue beyond four weeks (up to eight weeks).

Refer to [Notify an away from placement event](#) procedure.

### Away from placement period

The period in which a child or young adult may be away from placement is limited.

The period commences on the date of the child protection report or notification of the event (whichever is sooner), for a period (subject to DCJ approval) of:

- up to eight weeks, for a child in a foster care placement
- up to four weeks, for a child in a placement other than foster care or
- up to four weeks or for a longer period, for a young adult previously in care, in a SIL/TSIL placement.

The away from placement period ends when:

- a child or young adult returns to their primary placement or
- a child transitions to another placement arranged and supervised by the service provider or
- the maximum away from placement period expires, with the child or young adult remaining away from their primary placement – refer to [Not in Placement](#).

### Case responsibility during an away from placement period

Funding continues during an away from placement period, to enable:

- the service provider to continue to exercise case responsibility
- the child or young adult's primary placement to remain open.

Refer to [Funding and financial support](#).

## Casework during an away from placement period

Everyday casework continues during an away from placement period. With the active involvement of the carer, practitioners:

- provide outreach casework support to meet their immediate needs
- create new Whereabouts records (and end-date previous Whereabouts records) in ChildStory Partner community, when a child or young adult's whereabouts change
- conduct ongoing risk assessment, implementation and review of a risk management plan
- conduct early assessment and review of their case plan
- conduct permanency goal review
- support the child or young adult to return to their placement (if safe to do so) or
- support the child transition to another placement (when it is not practicable or in their best interests to return to their primary placement).

Refer to [Procedures](#).

## 6.2 Not in placement

### When is a child or young adult not in placement?

A child is not in placement when:

- the child does not return to their primary placement during the away from placement period *and*
- the child's primary [placement is closed](#)<sup>3</sup> and the child does not transition to another placement *and*
- the child is referred to the local district's [complex needs panel](#) (or equivalent) for oversight.

A young adult (previously in SIL/TSIL placement) does not enter a not in placement period. Refer to PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [After Care Support](#).

### Not in placement period

The period a child is not in placement commences when the away from placement period ends or when their primary placement is closed (whichever is sooner).

The not in placement period is up to 6 months. The not in placement period ends when (whichever is sooner):

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<sup>3</sup> No separate notification is required.

- the child transitions to another placement arranged by a service provider or
- other care arrangements are put in place as a result of the court order being varied/rescinded by the Children’s Court or
- the maximum not in placement period is reached or
- the child’s court order expires and/or they attain the age of 18 years.

### Not in placement period extension

The not in placement period may be extended for a further period of up to 6 months (maximum 12 months)<sup>4</sup> if the service provider demonstrates:

- all aspects of not in placement casework have been carried out and there is a reasonable likelihood the child will return to their primary placement or
- active steps have been taken to vary or rescind the child’s court order of a child who is unlikely to return to their primary placement.

The not in placement period may be extended for a longer period subject to approval of the Director, Child and Family, OOHC Programs on a case-by-case basis. For example, such an extension may be sought if the child is (already) subject to a section 90 application and court proceedings are on foot.

### Case responsibility during a not in placement period

The service provider continues to exercise case responsibility until the not in placement period ends. The maximum period the service provider may exercise case responsibility is one year.

In some cases case responsibility may be transferred to a different service provider during the not in placement period. This may occur, for example, if the child moves to and remains in a different location not serviced by the existing service provider.

When a not in placement period ends case responsibility returns to DCJ.

See [Return case responsibility to DCJ](#).

### Casework during a not in placement period

During a not in placement period, the service provider continues providing everyday casework. Practitioners:

- provide outreach casework support to meet the child’s immediate needs
- create new Whereabouts records (and end-date previous Whereabouts records) in ChildStory Partner community, when a child or young adult’s whereabouts change
- conduct ongoing risk assessment, implementation and review of a risk

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<sup>4</sup> This limits the maximum amount of funding available to service providers.



management plan

- conduct review of the child's case plan, with involvement of the child, their carer, parents, family/kin and networks of support
- actively support the child transition to:
  - another placement arranged and supervised by the service provider or
  - other care arrangements approved by DCJ and the Children's Court, for example restoration
  - a SIL/TSIL placement (young people aged 16 or 17 years).

## 7. Procedures

### 7.1 Notify an away from placement event

#### Service provider notification

Following an away from placement event, the service provider:

- completes an [away from placement notification](#) (AFP Notification) or requests a subcontracted OOH provider (see below) to complete the notification
- completes a Whereabouts record on ChildStory Partner Community and attaches the AFP Notification.

It is critical that sensitive client information is managed securely within ChildStory using the process described above.

#### Non-PSP provider notification

For a non-PSP provider (exercising case responsibility) that does not have access to ChildStory Partner Community, the provider:

- completes an [AFP Notification](#)
- forwards the AFP Notification to the applicable nominated unit (for example, using a secure email system).

#### Notification approval

The AFP notification does not require separate approval, as long as the service provider has completed the notification (to the satisfaction of the nominated unit) and it is attached to a Whereabouts record in ChildStory Partner Community.

Upon receipt of the Whereabouts (with attached AFP Notification) for approval in the ChildStory CFDU approval queue (or via other means), the nominated unit notifies the applicable referral unit:

- Central Access Unit (CAU) – when a child is away from an ITC, other residential care or TSIL placement
- Statewide Services Interim Care Referral Unit (ICRU) – when a child is away

from an ICM placement or other bespoke placement arranged by ICRU

- Cross Cluster Operations Business Support (CCOBS) placement management team – when a child is away from an ACA or IPA arrangement.

## DCJ notification

In some circumstances, a nominated unit may notify a service provider it has formed the view that a child's circumstances constitute an Away from Placement event (when that service provider has not made any notification).

## 7.2 Make a child protection report if needed

Following an away from placement event, if there is information that suggests the child's immediate safety is at risk<sup>5</sup> (not just that they have left the placement), the service provider:

- completes the [Mandatory Reporter Guide](#) (MRG)
- uses the MRG to ascertain whether or not a report to the Child Protection Helpline is required
- actions the MRG outcome or recommendation (make a child protection report *only if* recommended by MRG).

### Make a report only when recommended by the MRG

The MRG will guide you in determining whether a report to the Helpline is required. eReporting through [ChildStory Reporter](#) is the preferred method of making a child protection report.

When assessing whether a report to the Helpline is required, consider any strategies you have put in place to manage risks for the child and young person and in the context of these strategies whether a report to the Helpline is still required.

### Policy links

For guidance on which MRG decision tree to use, see [Mandatory Reporter's Guide To Selecting A Decision Tree](#).

DCJ practitioners see [Critical events](#), [Missing children and young people](#) practice mandates.

DCJ and service provider practitioners see [PSP Critical Events](#) policy.

## 7.3 Make a missing persons police report if needed

Always report a child (in OOHC) or young adult who is missing when suspected to have been abducted or there are there are serious concerns for their immediate

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<sup>5</sup> For information about how to make a child protection report, see [Mandatory Reporters](#).

safety. Contact [NSW Police](#). Also see [PSP Critical Events](#) policy.

## 7.4 Communicate with the child or young adult

Following an away from placement event, a service provider practitioner stays in touch with the child or young adult.

For example: Use initiative and communication skills to engage and influence them.

Support them to participate in risk assessment, case planning and review.

Document all attempts to contact and actual communication.

Help the young person resolve conflict that has led to the away from placement event.

## 7.5 Provide for child or young adult's basic needs

When a child or young adult is away from their placement the service provider practitioner acts to meet the child or young adult's daily care needs.

For example: Do they need a mobile phone to keep in touch with people that can support their safety?

Would a pre-paid NSW Transport Opal Card (or other transport card) help them easily escape places of high risk or attend a case conference?

Do they need a supermarket voucher for food and hygiene products?

What medication do they need to have dispensed or administered?

The service provider practitioner supports the child or young adult to access appropriate government and community services.

For example: Can they access benefits and payments from the Australian Government Department of Social Services?

## 7.6 Continuously manage risk

Following an away from placement event, the service provider:

- maintains ongoing engagement with the child or young adult to assess risk
- creates new Whereabouts records (and end-dates previous Whereabouts records) in ChildStory Partner community, when a child or young adult's whereabouts change.
- continuously conducts risk assessment by implementing and reviewing a risk management plan
- proactively works to reduce risk of significant harm to the child or young adult
- arranges consultation with a casework specialist or senior practitioner, or

(external) private practitioner, with participation of the nominated unit.

The nominated unit:

- uses its own systems to track children that are away from, or not in placement
- approves service provider Whereabouts records, received through the ChildStory CFDU approval queue
- liaises with the service provider to monitor the provider's management of risk
- supports decision making by the district's local complex needs panel
- considers group supervision with participation of the service provider.

## 7.7 Review the case plan

When a child or young adult is away from placement, the service provider conducts a case plan review to:

- address the factors that led to the child or young adult leaving their placement.
- plan support needed to return to placement; or transition to another placement.

### Health management plan

The service provider contacts their district OOHC Health Coordinator, to request a review of the child's health management plan. The review considers whether:

- the existing plan is effectively addressing their health needs and
- there are emerging or newly presenting health issues or their health needs have changed.

The service provider ensures referrals are made to appropriate health services and provides the child with support to attend appointments.

For example: Does the child need a reminder by phone or SMS to attend specific appointments.

Explore with the child who they would like to attend the appointment with them, for example their caseworker or carer or another support person.

Provide transport to the child to/from the appointment where possible.

Purchase for the child, medications prescribed by health practitioners.

### Behaviour support plan (BSP)

The service provider provides behaviour support to a child who is away from placement. This means:

- developing a new BSP if the child needs support with their behaviour or
- conducting a review of the child's BSP to ensure it meets the child's changed

behavioural needs and circumstances.

## Psychological support and therapeutic care

When a child or young adult needs support to heal relationships or strengthen placement stability, the service provider arranges a consultation with a psychologist or therapeutic specialist, with participation of the nominated unit.

If no services are locally accessible or available, the service provider may arrange, through their nominated unit:

- a psychological consultation with DCJ Psych Services
- a referral to [Intensive Therapeutic Transitional Care](#) (ITTC) Outreach.

ITTC Outreach is available for a child who has complex needs and requires increased support. Services include behavioural assessment and support, developmental assessments including occupational and speech therapy, mental health, alcohol and/or drugs, education, independent living skills, carer and placement support, and risk management.

## Policy links

See PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [Casework Support Services](#) and OOHC [Behaviour support](#) policy.

## 7.8 Arrange a permanency goal review

When a child's placement, legal arrangements or case plan goal has not been meeting their need for physical, legal, cultural and relational permanency, the service provider *considers* arranging a permanency goal review on a case by case basis.

Factors that may prompt a review include when a child is:

- likely to enter ITC, or an ICM placement, an IPA or an ACA or similar arrangement or
- not in placement (after their placement has been closed).

Permanency goal review occurs jointly with the permanency coordinator, the nominated unit and the service provider.

## Policy links

DCJ practitioners see [Case planning in OOHC](#) mandate.

DCJ and service provider practitioners see PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [Changing the goal from long term care to another goal.](#)

DCJ and service provider practitioners see PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [Permanency consultation.](#)

## 7.9 Conduct a carer review

Before a child returns to their primary placement, the service provider conducts a

carer review to strengthen the placement and create conditions for placement stability.

For example: Acknowledge and review any problems or difficulties the carer experienced in the lead-up to the away from placement event.

Provide further support or training to develop the carer's strengths, knowledge and skills.

## Policy links

DCJ and service provider practitioners see Caring for Children guide - [Carer reviews and authorisation decisions](#).

## 7.10 Arrange another placement

When it is not practicable or not in their best interests to return to their previous placement, the service provider arranges another a new placement for the child.

## Policy links

DCJ practitioners see [Placing a child in OOHC and supporting their transition](#) practice mandate.

DCJ and service provider practitioners see PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [Arranging an OOHC placement](#).

## 7.11 Refer to complex needs panel

When a child is *away from placement*, the nominated unit *considers* referral to the local district complex needs panel (on a case by case basis).

Factors that may prompt early referral to panel include:

- a child's care needs are particularly complex and/or there are significant risks to the child's safety, welfare and wellbeing
- a child is repeatedly [absent without carer permission](#)<sup>6</sup>.

The nominated unit *always* refers to the panel, when a child is *not in placement* (after their placement has been closed).

When a child or young adult is referred to the panel, the nominated unit:

- follows up the referral and ensures the child is on the panel agenda
- supports monthly review by the district complex needs panel

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<sup>6</sup> Temporary absence does not include circumstances when:

- a child or young adult is suspected to have been abducted or there are serious concerns for their immediate safety
- the child or young adult's location remains unknown for a period of over five days and contact has not been established or media attention is likely.

In these circumstances refer to the PSP Critical Events policy.

- monitors the progress of the service provider in responding to the panel's recommendations.

The service provider participates in the complex case panel by:

- attending meetings of the panel to which they are invited
- providing updates regarding risk assessment, case planning and review and casework
- providing updates regarding their response to panel directions and recommendations
- making proposals regarding proposed actions to promote a child's safety, permanency and wellbeing.

## 7.12 Close the placement

A service provider uses its own systems to ensure a child or young adult's primary placement is closed on ChildStory Partner Community, if/when the maximum away from placement period expires.

If it is not practicable or would not be in the child or young adult's best interests to return to their primary placement, or they are unlikely to return to their placement:

- the service provider discusses earlier closure of the placement with the nominated unit, and may close the placement as at a date agreed to by the unit or
- the nominated unit may direct a service provider to close<sup>7</sup> the placement, as at a date determined by the unit.

For a child in a primary placement other than foster care, the nominated unit consults:

- the CAU<sup>8</sup>, when the child is away from an ITC, other residential care or TSIL placement
- the ICRU, when the child is away from a placement arranged under ICM by ICRU
- CCOBS Placement Management Team, when the child is away from an ACA or IPA arrangement.

## 7.13 Return case responsibility to DCJ

Transfer of case responsibility from a service provider to DCJ occurs when:

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<sup>7</sup> As commissioning agency, DCJ may direct a placement be closed at any time.

<sup>8</sup> Authority to close ITC placements is with the CAU in consultation with the nominated unit and Commissioning and Planning team.

- the maximum not in placement period expires for a child or
- the nominated unit and the service provider agree the service provider is no longer capable of achieving the child's case plan goal or
- the nominated unit assesses (as a result of an alternate assessment) that the service provider is not capable of protecting the child from immediate danger of serious harm and/or risk of future, likely serious harm or
- the nominated unit declines to approve an away from placement period or declines to approve funding for a not in placement period or
- at any other time the nominated unit determines that transfer of case responsibility from a service provider to DCJ is in the child's best interests<sup>9</sup>.

When case responsibility is to be returned to DCJ.

- The service provider transfers case responsibility to a DCJ unit.
- The nominated unit advises the service provider of the DCJ unit to which the case will transfer; and supports the transfer process.

DCJ practitioners see [Transfer of a child or family between teams, CSCs, Interstate OOHC and JCPRP](#) mandate.

DCJ and service provider practitioners see PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [Collaborating in transfer of case responsibility](#).

## Delegation

Delegation for accepting transfer of case responsibility to DCJ is Category 4 (and above). For example:

- Director Community Services/Director Operations and above or
- Director ISS (for ITC or other residential care placements).

## 7.14 Conduct an Alternate Assessment

If an Away from placement event results in a screened in child protection report, an Alternate Assessment is conducted by the applicable CSC in the local district.

In preparing for and conducting the Alternate Assessment, the CSC always consults with the service provider with primary case responsibility. See [Collaborating in alternate assessment](#).

The CSC conducts an Alternate Assessment, unless an assessment is not required (see delegation below). For example, an assessment response might not occur in relation to:

- a child that frequently becomes absent from their placement, where a recent

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<sup>9</sup> As commissioning agency, DCJ may withdraw any child from case responsibility of a service provider at any time.



similar or identical event has already been assessed and/or

- a child in a juvenile justice correctional centre (not in OOHC<sup>10</sup>) who is otherwise considered by DCJ to be safe.

## Delegation

Approval delegation to not proceed with an assessment response is Category 4 officer and above, for example Director Community Services or Operations.

## Policy links

DCJ practitioners see [Assessing safety and risk](#) mandate .

DCJ and service provider practitioners see PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [Collaborating in alternate assessment](#).

## 7.15 Investigate reportable conduct

If an Away from placement (or subsequent) event results in reportable allegations or convictions ('reportable conduct'), the service provider:

- conducts investigation into the allegations and makes findings and/or
- completes a determination that the convictions are (or are not) reportable
- notifies the NSW Children's Guardian in accordance with the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#)
- provides the carer with support and training.

## Policy links

DCJ practitioners see [Critical events](#) and [Responding to allegations about DCJ carers, employees and employees of other agencies](#) mandates.

DCJ and service provider practitioners see PCMP Rules and Practice Guidance – [Collaborating in assessing reportable conduct](#), and [PSP Critical Events](#) policy.

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<sup>10</sup> Refer to the Regulations – these include boarding houses attached to education or training, holiday sporting or religious camps, health services, places of [detention](#) or supported accommodation.

## 8. Funding and financial support

### 8.1 Away from placement funding

#### PSP Packages

Following an away from placement event, provision of existing PSP packages to the service provider continues.

For children in placements with non-PSP providers, funding equivalent to PSP packages is provided.

Cost Component	Package Type	Cost description
Case Plan Goal	Existing package	Case planning and review; and provision of services to achieve case plan goal. These continue, even when the child or young adult is away from placement.
Baseline	Foster Care or Aboriginal Foster Care Package, Supported Independent Living or an ITC package	Staff salaries, training and recruitment, case load and case mix and overheads. Provision of placement, for example foster care recruitment, training and allowance. These enable the placement to remain open when the child or young adult is away from placement
Child Needs	Existing Child Needs (Low, Medium or High) package	Education support, allied health, psychology and behaviour therapy. Support is provided to attend school, health-related appointments and other routine activities, even when the child or young adult is away from placement.
Specialist	Existing suite of package options.	Per Package description – <a href="#">PSP Business Rules for Eligibility</a> .

#### Carer allowance

An authorised carer of a child that is away from placement continues to receive the carer allowance during an away from placement period.

#### Approval and payment

Approval of away from placement funding is automatic when the service provider:

- completes an [AFP Notification](#) and
- records a Whereabouts record on ChildStory Partner Community and attaches the AFP Notification.

## 8.2 Not in placement funding

### PSP packages

Following commencement of a not in placement period:

- The *PSP Case Coordination - Not in Placement* package replaces the applicable *PSP Baseline* package..
- The applicable *PSP Case Plan Goal* and *Child Needs* packages continue.
- Applicable *PSP Specialist* packages continue subject to eligibility criteria.

Packages are provided to service providers automatically by quarterly reconciliation<sup>11</sup>.

For children previously in placements with non-PSP providers, funding equivalent to PSP packages is provided, also by quarterly reconciliation.

Cost Component	Package Type	Cost description
Case Plan Goal	Existing package	Case planning and review; and provision of services to achieve case plan goal. These continue, even when the child or young adult is away from placement.
Baseline	Foster Care or Aboriginal Foster Care Package, Supported Independent Living or an ITC Package	Staff salaries, training and recruitment, case load and case mix and overheads. Provision of placement, for example foster care recruitment, training and allowance. These enable the placement to remain open the child or young adult is away from placement
Child Needs	Existing Child Needs (Low, Medium or High) Package	Education support, allied health, psychology and behaviour therapy. Support is provided to attend school, health-related appointments and other routine activities, even when the child or young adult is away from placement.
Specialist	Existing suite of package options.	Per Package description – <a href="#">PSP Business Rules for Eligibility</a> .

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<sup>11</sup> Currently, the Case Coordination - Not in Placement package is not built into ChildStory

## Approval and payment

The nominated unit:

- liaises with the service provider regarding their funding needs
- consults with the applicable referral unit<sup>12</sup>
- adds the child's case to the district complex needs panel agenda, for district oversight and approval of funding.

The panel approves not in placement funding (and records approval):

- as per the panel agenda, during a panel meeting or
- using its own local governance process, to make decisions out-of-session.

The nominated unit immediately notifies the funding decision to:

- the service provider and
- the applicable Commissioning and Planning unit.

## Delegation

Approval delegation for *PSP Case Coordination - Not in Placement* package is Category 4 officer and above. For example:

- Director Community Services or Operations (for foster care and SIL) or
- Director Information Access and Exchange Unit, Statewide Services (for ICM or other bespoke placement arranged by ICRU) or
- Director ISS and above (for ITC, other residential care and TSIL placements).

Approval delegation for extension of Not in Placement package is Category 3 officer and above, for example, Executive District Director.

# 9. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy is reviewed annually, as practice learning occurs and client outcomes become evident.

# 10. Support and advice

Advice and support in relation to this policy is available via the PSP mailbox – [permanency.support@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:permanency.support@dcj.nsw.gov.au).

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<sup>12</sup> For example the CAU (for children in ITC or other residential care), ICRU (from children in ICM) or CCOBS (for children in IPAs and ACAs).