

The logo for Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS) features the letters 'QCOSS' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'Q' is dark red, 'C' is a lighter red, 'O' is orange, and 'S' and 'S' are dark red.

Queensland Council
of Social Service

*Preparing for youth
services renewal:
A toolkit*

May 2014

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Introduction

The Queensland Government has reviewed the services provided for young people in Queensland to refocus its investment in line with the Queensland Youth Strategy.

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (the Department) is requesting funded services transition to achieve the following outcomes for young people:

- increased numbers living at home with family
- increased safe and stable accommodation
- increased engagement in employment ready opportunities, or in training or education opportunities
- increased safety and a reduction in self-harming and suicide.

Beginning in May 2014, the North Coast and Central Queensland regions will be the first transitioned, and the process reviewed before roll out across the state. All services are expected to complete the transition by the end of 2015.

Services transitioning to deliver these outcomes are encouraged to form collaborative partnerships and develop innovative service approaches.

The Department's investment is currently spread across a broad range of youth activities. The renewal process is a change of direction and raises some potential challenges to organisation's service delivery.

The renewal process aims to ensure that service delivery is focused on young people, is responsive to emerging needs, and achieves better results.

QCOSS' role

The Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS), along with the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), have been working with the Department to provide resources and support to help organisations and local governments with the transition.

As well as this toolkit, QCOSS will be providing a range of capacity building activities to guide organisations through the transition to the new service delivery types and modes.

Significant changes

Changes to target group

Services will be asked to target young people aged 12 to 18 who are at risk of disconnecting from their family or community, for example experiencing family conflict and related negative effects.

Questions to consider:

- Who are the young people we currently work with and are they in the target group?
- Is there a gap between our current clients and the identified target group?

- Do we need to engage with young people who do not currently access our service and if so, how should we start to do this?
- Do our staff have the right skills and networks to begin engaging and delivering services to these young people?
- Are we working with young people who are not of the target group? Are there other services we can transition them to?

Service types

Government will be purchasing three types of services:

- Access services
- Support services
- Integrated response services.

Service type 1: Access

Access services will assess client needs and facilitate access to the most appropriate support services, or to information to prevent issues escalating. This service will be providing initial assessment of client need and assistance for clients to access the most appropriate service through referrals. The Department will provide a common assessment tool to ensure consistency and accuracy in client assessments across service locations.

Questions to consider:

- Do we have the capacity, skills, networks and/or resources to deliver Access services?
- Are our staff skilled to deliver an Access service? What training will they require?
- Are our staff capable of engaging young people? Approachable and someone they can relate too?
- Do our staff have the right qualifications, attitudes and ability to relate to young people?

Facilitating access to support services

You will be required to be well connected to a variety of services such as drug or alcohol, mental health, general health, housing, legal, education, or domestic and family violence. After an initial client assessment, your service will be required to identify and support appropriate referrals to services that will assist in addressing the young person's needs.

Questions to consider:

- Are we connected with other services in our area?
- What relationships do we need to develop or nurture?
- Are there organisations or services we have not historically connected with that deliver services our target clients may benefit from?
- Do we have established MOUs or informal networking relationships we can build on?
- How might we formalise our relationships to show our connection to community?
- Are we well educated on the variety of different services provided both by government and non-government providers?

Tools and resources to assist:

- [QCOSS Service Mapping Tool](#) is a tool for people working in the health and community services, clients and carers to access information about organisations and the services they provide. It has been specifically tailored to assist sector workers identify opportunities that they can refer clients into. The base data in this tool has been drawn from the Queensland Government's Open Data Initiative. Community organisations may further extend the information by directly editing their own records. You can use this tool to identify other funded services in your region, to examine opportunities for facilitating service access for young people.
- [Collaborative practice tools on Community Door](#) – these tools include information on interagency protocols and a template for MOUs.
- [My Community Directory](#) is a broad directory of services that is designed for the public to access information on services. You can also use this tool to assess what services are available in your region that you can connect with.
- [Australian Clearing House for Youth Studies](#) gathers research on young people and the issues that affect them.
- [AIRS Standards and Quality Indicators for Professional Information and Referral](#) The Alliance for Information and Referral Services in the USA has developed a practical toolkit of best practice in assessment, information and referral (access) services.

Links to other service providers

Below are some links to statewide service providers that may be able to assist you to find services for young people in your local area. Some local government councils often have community directories and are another good resource for finding services.

- [Legal Aid](#) – dial 1300 65 11 88
- General Health and Mental Health – dial [13 HEALTH](#)
- Homeless Persons Information Queensland – dial 1800 474 753
- DV Connect - dial 1800 811 811
- [Support Services in Schools](#)

Service type 2: Support

Support services will provide individualised, practical and planned assistance to young people to achieve goals set out in case plans developed between support services, the young people they are supporting and any other relevant stakeholders. This assistance will address issues related to, or resulting from, disconnection from family and/or community. Presenting concerns could include family conflict, homelessness, self-harm and unemployment. Where young people's needs are more complex, support services will be able to provide a more *comprehensive client assessment*.

Services will work closely with young people and focus on addressing the following issues:

- Family conflict
- Homelessness
- Self-harm
- Unemployment.

These issues will also form the domains against which client outcomes are to be measured against.

Comprehensive assessment

When a young person presents at your service you will be required to undergo a risk assessment, safety plan and ensure on-going assessment.

Questions to consider:

- Are our staff skilled in engaging with young people in crisis?
- Will our staff require training to undertake comprehensive assessments?
- What training and ongoing support will we need to give frontline staff to ensure assessments are consistent and high quality?
- Do we have processes in place to perform these assessments?

Assisted and supported referrals

To ensure clients are able to keep appointments and are seeing the right people, your service will be required to make referrals and ensure they are completed.

Questions to consider:

- Do we currently have a supported referral process?
- How do we follow up on referrals and support young people to make and attend appointments?
- Do we have any existing referral pathways with other organisations that we can build on or formalise?
- What resources do we need to provide supportive, successful referrals? How will this impact on the cost of our service delivery?

Transport

Services are expected to provide support for young people to attend appointments.

Questions to consider:

- Do we have resources to support young people to attend appointments?
- How will this impact on our travel costs?
- Is there another organisation we can partner with to support young people to attend appointments?
- What other options are there to link young people to service providers in other locations?
- Can we work with other service providers to provide outreach access to young people rather than transporting young people themselves?

Personal assistance

You may be required to assess the financial position of a young person, including access to personal income and/or payments and their living situation, and work with them to address issues in these areas.

Questions to consider:

- What type and intensity of financial assessments will we need to do?
- Are our staff trained to assess young people's financial situation and support needs?
- What kind of tools will we need to perform these assessments?
- What relationship do we already have with our local Centrelink office? What can we do to strengthen this?
- Are our staff aware of the criteria and processes young people need to undertake to access Centrelink benefits? How do we support them to access Centrelink?

Coordinated service delivery

Workers will be required to support and participate in collaborative service delivery to ensure clients receive services across organisations where specific needs exist, e.g. from both Centrelink, a mental health support worker and the funded youth support service.

Questions to consider:

- Are our staff skilled in case management and connecting young people to specialist services?
- Do we currently have any relationships to support coordinated service responses? How can we strengthen these?
- Are we aware of models from other jurisdictions appropriate for adaption to our location?

Tools and resources to assist:

- Common Assessment Tool – to be released by the Department soon.
- [QCOSS Planned support guide](#) assists in the development of a shared understanding of good case management practice across the community services sector. Increasing the use of proven case management practice ensures better outcomes for clients
- [Collaborative practice tools on Community Door](#) – these include information on the differences between cooperation, coordination, collaboration, as well as information on different collaborative models, such as colocation, merges, lead organisation consortia

Service type 3: Integrated response

Services will be asked to *lead and maintain* integrated case management responses for clients across a number of service providers where young people have multiple or complex needs. The integrated response service will maintain a *continuous connection* with the young person to improve their journey through the service system and provide for other involved services to come together to make sure that services work with the client in a seamless and coordinated manner.

Lead and maintain integration

Staff will lead and coordinate complex case management panels for clients. This includes building and maintaining relationships with all stakeholders to ensure collaborative case planning and interventions are implemented to assist young people to achieve positive life outcomes.

Continuous connection

It will be required that at this level of service delivery, providers are able to build and maintain on-going relationships with young people and keep them engaged in their case management plan until clients reach an agreed exit point.

Questions to consider:

- Are our staff trained to engage with young people with complex needs?
- Are there other service providers in the area who are well positioned to deliver services to young people with complex needs?
- Do we have existing relationships across the sector in our area we can use to support engagement in case planning meetings?
- Do we need to consider developing relationships with other government and non-government organisations?
- What resources would assist our service to deliver this service type?
- What examples of this service type do we know of, and can these be developed for implementation with our clients and service community?

Tools and resources to assist:

- [QCOSS Integrated service delivery guide](#)

Service modes

The three service types described above are to be delivered across three modes of service delivery:

- mobile outreach
- centre based
- virtual.

Questions to consider:

- What modes are we best placed to deliver? What modes will we need to transition towards?
- How much will it cost us to transition to these modes of service? Will our overhead costs, such as rent, travel and IT change, or stay the same?
- Are our staff trained and/or skilled in delivering services via mobile outreach, centre based or virtual platforms?

Mobile outreach

Mobile outreach services are to be delivered to young people where they are, e.g. home, school, public spaces, community locations.

Questions to consider:

- Does our target audience know what services we provide?
- Are we able to identify young people demonstrating help-seeking behaviour?

- Does our organisation have an engagement strategy that is targeted at young people aged 12-18 who are not currently engaged with our service?
- Are we innovative and proactive in the way in which we look to engage young people? Know popular places to reach young people in their own environment? (skate parks, shopping centres, parks, cafes etc.)
- Do we have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of workers and young people? Including:
 - minimum staffing levels
 - personal safety procedures
 - crisis response protocol
 - referral procedures
 - agreements with relevant agencies (police, ambulance, local council)
 - end of shift 'check-in' procedures
- Are we equipped with resources to deliver effective outreach? Including:
 - vehicles
 - identifiable clothing/ name badges
 - first aid kits
 - mobile phones
 - food
 - laptops/tablets with internet
 - harm reduction supplies.

Tools and resources to assist:

- [Dovetail- Youth Outreach Fact Sheet](#)

Centre based

Delivering services from a youth friendly site that young people and their families can access.

Questions to consider:

- Is our centre accessible to young people? Close to transport, shops, visible from the street?
- Do we have effective referral pathways so young people can find our service?
- Do we have private spaces for assessment interviews?
- Do we have well established referral pathways to attract young people to our centre?
- Do we provide a welcoming atmosphere for young people to feel comfortable in our centre? For example comfortable furniture, games, posters, music and displays of young people's artwork.
- Do we give young people a sense of ownership of the space to ensure it is youth friendly?
- Do we have a variety of services available to manage all of the client's needs in the one space over a period of time?
- Are our staff aware of effective referral pathways to refer clients to more specialised providers when specific health or crisis issues emerges?
- Do we have effective follow up process in place to ensure referral process has been successful?
- Do we have workers with many attributes to relate to young people (flexibility, consistency, honesty, patience, client-centeredness, humour, non-judgemental)?
- Are we staffed for offer flexible opening hours?

Tools and resources to assist:

- [Good Practise in Youth Development](#)

Virtual

Providing services through digital platforms to communicate, engage and inform young people – for example using social media, Skype, and websites.

Questions to consider:

- Are we aware of the most popular virtual modes of communication with young people in our region? (for example, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, text messaging, apps and so on)
- Are our staff confident in using virtual methods to communicate, connect and engage with young people via these methods?
- Does our centre offer young people access to computers and internet to best suit their needs?
- Are our computers and technology up to date and connected to high speed internet?
- Do we already have or how can we purchase technology infrastructure for our staff and young people to communicate and access support services? (such as iPad, smart phones, and tablets)
- How well trained are our staff members to use virtual technology? What sort of training or professional development could we offer them?
- Does our organisation have social media policy and procedures for staff and young people?
- Do we have the skills to assess and set up the most appropriate virtual portal for outreach?
- Is our website attractive, easy for young people to find, accessible for young people with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse young people, and carry useful information in appropriate language?

Tools and resources to assist:

- [QCOSS Unit Costing Tool](#)
- [Young and Well- Using technologies safely and effectively to promote young peoples wellbeing](#)

Flexible service hours

Organisations will need to consider the breadth of operational hours needed in localities to target disconnected young people. Services may need to offer youth services out of school hours, for example from *6am to 9am or from 3pm to 8pm*, and target some service responses on *weekends and public holidays*.

Questions to consider:

- Are any existing staff willing to take on longer or different hours?
- How much service delivery should occur out of school hours and how many staff would be required to deliver these services?

- What penalty rates apply for staff working out of hours?
- How would this change the cost of delivering our services, and how would this impact the total number of service and output hours that can be provided?
- Are there options for partnering with another service to help us to deliver services to clients across these service hours?
- What do we need to do to transition to extended hours of service delivery? Do we need HR or IR advice? Do we need to recruit?

Tools and resources to help you:

- The [QCOSS Unit costing tool](#) can support you to determine the full-cost of current and proposed service delivery models. The tool can be used to calculate how changes in staffing hours will impact the number of service delivery hours your organisation can provide within existing funding. This information will help you determine if you can provide services across the changed service hours, or if you need to consider partnering with another agency to ensure access of services to young people outside of normal work hours.

Flexible service delivery

The Department will be encouraging innovative and collaborative service models between organisations. Services are urged to think about their current service delivery models and how these can be adjusted to deliver the new service types in innovative ways. The aim being to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

Questions to consider:

- What could we do better or differently to offer new or improved models to our clients?
- What examples exist from other locations or jurisdictions that demonstrate improved outcomes for young people using innovative models?
- Are these models adaptable to our service environment, clients and organisation?
- Are there other organisations our service could partner with to develop and/or offer new or improved services to our clients?
- Would it be possible to collaborate with another organisation to reduce costs and increase availability of services?

Tools and resources to help you:

- [Partnerships Practice Guide](#) is a series of tools designed to provide information, tools and resources to staff in the community services sector. The guides have been designed for anyone who has an interest in partnerships or partnering activities and wants an easy guide to commencing or sustaining a partnership arrangement.

Use of brokerage

Services can elect to set aside a portion of their funding for brokerage; it is up to services to determine how much that should be, in negotiation with the Department. Brokerage is to be made available to clients whose needs have been assessed by providers in the context of access, support and integrated services. Brokerage funds will be used to meet immediate needs that will reduce or extinguish the need for a more intensive intervention. Services will have an option to allocate a portion of their funding to use for brokerage

Questions to consider:

- Do we currently have a system in place to manage brokerage for young people? What resources would assist us to administer brokerage?
- What training or support would our staff require to assess whether to provide brokerage support?
- What rules and policies would we need to apply when providing brokerage to clients?

Collaboration resources

[Collaboration for Communities: Giving power to partnerships](#) is a fantastic tool out of the UK, which steps you through a process on facilitating collaboration between organisations. This tool is useful for managers or directors, beginning to think about collaborating and can assist with identifying partnerships.

[Evaluation of the Multi-Tenant Service Centre \(MTSC Pilots Project\)](#) is an evaluative report undertaken in 2009, for the Department of Communities, Queensland Government. This resource looked at some pilot collaborative models and organisations existing in Queensland, and has a number of process and structure tips for starting and implementing a collaboration model.

[The importance of a new kind of learning in collaborative networks](#) is a short paper that talks about the way in which we learn to develop and work in different kinds of networks. It also includes a great table, which outlines the differences between cooperative, coordinative and collaborative networks.

[Are you ready for business?](#) is a toolkit to enable small organisations to assess their current business capacity and skills. The tools enable an organisation to develop a greater understanding of their strengths, weakness, and areas for development. This toolkit was used to conduct an audit of three organisations that came together to form a consortium. It has since been adapted for the use other organisations' wishing to do the same. This document also has some great tendering tips and is really simple to follow.

[Consortium Toolkit](#) is intended to provide a reference for organisations considering adopting a consortium approach, with a particular focus on the legal and constitutional aspects of consortium development. The toolkit can be used in conjunction with the Fusion Are You Ready for Business pack.

[Collaborative practice tools on Community Door](#) – these include information on the differences between cooperation, coordination, collaboration, as well as information on different collaborative models, such as colocation, merges, lead organisation consortia