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Service Stream	Families and Young People Services	Category	Foster and Kinship Care
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Purpose

- The welfare and best interests of children and young people residing in foster and kinship care is paramount.
- Children and young people need to be cared for within a healthy family environment that is characterised by 'positive-parenting-practices', including: structure and routine; reasonable rules, expectations and age-appropriate limits; guidance, support and encouragement; positive reinforcement; with fair, consistent, and reasonable discipline, and demonstrating tolerance for normal and/or symptomatic behaviour.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors engaged within Foster and Kinship Care (FKC) programs across Mercy Community (MC) Families and Young People Services (FYPS).

This procedure relates to general FKC placements, Intensive Intervention Placement Support (IIPS) and High Plus (HP) support programs.

Procedure

1. Service planning – overview

- 1.1 MC operates several foster care services across Queensland. Although each program delivers similar programs, there will be some differences across regions due to local protocols with partner agencies, such as the Department of Child Safety, Seniors, and Disability Services (the Department).
- 1.2 MC will be adaptive to changing needs, including legislative changes, changes to local protocols (where appropriate) and any other changes that might improve working relationships with partner agencies.

2. Regional relationships

- 2.1 Line Managers and Regional Directors (RDs) are responsible for ensuring that programs are responsive to the needs of the Department.
- 2.2 Line Managers and RDs will attend regular meetings with local Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC) Managers and/or regional Placement Services (PS) representatives to discuss current placement needs, regional needs, targeted carer recruitment strategies, and any other strategies to ensure ongoing program responsiveness.
- 2.3 Line Managers will ensure that feedback from these meetings is made available to all Foster and Kinship Care Practitioners (FKCPs) and any other relevant people via emails, supervision, and team meetings.
- 2.4 Where applicable, Line Managers and, if required, RDs, will attend Quarterly Service Meetings held by the Department. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss program service delivery and its responsiveness to local CSSC placement needs. Where RDs do not attend, Line Managers will provide feedback on areas discussed in the meeting.
- 2.5 Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that formal links with external agencies are established, maintained, and documented. This includes attendance at meetings and any regular communication and correspondence with partner agencies.

Approved By: FKC Regional Directors and FYP Quality Practice Director

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3. Caseloads and allocations

- 3.1 The Line Manager is responsible for the allocation of cases and for monitoring caseload numbers. Allocated FKCPs will discuss any workload management issues with the Line Manager.
- 3.2 Factors that affect caseload numbers include:
- Travel;
 - Worker skills and experience;
 - Carer skills and experience;
 - Other responsibilities (e.g., recruitment activities, training, assessments);
 - Staffing shortages and leave periods;
 - Children and young people who are siblings;
 - Emergent needs (e.g., Standards of Care matters); and/or
 - Assessed levels of intensity or intervention/support required.
- 3.3 General suggested caseload numbers are as follows:
- For general FKC only, 25 – 30 primary placements;
 - For HP, 15 – 18 primary placements;
 - For IIIPS, 10 – 15 primary placements.

4. Records management

- 4.1 Minutes from the inter-agency meetings, any other meetings, and general service planning documentation is filed by the Line Manager on the Shared Drive, under the Interagency Meetings folder.

Definitions

Foster and Kinship Care Practitioner (FKCP)

The employee who has been delegated by the Line Manager to undertake specific case management or placement support tasks.

Line Manager

Employees with supervisory and program management responsibilities of a FKC program.

Regional Director (RD)

The manager with overall finance and program management responsibilities, who is a member of the FYPS Leadership Team.

References

Child Safety Practice Manual (CSPM)
FS DOC FKC Program Overview
Service Agreements (relevant to program region)

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