

# Operations Division

## Division and Area Child Protection

### Change proposal

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#### Consultation Timelines (aligned to the VPS Agreement)

Timelines for consultation will be in accordance with the Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2016 (VPS Agreement) and these will be communicated to staff by each division.

# Preamble

## Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services aspires for all Victorians to be safe, healthy and able to lead a life they value.

The department is responsible for developing and delivering policies, programs and services that support the health, wellbeing and safety of all Victorians. We take a broad view of the drivers of good health, the causes of ill health, the social and economic context in which people live, and the incidence and experience of vulnerability. This allows us to place people at the centre of policymaking, service design and delivery.

The department provides stewardship of the systems and outcomes in health, human services and sport and recreation. The department leads the delivery of many of the government's major reforms such as: the prevention of family violence; the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the subsequent transformation of disability services in Victoria; the implementation of strategies to address the challenges in homelessness services and social housing; building the capability of vulnerable children and families to break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage; and strengthening the safety and quality of our health services.

## Children, Families, Disability and Operations Division Overview

The Children, Families, Disability and Operations (CFDO) division leads the development and implementation of operational policy and funding frameworks focused on children, families and disability. This is achieved by working with clients, service providers and other government partners to co-design more integrated end-to-end client journeys to make human services easier to navigate and achieve better sequencing of service interventions.

The division also enables healthy, safe and strong communities by addressing the needs of Victorians across the continuum of health and human services. This is achieved through the provision of quality person centred services directly to Victorians through four operational divisions.

The CFDO division is made up of ten branches:

- Children and Families Policy Branch
- Disability and NDIS Branch
- Performance and Reporting Branch
- Safety and Quality Office
- Office of Professional Practice
- Four Operations Divisions – North, South, East and West
- Office of the Deputy Secretary

## Operations Divisions Overview

The Operations Divisions (North, South, East and West) play a vital role in state-wide service delivery for health and human services, and oversight and coordination of all operations including Areas. Areas play a key role in service delivery, managing relationships with providers and building the capacity of the system and communities across health and human services. Divisions and Areas play a fundamental role in cross government relationships and building capacity in communities including links with the Family Safety Hubs and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable communities and all Victorians.

There are also a range of reforms and changes that will impact Divisions and Areas including the transition to NDIS, implementation of the *Roadmap to Reform* and other reform activities in the health and housing portfolios.

## Impact of redesign

The key impacts of the proposed redesign of Child Protection for Operations Divisions and Areas are:

1. The management of Child Protection Operations moving to Area. Area Directors will be accountable for the operational management of child protection services in 17 Areas.
2. Each Division will have a Director, Child Protection, reporting to the Operational Deputy Secretary and responsible for maintaining consistency of operational service delivery, consistency of practice, implementation of change and reforms.

## Proposed changes

Consistent with the strategic direction of the department it is proposed that the management of Child Protection Operations move to Area to provide local responses and solutions, and person centred approaches to service delivery and care, while promoting earlier and more connected support.

Division-based Child Protection services: strategic projects and practice support will continue to be delivered through the Division Child Protection Branch.

The proposed new Area structures include the additional 452.6 positions announced in the 2017/18 State Budget, providing new positions in all Areas and boosting capacity in all offices.

Specific proposals are:

1. Area Directors will be accountable for the operational management of child protection services in 17 Areas.
2. Each Division will have a Director, Child Protection, reporting to the Operational Deputy Secretary and responsible for maintaining consistency of operational service delivery, consistency of practice, implementation of change and reforms.
3. The Director, Child Protection, will be accountable for the management of Division-wide service elements such as Intake, Adoption and Permanent Care, Practice Advice and Support and/or state wide services such as the Central After-Hours Child Protection Service. Working with Area Directors, the position will take a strategic support and oversight role across Division and Areas.
4. Child Protection Operations teams currently in Divisions to be managed in Area with 10 Areas to have an **Assistant Director, Area Child Protection Operations**, replacing the existing Operations Manager. The intent of this proposal is to build executive support and oversight for larger Areas based on scope, scale and forecast growth.
5. Areas that do not have an Assistant Director, Child Protection Area, are to have an operations manager at CPP 6.2 level renamed as **Area Operations Manager (AOM)**. The function of this position will remain the same as a current Child Protection Operations Manager.
6. Each Area to have a **Deputy Area Operations Manager (DAOM)** at a CPP 6.1 level reporting to an Area Operations Manager or an Assistant Director, Area Operations Manager. It is proposed the existing Deputy Area Manager (DAM) role will no longer continue in the CPOM structure. This proposal flattens the structure by one level in most Areas, bringing Executive and senior management support closer to child protection practitioners. All existing DAMs will remain at level (CPP5.2) and be matched to either a team manager or practice leader position. The overarching proposal also provides progression opportunities for existing DAMs to apply on a merit based process for a **DAOM** role.

7. Additional **Principal Practitioner** capacity is proposed, with new positions working in and across Areas.
8. Additional case planning capacity is proposed. This will improve timeliness of decision making and reduce the case planning burden for team managers. The existing family-led decision making (FLDM) role is to be converted to **Practice Leader (Case Planning)** at a CPP 5.2 level. There will be no change to the Aboriginal Family Led Decision Making (AFLDM) position.
9. In the five launch sites for Support and Safety Hubs, an enhanced and redefined Community Based CP role is being developed within a new team structure creating scale to embed the role within a broader multi-disciplinary team within the Hubs.
10. There will be no change to the role of Team Managers, however all Team Managers will have of a classification of CPP 5.2.
11. No change is proposed to the role or classification of senior child protection practitioners, advanced child protection practitioners or child protection practitioners, however each Division will receive new positions in these roles from the additional 452.6 positions from the 2017-18 State Budget.

## Division Child Protection Branch description

The Divisional Child Protection Branch is responsible for overall stewardship of child protection service delivery across all Areas within a Division, and the Division as a whole. This branch is responsible, through Area Directors, for ensuring the continued integrity and consistency of the operating model, providing strategic support and direction to ensure continuous improvement, and supporting the effective implementation of change and reform. The focus on the statutory elements of directly delivered child protection services also includes providing authoritative, specific and thematic advice about elements of the broader service system, particularly for children at risk of entering, or in the care of, child protection.

The key roles of the branch are:

- Deliver Divisional Child Protection Intake
- Deliver the Central After Hours Child Protection Service (East Division)
- Manage Adoption and Permanent Care teams (East, West and North Divisions)
- Deliver Refugee Minor, Intercountry Adoption and Family Information and Network Discovery (FIND) services (South Division)
- Oversee consistency of child protection practice and service delivery across Area and Division
- Maintain the integrity of the Child Protection Operating Model, managing change through the Child Protection Executive Group
- Support the implementation of system reforms
- Provide authoritative support and advice to Area Directors and Areas on the statutory requirements for Child Protection Operations, including quality and compliance requirements related to case plan reviews
- Provide a strategic point of contact for Ministers and senior executives on critical child protection issues
- With Area Directors, develops or implement strategic approaches to addressing workforce, system and performance issues across the Division
- Manage rural legal officers (North, East and West Division)

## Team descriptions

### Intake and Assessment

Intake is the phase of child protection involvement where reports are received and assessed for children where there are significant wellbeing concerns or where there are concerns a child is in need of protection. Intake assesses and determines an appropriate response, providing advice to reporters, making referrals to support services or transferring for an investigation by child protection.

### Practice Advice and Support

The Principal Practitioners provide practice leadership and development, foster continuous improvement in service delivery and encourages practice excellence for Child Protection Practitioners in Division and Areas. The Principal Practitioners will support Area Directors and Areas in maintaining consistency of practice, quality service delivery, and will provide authoritative advice on statutory matters. Reporting to the Division Child Protection Director (Child Protection Assistant Director in East Division), the Principal Practitioners will work closely with Area Directors and Area-based Child Protection Operations teams. The Practice Leader (Sexual Exploitation) has a role across the Division working to identify and respond to children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation.

### Oversight and Coordination

Child Protection Oversight and Coordination at Division is responsible for overseeing and maintaining the integrity of the Child Protection operating model and ensuring consistency across Areas and across the Division consistent with the statutory and policy requirements of the program. This team takes an active role in supporting Area Directors and Areas to implement policy and program changes and reforms as they relate to the delivery of statutory services. They will also support state wide and division-wide strategic initiatives and projects to support outcomes for children in child protection including Sexual Exploitation.

### Division Specific Teams

South – Family Records, Intercountry Adoption Services and Refugee Minor Program

East – Central After Hours Service, Adoption and Permanent Care

North – Adoption and Permanent Care

West – Adoption and Permanent Care

## Area Child Protection Operations Description

The Victorian Child Protection Service is specifically targeted to those children and young people at risk of harm or where families are unable or unwilling to protect them.

The Area Child Protection Operations Unit delivers statutory child protection services.

The main functions of child protection are to:

- investigate matters where it is alleged that a child is at risk of harm
- refer children and families to services that assist in providing the ongoing safety and wellbeing of children
- take matters before the Children's Court if the child's safety cannot be ensured within the family
- supervise children on legal orders granted by the Children's Court
- manage statutory obligations related to cases contracted to community service organisations
- Provide advice and work within the broader service delivery structure at Area level, such as in Support and Safety Hubs as they are being implemented.

## Team descriptions

### Investigation and assessment

The function of Investigation is to establish if a child is in need of protection as defined by section 162 of *the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*. An investigation involves direct contact with a child and family and determines:

- the extent and nature of reported concerns, or any other concerns
- whether the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm
- whether the parents have protected or are likely to protect the child from harm
- whether statutory intervention is needed to meet the best interests of the child
- whether other interventions are needed to assist the family.

An investigation starts when a report is classified as a protective intervention report and concludes when a decision is made on whether the report is substantiated.

Protective intervention is the period of intervention with a child and family following the substantiation of a report and ending when a protection order is made or the case is closed without a protection order.

### Case Management

Case management phase involves case management tasks in relation to a child subject to a protection order, including ongoing assessment of the risks, needs and development of the child, development and ensure implementation of a case plan in accordance with legal requirements, the provisions of the protection order and the child's needs, ensuring a cultural plan is provided to Aboriginal children in out-of-home care, planning and managing contact arrangements for the child and family in accordance with the protection order and case plan, and facilitating appropriate referrals and engagement with service providers.

Child protection maintains case planning and delegated statutory functions for cases contracted to a community service organisation, including responsibility for authorised cases being managed by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

### Supervised Contact and Transport

Supervised contact is aligned to a child's case plan and refers to the coordination and delivery of supervision and support of contact between parents and children subject to protection orders, to ensure the protection and wellbeing of the child whilst promoting the child's relationships with significant family members. Client transport involves the transporting and accompanying of children from placement to school, medical and other appointments inclusive of supervised family contact visits.

These functions are undertaken by child protection practitioners as well as dedicated case practice support staff.

## Relationship to the Central Divisions

The Division Child Protection Branch will have a strong relationship with the Children, Families, Disability and Operations Division, the Office of Professional Practice, Children and Families Policy Branch and Service Implementation and Support Branch for policy, practice and operational support.

The branch will also have a relationship with the Children and Families Reform Division in relationship to the development and implementation of reforms which directly and indirectly impact Child Protection.

The Corporate Services Legal Branch provides legal advice and support to Area Child Protection but may also be consulted on complex cases and broader legal issues by this branch.

## Rationale and intended benefits

### Division Child Protection Branch

The Division Child Protection Branch will provide support and advice to Area Directors and Area Child Protection Operations to ensure the integrity of the child protection operating model is maintained and that there is consistency in the delivery of statutory child protection services across Areas and the Division. They will also be able to provide authoritative advice on the statutory requirements for service delivery.

The branch will have increased capacity and capability to place a greater focus on the strategic and program support functions for child protection, considering opportunities for improvement, and leading undertaking initiatives and reforms that improve outcomes for children.

### Area Child Protection Operations

Consistent with the strategic direction of the department, the management of Child Protection Operations is to be provided in Area, by moving as many functions to Area as possible. This will empower and strengthen Areas with more strategic capacity and autonomy to deliver services. Managing services at an Area-level will provide local responses and solutions, earlier and more connected support, and will strengthen the focus on quality and practice improvement.

The 2017-18 Family Violence State Budget made provision of \$67.024 million for the recruitment of a total of 452.6 child protection positions for Operations Divisions to boost allocation capacity, stabilise the allocation rate and to 'protect our kids from family violence'. This investment is inclusive of the 150 fixed term positions made available from December 2016.

An equity review was completed by Performance and Reporting, Operations in December 2016 and updated in May 2017, to ensure the allocation of the positions took into account divisional demand and to boost overall capacity.

This proposal aims to strengthen the Child Protection Operating Model to accommodate the significant increase in capacity for child protection operations. Previous investment in the Child Protection program has been targeted primarily at case carrying roles without any increase in management infrastructure and program oversight. The 2017-18 State Budget and the proposed Area-based structure provides Executive and Management capability to bolster program management and oversight, and provide the support and supervision of staff necessary to ensure quality service delivery and sound decision making.

The proposal also includes the most significant increase in the Executive and senior leadership oversight of Child Protection providing:

- Additional Area Operations Manager (CPP 6.2) and Deputy Area Operations Manager (CPP 6.1) in all divisions.
- Executive leadership of Division-based services and practice advice and support
- 17 Area Directors to be accountable for Area Child Protection operational service delivery
- Nine Assistant Directors to be accountable for the delivery of Area Child Protection Operations with all remaining Areas having a CPP6.2 Area Operations Manager, plus one Assistant Director to have responsibility for Central After Hours Service.

## Likely effects on employees

We have made a commitment as part of the review that there will be no overall reduction in jobs.

The department has made a commitment that there will be no down-grading to an individual staff member's substantive classification in the final structure implemented as a result of consultation. Where there are changes to an individual's role at level, we are committed to ensuring staff have the necessary skills so they can undertake any new roles successfully.

The department has developed standard business rules for the transition of staff from current to proposed structures. Please refer to the Business Rules document provided for further information.

No changes will be made to an employee's basis of employment (ongoing/fixed term/casual) as a direct result of assigning them to a new organisational structure.

Employees on fixed term contracts will be assigned roles in the new organisational structure as part of the process, consistent with the terms of their fixed term contract.

Where required, revised or new position descriptions have been developed and are available for staff to comment and provide feedback as part of the consultation process.

The likely effects on employees, including those covered by the VPS Agreement, arising from the proposed changes are as follows:

The specific role impacts of this proposal are:

Current Role	Impact
<p><b>CPP 6.2 Operations Managers (renamed as Area Operations Managers) in:</b></p> <p>North: Mallee</p> <p>South: Outer Gippsland</p> <p>East: Inner East Melbourne, Outer East Melbourne, Goulburn, Ovens Murray</p> <p>West: Central Highlands, South West</p> <p><b>Executive Officers in:</b></p> <p>North: North East Melbourne, Hume Moreland, Loddon</p> <p>South: Southern Melbourne, Bayside Peninsula, Inner Gippsland</p> <p>East: Divisional Services</p> <p>West: Brimbank Melton, Western Melbourne, Barwon Colac.</p>	<p>Where a CCP6.2 role is replaced by an Executive Officer role the current CPP6.2 Operations Managers who are impacted will be indicatively matched into the Deputy Area Operations Manager roles at the same classification (CPP6). Current classification and salary will be maintained for all affected staff.</p> <p>Four current EOs will be matched into those roles due to their role being discontinued/changed into this Assistant Director role. There will be six Assistant Director roles which will need to be filled through a merit selection process. We would anticipate that a number of current Operations Managers would be interested in the new Assistant Director roles and would be successful in a merit selection process.</p>
<p>Area Managers CPP6.1</p>	<p>Renamed Deputy Area Operations Manager (DAOM) at a CPP 6.1 level. The role is unchanged and reports to the Area Operations Manager.</p>



Current Role	Impact
Deputy Area Managers CPP5.2	<p>This position is no longer in CPOM. This proposal flattens the structure by one level in most Areas, bringing Executive and senior management support closer to child protection practitioners. All existing DAMS will remain at level (CPP5.2) and be matched to either a team manager or practice leader.</p> <p>The matching process will be undertaken through conversations with affected staff to seek their role preference.</p>
Community Based Child Protection Practitioners (CBCPPs)	<p>CBCPPs will be located in the Support and Safety Hubs. Hubs will go live in five launch sites in November 2017 with a gradual scaling to full service provision in January 2018. An enhanced and redefined Community Based CP role is being developed within a new team structure creating scale to embed the role within a broader multi-disciplinary team within the Hubs.</p>
Family Led Decision Making	<p>Converted to Practice Leader (Case planning) providing additional case planning capacity and improved timeliness of case planning. No change to AFLDM.</p>
Practice Leader	<p>With a dedicated team manager supervising the Community Based CP practitioners, the Practice Leader will no longer have supervisory responsibility.</p>