

Working with Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) child protection services

Factsheet 1

Be aware of roles and responsibilities of DCJ and its staff.



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In 2019 the Department of Communities and Justice was created, bringing together, and replacing Family and Community Services (FACS) and Justice services. DCJ is responsible for several departments including; Child Protection and Permanency, District and Youth Justice Service, Corrective Services, Courts and Tribunals, Housing and Disability Services, Legal Services. For more details see www.dcj.nsw.gov.au.

DCJ Communities provides child protection services across 3 key areas including; prevention and early intervention, child protection and out-of-home care

Child Protection is the division that is responsible for keeping children and young people safe from harm. Out of home care is responsible for children and young people who have been removed from their family and placed with a foster carer, kinship carer or in residential care. See [DCJ Communities child protection services](#) for more details.

DCJ works across 16 districts that align with Local Health Districts. Leading each group is an Executive District Director (EDD). Every district has local offices that are referred to as Community Service Centres (CSC). For more information about your local CSC refer to [DCJ Community Service Centres](#).

To help your work with DCJ it is helpful to know about the different roles of DCJ staff, including:

Manager client services (MCS) is the practice leader of the Community Service Centre (CSC). They have overall responsibility for the CSC.

Manager casework (MCW) is the lead practitioner for their team. They focus on the team's practice skills and take responsibility for casework.

Caseworkers (CW) work directly with children and families. They work as a part of a team. CWs must have a university undergraduate degree as a minimum qualification and mainly come from a social work background. For more details see [caseworker](#).

Prenatal caseworkers work specifically with pregnant mothers, their partners and family, when their unborn child is at risk of significant harm. Not all CSCs have an allocated prenatal caseworker.

Casework specialists (CWS) provide direct, practice-based professional support and development to caseworkers and managers. This includes specialist advice and consultation on case practice matters, supporting case practice skills and undertaking complex case reviews. For more details see [casework specialists](#).

Aboriginal caseworkers provide services to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children, young people, and families. They advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people in the community and use their cultural knowledge to help shape service delivery. When an Aboriginal child or young person is first involved with DCJ an Aboriginal consultation with an Aboriginal caseworker should take place. For more information see [Aboriginal caseworkers](#) and refer to DCJ's [Aboriginal consultation guide](#).

Multicultural caseworkers provide generalist casework and services to children, young people and families from culturally and linguistic diverse (CALD) backgrounds. When a child or young person from a CALD background is involved with CS, staff are encouraged to conduct a consultation with a multicultural case worker to support culturally appropriate ways of working. Click on the link for more details about [supports for families with diverse cultural and language backgrounds](#).

Other statewide services provided by DCJ include:

Child Protection Helpline (132 111) is 24 hours/7 days, state-wide call centre staffed by professionally qualified caseworkers to receive and screen all reports made about suspected child abuse or neglect.

Domestic Violence Line provides 24 hrs/7 days telephone counselling, information and referrals for women and same-sex partners who are or have experienced domestic violence. They provide a range of services including, referrals to women's refuges, family support services, police, and courts. They assist with funding for emergency transport and accommodation. See [Domestic Violence Line](#).

Office of the Senior Practitioner (OSP) is made up of various units (Practice Quality and Clinical Support Unit, Serious Case Review Unit, Reportable Conduct Unit, and Practice Support) that promote best practice, undertake independent reviews of casework practice and provide evidence-based advice and guidance to field staff.

Joint Investigation Response Teams (JIRT) responds to serious child protection reports about children that may involve a criminal offence (eg: sexual abuse, physical assault). JIRT comprises of three equal partners; NSW Police, NSW Health and DCJ child protection.

Practice point

- If you are working with a pregnant woman involved with DCJ, the prenatal caseworker is a very useful support and contact. Unfortunately, not every CSC has a prenatal caseworker, but if you're working with a pregnant woman, it is worthwhile contacting the CSC managing their case, to see if there is a prenatal caseworker available.

Practice point

- If you are working with a client who has DCJ involvement, ask their caseworker if you can attend group supervision about that person and their family. Group supervision is where the caseworker, their team and specialists discuss a family and case plan and make decisions.

For more details and copies of these Factsheets go to <http://www.nada.org.au/>