

Peak Perspectives



This newsletter is a joint initiative of the Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people in the ACT; and Families ACT, the peak body for the family support sector in the ACT.



It aims to provide current information and news to workers and services relating to the implementation of the new Child, Youth and Family Services Program in the ACT.

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1. About this Newsletter

Peak Perspectives is a joint initiative of the Youth Coalition of the ACT and Families ACT. The Youth Coalition is the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12 – 25 years in the ACT. Families ACT is the peak body for the family support sector in the ACT.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT have commenced this monthly newsletter in order to provide workers and services with an overview of the current and relevant changes occurring in the transition to the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP).

Each issue of *Peak Perspectives* will provide an update on key changes and activities related to the CYFSP, such as funded service models, ACT Government initiatives, and peak activities. It will also introduce a topic for discussion each month that the Youth Coalition and Families ACT has identified as a key issue.

2. Messages from the Peaks

Youth Coalition of the ACT

Welcome to another year! We are very pleased to bring you the first issue of *Peak Perspectives* in partnership with Families ACT.

The changes occurring to the youth and family sector are rapid and complicated. It is hoped that this newsletter will help to communicate and make sense of these changes; not only for workers and services within the CYFSP, but also other stakeholders working to support young people and their families in Canberra.

This issue includes a discussion on 'referrals', which we feel is a key issue with significant implications for the youth and family sector. We believe this urgently needs to be addressed to inform service models.

Emma Robertson, Director



Families ACT

Best wishes for the New Year.

Prior to Christmas, the Youth Coalition invited Families ACT to join them in a joint planning session. *Peak Perspectives* is just one initiative flowing from that meeting. Others will follow as the year unfolds.

The collaborative relationship between the peaks is growing stronger by the day and is a vital element in supporting our members during what promises to be a challenging year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Emma and her staff for their support since I took on the role of Executive Officer and particularly for their work on the newsletter.

Will Mollison, Executive Officer



3. Update on the Child, Youth and Family Services Program

This update will be a regular item in *Peak Perspectives*, and seeks to provide an overview of key changes and activities occurring in the transition to, and implementation of, the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP).

This first issue will be longer than subsequent newsletters, because we feel it is important to go 'back to basics' and provide a simplified overview of the CYFSP framework for those who have not been involved in the process to date, or who would like a refresher.

Back to Basics: What IS the CYFSP?

In order to explain the CYFSP, we need to provide some brief history. Currently, the ACT Government coordinates the Youth Services Program (YSP) and the Family Support Program (FSP); two different streams which provide funding to a number of community-based services in the ACT. These are run through the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, under the Community Services Directorate (previously the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services).

In March 2010, the ACT Government began the process of merging the YSP and FSP to form a single program – the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The Youth Coalition, Families ACT, YSP and FSP funded services, and the broader sector have all sought to engage with the ACT Government in this process through a series of consultations.

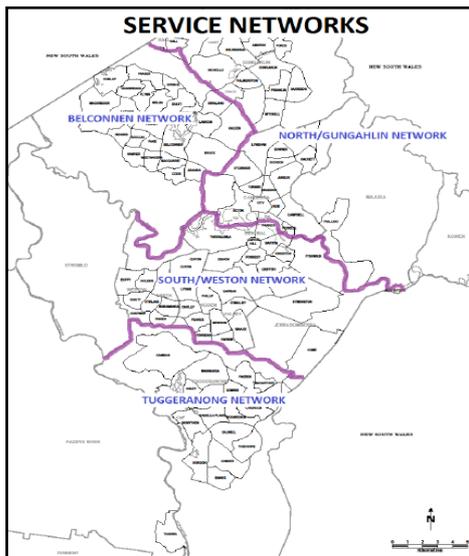
Two years later, the CYFSP will be implemented from 1 March 2012. This will significantly change the scope of the youth and family sector, with many new services opening, and some existing services closing their doors. Workers, services and the sector are currently in a transition period; and working out how to continue to provide quality services and supports to children, young people and their families throughout this phase.

There are four key components to the CYFSP. These include:

1. Central information, engagement and coordination service;
2. Network (locally) based services;
3. Territory wide services; and,
4. Complementary services.

The central Information, Engagement and Coordination Service (IECS) will be the primary intake and engagement service for services in the Framework when contacted by community members or other services. The IECS will be responsible for activities that promote knowledge of, access to and engagement with the service system across the ACT. Parentline has received funding to deliver this service.

The IECS will undertake initial assessments with children, young people and their families; and identify an appropriate course of action. This may include telephone support or a service referral.



Network (locally) based services will operate in four regions across the ACT (see map). They will provide case management activities, group programs, youth engagement services, network coordination and engagement with the broader service system. They will work closely with the IECS.

Territory wide services will provide targeted and specialist services across the ACT. These will include: intensive intervention for Care and Protection and Youth Justice Service referrals, therapeutic services, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement service, migrant and refugee programs and a service for young carers and their families.

Finally, complementary services will include smaller or 'grant-like' recipients, such as the Lone Fathers Association, Majura Women's Group, Scouts, Girl Guides, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, St Vincent de Paul subsidised camps for children and young people and peak activities (including funding for the Youth Coalition and Families ACT).

Funded Services

In late December 2011, the ACT Government released an updated briefing on which organisations will receive funding to deliver services under the CYFSP from 1 March 2012. They are outlined below.

Service	Provider
Information, Engagement and Coordination Service	Parentline ACT Inc

Network (locally) Based Services – Gungahlin / North Region	
Service	Provider
Network Coordination	Barnardos Australia
Case Management	See Territory Wide Services
Youth Engagement	Consortium: Northside Community Services / Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn
Group Programs	See Territory Wide Services

Network (locally) Based Services – Belconnen Region	
Service	Provider
Network Coordination	Belconnen Community Service
Case Management	Belconnen Community Service
	UnitingCare Kippax
Youth Engagement	Belconnen Community Service
Group Programs	Belconnen Community Service

Network (locally) Based Services – South / Weston Region	
Service	Provider
Network Coordination	Consortium: Woden Community Services / Southside Community Services / Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn
Case Management	Consortium: Woden Community Services / Southside Community Services / Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn
Youth Engagement	Consortium: Woden Community Services / Southside Community Services / Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn
Group Programs	See Territory Wide Services

Network (locally) Based Services – Tuggeranong Region	
Service	Provider
Network Coordination	Communities@Work
Case Management	See Territory Wide Services
Youth Engagement	Consortium: Communities@Work / YWCA of Canberra
Group Programs	See Territory Wide Services

Territory Wide Services	
Service	Provider
Intensive Intervention Services	Barnardos Australia
Therapeutic Services	Relationships Australia Canberra and Region Inc
	Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma Inc
	YWCA of Canberra
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth Engagement Services	Companion House Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma Inc
	Multicultural Youth Services Inc and the Youth Coalition of the ACT
Young Carers	Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn (CYCLOPS ACT)
Case Management	Canberra PCYC
	Barnardos Australia
	The Smith Family
	CatholicCare Canberra Goulburn
Group Programs	Relationships Australia
	Canberra PCYC
	Tuggeranong Community Arts Association
	St Vincent De Paul

Complementary Services and Single Select Services	
Service	Provider
Peak Bodies	Youth Coalition of the ACT
	Families ACT
Other	Lone Fathers Association
	Majura Women's Group
	Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services
	St Vincent De Paul
	Scouts ACT
	Girl Guides ACT
	Duke of Edinburgh
	Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation
NAPCAN – National Child Protection Week	

Transition Process

The ACT Government has instigated a number of initiatives and processes that aim to support the transition to the CYFSP. These include:

- Transition Guidelines: These were distributed to services on 16 December 2011, and provided information on the services that would be available during the transition period from December 2011 to March 2012. To obtain a copy of the Transition Guidelines, contact alison.lawrence@act.gov.au. See also 'Transition Services and Closures' below.
- The CYFS Directors' Group: The next meeting will be held 3 February 2012 from 9.30 – 11.30am at Uniting Care, Kippax.
- The CYFS Practice Leadership Group: Seeks to contribute to strategic leadership by providing leadership in practice. The next meeting will be held 23 February 2012, from 9.30 – 11.30am at the Smith Family, Launceston St, Woden.
- Distribution of Communiqués and 'Q and A' fact-sheets: OCYFS have released 4 communiqués that aim to provide the youth and family sector with regular updates about the transition to the new Framework. These communiqués have been accompanied by a 'Q and A' factsheet with information for services. For more information or to be added to the distribution list, email jeremy.chalmers@act.gov.au.
- Communication Strategy: OCYFS have released a draft Communication Strategy. This included a fact-sheet for young people about the changes occurring in the ACT and how it might affect their access to services.
- Planning Days: Two planning days were held in 2011 with services and stakeholders in the youth and family sector, to support and plan for the transition to the CYFSP. The next planning day will be held on 8 February 2012, from 9.30am – 4pm at the 'Reflections Room', Tuggeranong Community and Function Centre, 245 Cowlshaw St, Greenway. It will focus on data collection, training requirements, outcomes and performance measures.

Transition Services and Closures

Current YSP and FSP funded services are in the process of developing transition plans for existing clients. In addition to these plans some additional / special support services will be established during the transition period to provide support to the target group. Other services that will not be receiving funding through the CYFSP have already closed their doors. This section provides a brief overview of these services.

A full overview of these services is available in the Transition Guidelines, prepared by OCYFS. Contact alison.lawrence@act.gov.au to obtain a copy of the Transition Guidelines.

ADDITIONAL / SPECIAL TRANSITIONAL SERVICES		
Service	Provider	Comments
Intensive Case Management	Barnardos	Barnardos has negotiated to deliver this service during the transition period for high-risk clients, though they will not have to be referred from Care and Protection or Youth Justice.
Staff Recruitment Project	Families ACT	Families ACT is providing information on staff vacancies and recruitment action to assist in the transition process (see Peak Activities for more information).
Information, Engagement and Coordination Service	Parentline	This transitory service will offer the IECS in a scaled-down model, including the provision of telephone information and support; and provide an active holding service where required. A Youth Support Line has been established for young people who cannot access their regular support services. Contact (02) 6162 4718.
Therapeutic Services	Relationships Australia	Relationships Australia will commence provision of therapeutic services in December 2011, and will accept referrals from outgoing services.
Low Complex Case Management	The Smith Family	The Smith Family can provide low-level case management to young people and their families over January and February, available to young people transitioning from outgoing services.

CONCLUDED SERVICES		
Service	Date of Closure	Comments
Belconnen Community Service: U-Turn Youth Service Group Programs and Drop-In	Dec 2011	U-Turn will run a school holiday program in January 2012. Youth Engagement Services will commence on 1 February 2012.
CatholicCare Group Programs	Dec 2011	No other group programs will be run during the transition period.
Lifeline Youth NetworX (LYNX)	Dec 2011	Lifeline will not be funded in the CYFSP.
YWCA: SCOPE and Navigate	1 Feb 2012	Although operating until February 2012, these services are not accepting referrals.
Marymead: Families Together	Feb 2012	Families Together, although operating until Feb 2012, is not accepting referrals.

Key Contacts in OCYFS

Ms Leanne Power, Director,
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4. Peak Activities

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT are working together closely to support workers and services to transition to the CYFSP. This includes providing information and resources, undertaking specific projects, being a communication point between the ACT Government and the sector, and engaging in advocacy and policy.

This section of *Peak Perspectives* seeks to provide an overview of the activities that the Youth Coalition and Families ACT are undertaking in relation to the CYFSP.

Peak Meetings with OCYFS

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT have been meeting on a regular basis with Ms Janelle Wheatley, Senior Manager of Strategy and Purchasing. These meetings aim to support the change process and clear communication to and from the sector.

The peaks most recently met with Ms Wheatley on 19 January 2012. Issues raised by the peaks included: best and final offer process, the agenda for the next Planning Day, proposed 'bus tours' induction model, directorate staffing, and peaks' reporting processes.

Update: Practice Framework Project

The Practice Framework will support service providers to implement key elements of the new Service Delivery Framework. It is a tool that integrates theoretical and philosophical approaches with practice knowledge and research / evaluation evidence to inform practice that will best support positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Key issues that the Practice Framework will support services to address include:

1. Engagement of vulnerable children, young people and their families that services find hard to reach;
2. Real and perceived barriers faced by children, young people and their families in gaining access to services;
3. Service users and their needs being central to service design and implementation; and,
4. System changes needed to facilitate shared responsibility between agencies in providing joined up service delivery.

Five agencies will pilot the Practice Framework, using action research methods, during March to June 2012. The primary focus is to test the acceptability and usefulness of the Practice Framework in working with vulnerable clients, and to assess the extent to which it is a viable tool in supporting service providers to implement key components of the Service Delivery Framework.

For more information about the Practice Framework, contact Kate Butler, Project Manager, Families ACT, on (02) 6238 0782.

Update: Staff Transition Project

Families ACT is leading a collaborative project with the Youth Coalition that seeks to provide staffing information to services in relation to the transition to the new Framework. This Project seeks to communicate information about in-coming and out-going staff positions to support the potential movement of staff between agencies.

A template was distributed to services in November 2011 that allowed agencies to identify vacancies and commencement dates. At 22 December 2011, 7 organisations had responded. For more information contact Will on familiesact@frsa.org.au.

Proposed Collaborative Peak Activities

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT are committed to working together closely to support the youth and family sectors in the transition to, and implementation of, the new Framework.

In December 2011, both organisations met to plan activities for 2012 and identify possible areas for collaborative work. Some of the proposed activities include:

- Dissemination of a regular newsletter from the peak bodies (this document);
- Development of a web-page dedicated to CYFSP issues, that will include relevant documents;
- Development and implementation of a professional development program for program managers;
- Development and implementation of training and professional development opportunities focused on skills development (e.g. involving families in youth work practice);
- Exploring the feasibility of an outreach network; or similar activity to support workers to engage in effective outreach;
- Shared work relating to monitoring and reviewing the change process; and,

- Partnering to advocate for a comprehensive and sustainable workforce development strategy for the broad sector working to support children, young people and families.

5. Discussion Topic: Referrals

Each issue of *Peak Perspectives* will feature a key discussion topic that the Youth Coalition and Families ACT identify as a significant issue in the transition to, and implementation of, the CYFSP. It is hoped that this section of the newsletter will inform strategic discussions within the sector, the ACT Government, and groups such as the CYFS Directors' Group and CYFS Practice Leadership Group.

'Referrals' will be a crucial component in developing service models for the CYFSP, particularly for the regional networks and the Information, Engagement and Coordination Service (IECS), in working together to create a service system that quickly and seamlessly delivers supports to children, young people and their families.

The service model for the IECS was presented at the Planning Day on 9 November 2011. It identified that when individuals or families make initial contact with the IECS an assessment will be undertaken and an appropriate course of action identified. This could include telephone support and / or a service referral. In the case of a referral, clients' information could be forwarded to the Regional Network Coordinator (RNC) Engagement Panel; which would allocate each case to an RNC. Each RNC may have differing client matching processes from this point. For example, at the Planning Day, one RNC described the possibility of having two additional panels to assess clients' needs, before matching them to services.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT are concerned that a lengthy and complicated referral process may result in multiple assessments and significant waiting times for clients in receiving access to services. In light of this, it is very likely that clients may approach services directly (particularly services they are familiar with); through the 'no wrong door' approach. It is possible too that many services, both within the CYFSP and in other sectors, will continue to use the worker-to-worker, 'warm referral' method they are familiar with, to ensure continuity of support to their clients.

It is unclear how referral processes for the CYFSP will interact with those of other sectors who support the target group, such as the housing and homelessness sector (for which First Point is the central intake service) or the health sector.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT argue that it is crucial that referral pathways into and within the CYFSP be discussed as a matter of urgency, to inform the development of effective and collaborative service models. The ultimate goal of these discussions should be that:

- Children, young people and their families receive timely access to appropriate support;
- Children, young people and their families are able to access services they feel comfortable with or choose to access;
- Children, young people and their families are not required to undertake multiple assessments or share their stories numerous times; and,
- Children, young people and their families receive seamless inter- and intra-sectoral support.

It will also be necessary to develop and evaluate best-practice resources for workers, services and service-users that clearly articulate the referral pathways available to them and provide information on the support they can expect to receive. These resources will need to be audience-specific (e.g. young people, families, front-line workers) and include workers and services outside of the CYFSP that support children, young people and their families.

If you have any feedback, comments or questions relating to referral processes and the CYFSP, that can inform the peaks' work in this area, contact erin@youthcoalition.net or familiesact@frsa.org.au.

6. Key Contacts

Staff at Families ACT

Mr Will Mollison, Executive Officer
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Youth Housing Homelessness Sector Reform

This addition to *Peak Perspectives* focuses on the changes occurring in the ACT youth housing and homelessness sector.

The Youth Coalition advocates for a whole-of-government approach to supporting young people and their families. While reform of the youth housing and homelessness sector is not being implemented by the Child, Youth and Family Services Program, the Youth Coalition recognises that the changes occurring to each of these sub-sectors of the youth sector will have a significant impact on the scope of the broader youth sector.

Funded Services

The outcome of the tender to provide youth housing and homelessness support services in the ACT has been announced, and preferred providers are outlined below. These services will commence by April 2012.

Preferred Providers for Youth Housing and Homelessness Support Services		
Service	Provider	Description
Housing Support Service	CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn	To support a minimum of 150 (per annum) young people aged 15 – 25, at risk of or who have experience homelessness. The HSS will provide a sustaining housing approach to preventing cycles of homelessness and encouraging long-term positive outcomes.
Crisis Mediation Service	Conflict Resolution Service	To support to a minimum of 20 (at any one time) young people aged 15 – 20 (consideration outside this age range is possible), to prevent them from entering homelessness. The CMS will provide an intensive mediation service at the point of crisis.
Emergency Accommodation Network	Canberra Youth Refuge and The Salvation Army	To support a minimum of 24 (at any one time) young people aged 16 – 25 experiencing homelessness. The EAN will provide a 'safety net' where all other accommodation options have been exhausted. It will focus on immediate safety and support needs and moving young people into longer-term, stable accommodation as quickly as possible.
Friendly Landlord Service	Barnardos Australia	To support a maximum of 80 (at any one time) young people aged 16 – 25, who are at risk of or have experienced homelessness, with moderate to low needs. The FLS will be provided in up to 30 properties and will provide a supportive tenancy approach to preventing cycles of homelessness and encouraging long-term positive outcomes.

Youth Identified Accommodation and Support Program	Barnardos Australia	To support a minimum of 20 (at any one time) young people aged 16 – 20 within family-style accommodation arrangements.
Mentoring, Life Skills and Social Enterprise Service	The Ted Noffs Foundation	To support a minimum of 80 (per annum) young people by providing a flexible approach to the development of life and work skills, with the option of a mentor, assisting to prevent cycles of homelessness and encouraging long-term positive outcomes.
Parents Accommodation and Support Program	St Vincent De Paul	To support 4 families and 20 (any at one time) young parents aged 16 – 25 by providing supported accommodation for homeless young parents and their children for up to 12 months. It will focus on development of life skills and parenting skills.

Transition Process

Initiatives and processes aimed at supporting the transition to delivering the new service models include:

- The Community Services Directorate has committed to providing regular updates, and encourages services to contact them to discuss any concerns. A communiqué was sent out on 16 January 2012, which assisted in developing this document.
- A transitions planning forum will be held on 17 February 2012.
- Information will be disseminated through the Youth Coalition of the ACT, the Homelessness Forum and Joint Pathways.

Key Contacts in Housing ACT

Regarding Tender Evaluation:

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Regarding Service Funding Agreements:

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Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum

The Youth Coalition hosts the monthly Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum (YHHF) on the first Tuesday of each month. The YHHF aims to provide a forum for housing and homelessness providers to improve their practice in supporting young people who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness in the ACT.

The details for the next YHHF meeting are:

Date: Tuesday 7 February 2012
Time: 9.30am: Youth Homelessness Service Preferred Providers only
10.30am: All other services and government agencies welcome
See comments below
Venue: 46 Clianthus St, O'Connor (Youth Coalition Office)

In light of the reforms occurring to the youth housing and homelessness sector, and following consultation with members, meetings for 2012 will take on a different format.

The first hour (9.30 – 10.30am) will be for Youth Homelessness Service Preferred Providers ONLY. The second hour (10.30 – 11.30am) will be open to all other services and government agencies.

The purpose of these changes is to enable preferred providers to have a forum to voice their opinions, access support, and to ensure a successful transition to the new service framework.

Meeting dates for 2012 include:

- 7 February
- 6 March
- 3 April
- 1 May
- 5 June
- 3 July
- 7 August
- 4 September
- 2 October
- 6 November

For more information about the Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum, contact Adelaide Jones on (02) 6247 3540 or adelaide@youthcoalition.net.