

Interchange Shoalhaven Child Safe Code of Conduct

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All members of the Board, management, employees, and volunteers are required to abide by this Code of Conduct, which sets out the appropriate standards of behaviour within Interchange Shoalhaven. The Code should be interpreted with integrity, transparency and common sense, with children's best interests as the primary objective.

At Interchange Shoalhaven the governing body will:

- Take responsibility for ensuring all staff, and volunteers understand and comply with the Code of Conduct and know their roles, responsibilities and duty of care obligations
- Deal with any breaches of the Code of Conduct seriously and responsively, and take appropriate disciplinary action

All members of the Board, management, employees, and volunteers will:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and take responsibility for ensuring that the service operates in child safe environments at all times
- Act as a positive role model for children and young people, and model respectful behaviours at all times
- Promote an open environment where children and young people can have a say and express their thoughts and feelings and be taken seriously
- Treat all children and young people fairly, equally and with respect
- Value children's and young people's ideas and opinions, and believe them
- Welcome parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child's training schedule and any other matters about their safety
- Maintain professional standards of conduct, including keeping clear boundaries between professional and personal
- Promote respectful behaviour, and intervene in situations of bullying between children and young people
- Be aware of their duty of care, and their legal obligations such as mandatory reporting of child abuse concerns
- Be sensitive to the needs of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Be sensitive to the needs of children and young people with a disability.
- Act in accordance with the organisation's policy on appropriate physical contact with children and young people
- Act in accordance with the organisation's policy on online/digital interactions with children and young people (including Facebook, SMS, etc.)
- Respect children's and young people's privacy, and keep children's and their families' information confidential unless otherwise required for safety reasons
- Report any conflicts of interest (such as an outside relationship with a child)
- Be alert to risk of harm to a child or young person from an adult or another child or young person.
- Take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse
- Contact police if a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse
- Take appropriate action if they witness another person breaching or potentially breaching this Code
- Abide by all organisational policies, procedures and this Code of Conduct

- Report any concerns of abuse or neglect

Staff members of the Board, management, employees, and volunteers will not:

- Ignore, disbelieve or minimise allegations or concerns of abuse from children or young people or other adults
- Act in a way that is likely to emotionally abuse, bully, humiliate, oppress or degrade children or young people
- Act in a way that is likely to result in harm to children or young people in any way, including physical, emotional, psychological, or cultural harm.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with children or young people, including for example, showing children sexually explicit material
- Act in a way that may put children or young people at risk of abuse
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Engage in unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with children or young people, such as rough physical play
- Exchange personal contact details with children or young people or have unauthorised contact with children outside of the scope of the organisation's services
- Show favouritism to particular children or young people through special attention, or special relationships
- Take photographic or video footage of any child or young person without their consent and the written consent of their parent/carer
- Work with children or young people under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Use inappropriate language, discuss topics of an adult nature, or express personal views about different cultures, race or sexuality while children or young people are present
- Verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs
- Subject children to unauthorised restrictive practices such as using exclusionary time-out as punishment

Any person found to be breaching this Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action relative to the seriousness of the breach, and may be subject to criminal proceedings. This may include termination of employment with Interchange Shoalhaven.

All staff, volunteers, families and community members are required to speak up if they have concerns about the safety of children. Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to Site Manager Interchange Shoalhaven.

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to external authorities. Refer to Interchange Shoalhaven Code of Conduct for more information about our reporting obligations as well as information on the protections and confidentiality provisions for anyone making a report.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

I have read, understood, and agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Last reviewed:

Next review date:

Responsible officer:

Reportable Conduct - Policy

CURRENT ISSUE DATE: 27 NOVEMBER 2020

PURPOSE (*Why do we have this Policy?*)

This policy helps drive a broader culture of child safety, enables more people to identify reportable conduct, ensuring entities properly respond to allegations of inappropriate or abusive conduct towards children. It provides a framework for greater scrutiny, transparency and accountability in processes and decision making. It also brings reporting into one body, the Office of the Children's Guardian. Staff will be clear about responsibilities and accountabilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES (*Who needs to know about this policy and procedure?*)

Client Services Team /consultants

Site Manager

Support Coordinators

VOOHC Coordinator

Scheduling Team

Board members

Volunteers

Support workers

Contractors

CEO

DEFINITIONS (*What does this Policy and Procedure mean?*)

Relevant Entities

All VOOHC providers are "relevant entities". All relevant entities must notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of all reportable allegations and convictions that occur inside or outside the employee's work.

Heads of Relevant Entities

The most senior officer, the person primarily responsible for executive decision making in the organisation.

Reportable Conduct

This is an allegation based scheme, that is, there is an allegation that an employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct, or that they are the subject of a conviction that is considered a reportable conviction. It means certain defined conduct under the *Childrens Guardian Act 2019*:

- A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- Sexual misconduct with, towards or in the presence of a child
- Ill-treatment of a child
- neglect of a child
- an assault against a child
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Any offence under section 43B or 316A of the Crimes Act 1900, whether or not, with the consent of the child

Sexual Offence

A sexual offence is an offence of a sexual nature under a law of NSW, another state/territory, or the Commonwealth committed against, with or in the presence of a child, such as:

- sexual touching of a child;
- a child grooming offence;
- production, dissemination or possession of child abuse material.

An alleged sexual offence does not have to be the subject of criminal investigation or charges for it to be categorised as a reportable allegation of a sexual offence.

Sexual misconduct

The Act defines sexual misconduct to mean any conduct with, towards or in the presence of a child that is sexual in nature (but is not a sexual offence) and provides the following (non-exhaustive) examples:

- descriptions of sexual acts without a legitimate reason to provide the descriptions;
- sexual comments, conversations or communications;
- comments to a child that express a desire to act in a sexual manner towards the child, or another child.

Note - crossing professional boundaries comes within the scope of the scheme to the extent that the alleged conduct meets the definition of sexual misconduct. That is, conduct with, towards or in the presence of a child that is sexual in nature (but is not a sexual offence).

Assault

Technically, any form of unwarranted touching can, depending on the context in which it occurs, constitute an assault. However the Act explicitly exempts from notification assaults that are, in all the circumstances, trivial or negligible – as long as they are investigated under workplace procedures.

Generally, physical force that does not result in more than transient injury and which had no potential to result in serious injury – with consideration to the context and circumstances in which the alleged assault took place – would be considered ‘trivial or negligible’.

Under the Act, an assault can occur when a person intentionally or recklessly (ie. knows the assault is possible but ignores the risk):

- applies physical force against a child without lawful justification or excuse - such as hitting, striking, kicking, punching or dragging a child (actual physical force);
- or causes a child to apprehend the immediate and unlawful use of physical force against them– such as threatening to physically harm a child through words and/or gestures and regardless of whether the person actually intends to apply any force (apprehension of physical force).

Allegations of ‘serious physical assault’, if proven, must be reported to the OCG for the purpose of the Working With Children Check. Therefore, it is important to obtain the information necessary to determine whether the alleged assault, if proven, will constitute a serious physical assault.

What is serious physical assault?

A physical assault is not serious where:

- it only involves minor force; and
- it did not, and was not ever likely to, result in serious injury.

A physical assault is serious where:

- it results in the child being injured, beyond a type of injury like a minor scratch, bruise or graze; or
- it had the potential to result in a serious injury; or
- the injury suffered may be minor, but the assault is associated with aggravating circumstances (in this regard, aggravating circumstances might include associated inhumane or demeaning behaviour by the employee, for example kicking a child, pulling a child by grabbing the child around the neck).

What is ill-treatment?

The Act defines ill treatment as conduct towards a child that is:

- unreasonable; and
- seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel.

Ill-treatment can include a range of conduct such as making excessive or degrading demands of a child; a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child; and using inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child.

What is neglect? The Act defines neglect to mean a significant failure – by a person with parental responsibility for the child, or an authorised carer or an employee if the child is in the employee’s care – to provide adequate and proper food, supervision, nursing, clothing, medical aid or lodging for the child that causes or is likely to cause harm to the child.

Neglect can be an ongoing situation of repeated failure by a caregiver to meet a child’s physical or psychological needs, or a single significant incident where a caregiver fails to fulfil a duty or obligation, resulting in actual harm to a child or where the failure is likely to cause harm. Examples of neglect include failing to protect a child from abuse and exposing a child to a harmful environment.

What is behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm to a child?

Behaviour that causes significant psychological or emotional harm is conduct that is intentional or reckless (without reasonable excuse), obviously or very clearly unreasonable and which results in significant emotional harm or trauma to a child.

For a reportable allegation involving psychological harm, the following elements must be present:

- an obviously or very clearly unreasonable or serious act or series of acts that the employee knew or ought to have known was unacceptable, and
- evidence of psychological harm to the child that is more than transient, including displaying patterns of ‘out of character behaviour’, regression in behaviour, distress, anxiety, physical symptoms or self-harm, and
- an alleged causal link between the employee’s conduct and the significant emotional or psychological harm to the child.

Reportable allegation

It is an allegation that an employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct

Reportable conviction

A reportable conviction means a conviction (including a finding of guilt without the Court proceeding to a conviction), in NSW or elsewhere, of an offence involving reportable conduct. A reportable conviction may have occurred outside the current workplace. However, it would still be judged to have a possible impact on a child or young person in the workplace as a level of risk may be indicated by any previous conviction.

PROCEDURE *(What do we do?)*

Responsibilities of the head of an entity

The head of an entity (or their delegate) is required to:

- ensure specified systems are in place for preventing, detecting and responding to reportable allegations or convictions;
- make a notification to the Office of the Children’s Guardian **within 7 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation or conviction against an employee of the entity;** www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/reportableconduct
- What should the report contain? 1. Type of reportable conduct 2. Name of employee 3. Name and contact details of the entity and head of entity (or approved delegate) 4. If the reportable allegation has been reported to Police and Child Protection Helpline 5. Nature of initial risk assessment 6. Risk management action Entity heads should provide additional information and copies of relevant material (if available) at the time of notification. If the Department of Communities and Justice and/or police are already investigating a reportable allegation against an employee, the entity is still required to notify the Office of the Children’s Guardian of the allegation. However, the entity should consult those bodies before taking any other action (except action to address any immediate risks).
- as soon as practicable after receiving the reportable allegation/conviction, arrange for it to be investigated/determined;
- If the Department of Communities and Justice and/or police are already investigating a reportable allegation against an employee, the entity is still required to notify the Office of the Children’s Guardian of the allegation. However, the entity should consult those bodies before taking any other action (except action to address any immediate risks).
- Similarly, if the Head of the Entity is of the belief that the matter constitutes a possible criminal offence, the matter must be referred to NSW Police, with the Office of the Children’s Guardian notified within the 7 day timeframe.
- complete the investigation within a reasonable time, having regard to the principles of procedural fairness and the mandatory considerations outlined in Division 6 of the Act; ie: guidelines for assessing conduct (s.40); and conduct that is not reportable conduct s.41)
- provide information about the allegation, the progress of the investigation and the finding and action taken to the alleged victim and their parent/carer unless the head of the relevant entity considers that it is not in the public interest to do so;
- **by 30 calendar days after the head of the entity becomes aware of the reportable allegation, provide either a finalised entity report or an update (an interim report, reasons the investigation has not been completed and an estimated timeframe for completion);**
- make a finding of reportable conduct if satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the case against the employee the subject of the reportable allegation has been proved;
- provide information to the Children’s Guardian that the Guardian requires under relevant provisions of the Act, which may include information about a reportable allegation, the relevant entity’s response to a reportable allegation, and systems for preventing and responding to reportable allegations;
- ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality of information relating to reportable allegations and only disclose information about the allegations in circumstances permitted by the Act or other legislation;

At the end of the investigation of a reportable allegation, the head of agency must send a report to the Office of the Children's Guardian that enables the Office of the Children's Guardian to determine whether the investigation was carried out in a satisfactory manner and whether appropriate action was or can be taken.

Considerations for an Interim Report

The interim report is to include:

- in relation to a reportable allegation—if known, the facts and circumstances of the reportable allegation OR in relation to a conviction considered to be a reportable conviction—any known information about the conviction,
- action taken since the Children's Guardian received a notification about the reportable allegation or the conviction considered to be a reportable conviction,
- further action the head of the relevant entity proposes to take in relation to the reportable allegation or conviction considered to be a reportable conviction, including if the head of the relevant entity proposes to take no further action,
- the reasons for the action taken and the action proposed to be taken or the reasons for the decision to take no further action.

Providing a detailed and updated investigation plan with actions and timeframes, along with supporting documentation, should meet the interim reporting requirement.

What to include in the Entity Report

Once the head of entity is satisfied that the investigation has been concluded, they must, as soon as practicable, provide the Office of the Children's Guardian with an Entity Report that includes:

- in relation to a reportable allegation— information about the facts and circumstances of the reportable allegation, the findings the head of the relevant entity has made about the reportable allegation and an analysis of the evidence and the rationale for the findings,
- in relation to a conviction considered to be a reportable conviction— information about the conviction considered to be a reportable conviction, and the determination the head of the relevant entity has made about the conviction (including whether the head of the relevant entity has determined the conviction is a reportable conviction),
- a copy of any written submission made by the employee,
- information about what action has been, or will be, taken in relation to the reportable allegation or conviction considered to be a reportable conviction, including the following— ● remedial or disciplinary action in relation to the employee, ● whether information about the matter has been referred to a different entity, ● changes to systems or policies, ● if no further action is to be taken— that no further action is to be taken, ● the reasons for the action taken, including taking no further action; **and** ● any copies of documents in the relevant entity's possession that are relevant to the report, including transcripts of interviews and copies of evidence.

Other considerations:

- Conflicts of interest. This could include a reportable allegation involving a senior person from the entity, a Board member, or a colleague with whom a person has a close relationship. In any circumstances, with or without a pecuniary interest, care must be taken to appoint an appropriate person to conduct the investigation if the conflict of interest involves the head of entity, or delegate. Such matters may also be brought to the attention of the Office of the Children's Guardian who may advise on a course of action, or decide to investigate herself.
- Procedural fairness. There are general principles to take into consideration, such as advice as appropriate for the person under investigation. This may include opportunities to put their response

forward, verbally and written, with clear timeframes to be explained, as well as the general process outline. The person under investigation may wish to have a support person present during an interview.

- Support offered to the child, young person and family, as well as the person under investigation.
- Appropriate confidentiality is to be maintained, both in discussions about the matter and in the management of records.
- Supporting a child safe culture through associated processes such as Working with Children Checks and systems, and embedding a learning culture where staff are regularly reminded of , and participate in a code of conduct that aligns with the child safe standards

What to expect from the Office of the Children’s Guardian.

If the investigation has been completed at the point of notification, we will assess the information that the entity has provided and either request further information or give feedback. If the investigation has not been completed, we may ask for further information or wait for your interim or entity report. The Office of the Children’s Guardian can also:

- Monitor the progress of an entity’s investigation concerning the reportable allegation or conviction.
- Conduct a direct investigation into any reportable allegation or conviction against an employee of an entity, regardless of whether or not it has been notified to us by the head of entity. If the Office of the Children’s Guardian decides to directly investigate a reportable allegation or conviction, the entity may be required to defer its own investigation.
- Conduct an investigation into a relevant entity’s response to a notification.

If we decide to monitor an entity’s investigation or to conduct a direct investigation, we will let the entity know about this decision and what to expect. After we receive an entity report, we will assess it and either request further information or finalise our involvement. As part of this process, we may provide feedback about the handling of the reportable allegation, including the investigation. If you do not understand or agree with our feedback, you can contact us to discuss your questions or concerns. The Office of the Children’s Guardian maintains records relating to all notifications of reportable allegations, regardless of the results of the investigation. It is required to make certain reports to Parliament under s138 of the Children’s Guardian Act 2019. The investigation and reporting records are not publicly accessible, as they are exempt from disclosure under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) and our records cannot be requested or subpoenaed for the majority of proceedings as evidence in a court or tribunal. Entities should also be aware that correspondence from the Children’s Guardian about reportable allegations is ‘excluded information’ under section 6 of GIPA. That means that you cannot release those records to any person under GIPA without first obtaining consent from the Children’s Guardian.

MEASUREMENT (How do we tell this procedure is successful?)

Staff will be aware of policy and expectations in creating a child safe environment. They will have opportunities to attend training, and be familiar through regular discussions at team settings and through systems, to understand and be committed to child safety practices. They will bring incidents, critical incidents, reportable conduct matters and reportable incidents to the attention of managers as soon as becoming aware of them. They will document all information on the incident management system and keep contemporaneous notes.

REFERENCES

Children's Guardian Act 2019 Part 4

Office of the Children's Guardian Statutory Procedures (VOOHC) in NSW

Office of the Children's Guardian: the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme Fact sheets 1-10

Office of the Children's Guardian: a guide to the child safe standards



Information Guide
for Participants and their Legal Guardian /
Nominee

Our **purpose** is at the heart of *why* we do what we do;

To enable participants to live their life, their way

Our **vision** is *what* the world looks like when our purpose is realised;

We see a community where all people have choice and lead good lives

Our **mission** is our quest, it's *how* we will achieve our vision;

We provide pathways for people with disabilities to live a good life by asking them what they want and supporting them to achieve this, their way

Our **values** are how we behave and what we stand for;

We have six core values;

Openness

We are committed to the delivery of quality services in an open and transparent support environment. We give people space to express their opinions in a safe and respectful environment, and encourage learning and development. We openly encourage new ideas and innovation in the workplace and actively encourage this in our practices

Respect

We respect all people from all walks of life and cultures and will work with individuals to develop meaningful support. We are respectful in our communications with or about our colleagues, customers and suppliers

Flexibility

We work closely with individuals to match their support to the goals they wish to achieve. We work in an innovative, flexible environment and love to trial new ways

Reliability

You can count on us to deliver what we set out to achieve and be assured that our staff will support you. You can rely on the support of your fellow staff and the team

Responsiveness

We will communicate with people how we are working together to achieve their goals.

We are responsive to the changing needs of the environment we work in and embrace this change positively

Choice

We believe everyone has a choice, and we choose to work as an employer and provider of choice for people here in the Shoalhaven

Welcome to Interchange Shoalhaven

Thank you for choosing us to provide services to you. We have been in the local area for more than 30 years, and value the opportunity to provide support and services to you.

In doing this we will:

1. Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions
2. Respect the privacy of people with disability
3. Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill
4. Act with integrity, honesty, and transparency
5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability
6. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse
7. Take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual misconduct.

We provide a range of NDIS Services for participants in the Shoalhaven and surrounding areas.

NDIS

We are a registered NDIS provider. As a registered NDIS provider our staff are here to make your journey and your experience with the NDIS as simple as possible, from applying for the NDIS, through to providing a range of direct disability services and coordinating your support.

INDIVIDUALISED SUPPORT

We can offer you individualised support including assistance with daily life, transport, home support, assistance with social and community participation and learning and development possibilities, including employment and training opportunities. Interchange Shoalhaven can customise your support using your NDIS funding for areas such as Assistance with Daily Life, Transport, Assistance with Social & Community Participation, Improved Relationships, Improved Learning, Improved Life Choices and Improved Daily Living Skills.

PROGRAMS AND GROUPS

We run Social Support Clubs, Learning and Development Programs and Group Respite for our participants, that aim to provide adolescents and adults with special needs the opportunity to mix socially with others and participate in a variety of activities which can teach them new skills and enhance the quality of their lives.

SUPPORT COORDINATION

Support Coordination assists you to strengthen your own abilities to coordinate your supports into the future, to ensure you can get the most out of your NDIS package, and the most out of life. We will work with you to offer a choice of services and will be flexible to meet your changing needs. Our approach is person centred, which means that you are an equal partner with us, in selecting and receiving supports agreed within your plan.

Support Coordination with Interchange Shoalhaven helps you accomplish your objectives and ensures your services are delivering on the results that you require.

PLAN MANAGEMENT

Let us take care of the time consuming parts of managing your plan, so you don't have to. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is changing the way people with disabilities receive government support and funding, giving you more power over the way you work towards your goals. To get started with our plan management.

SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATION/RESPITE SERVICES

Are you looking for your home away from home? Would you like to gain more independence in a safe, familiar & comfortable environment? You can stay in one of our safe, self contained homes right in the heart of the Nowra CBD with your Interchange Shoalhaven support worker, and you can even split the costs by getting your friends together to use our spacious homes for a getaway by using your support funding. We also have access to other houses in the Shoalhaven Heads and Ulladulla areas.

LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Individual or group settings to work towards increasing your life skills. Participate in Community: The focus is on building independence and creating strong community connections.

DAILY TASKS

Assist people with daily living activities such as cleaning, cooking, shopping and help with organising everyday household activities and appointments.

GROUP AND CENTRE BASED ACTIVITIES

Assisting people including children to participate in group based community, social and recreational activities.

ASSISTANCE WITH PERSONAL ACTIVITIES

Working alongside people supporting to develop self-care living skills and independence.

Your Client Services Manager will work with you to help develop your goals to achieve the good life choices you are wanting to make. Your Client Services Manager will also help you to work through the financial aspects of your plan and will put you and your needs at the centre of discussions with your Plan Manager and Support Coordinator, if you have engaged with these services.

Your goals will be set up in your personalised Service Agreement with us, and may be reviewed at any time ensuring that you have choice and control in your plan.

Following are a few questions that people using our service often ask:-

What if I am a Koori or other indigenous person, or a person from a non english speaking background? What if I am gay or transgender?

Our service will treat and value everyone equally. We will meet your needs wherever possible. We will ensure that everyone feels safe, welcome and respected. You may have a support person, family or agency with you, or an advocate. We will have relevant interpreter services or culturally sensitive or specialist services available if needed. Please let us know if you need a translation or other format - audio or braille, or a specialised service.

How do I cancel or postpone my scheduled support with Interchange Shoalhaven?

Please contact your Client Services Manager on ph: 02 4423 0255, please provide 24 hours notice where possible. You may be charged a minimum of 2 hours support if you are unable to notify us before 3pm the day before your scheduled support.

What happens if Interchange is unable to provide me with the supports I need?

We will always work with you to provide you with the supports you need. If we are unable to do so, we will provide you with the reason why we cannot. We may refer you to other organisations within the community who may be able to assist you. We always strive to provide continuity of service. We value good relationships with other providers and are always working together to help each other out in emergency situations if additional support is needed. We would only do this with your permission, and after discussion with you.

Are you a child safe organization?

We recognise the importance of promoting safety and well being of children, and respect and listen to children's opinions, needs and views. We have safety systems to protect children from risk of harm and foster a culture of safety. We carefully check/screen our workers' history, and provide training to make sure that they are as well equipped as possible to recognise and report situations of harm, and to follow a code of child safe conduct for their own behaviour. We take any reports of risk of harm seriously and will act to protect children. We will also seek every opportunity for children and young people to give us input and feedback about decisions and situations affecting their lives.

How do I provide feedback and comments on the service that I am receiving?

Interchange values your feedback and comments about the services you receive and uses this information to continuously improve our service delivery. If you have any concerns or comments regarding your services, you are encouraged to speak to your Client Services Manager in the first instance. If you need further discussion or resolution, please contact the Site Manager at this office. All concerns will be kept confidential. They will only be discussed with people who need to be involved and to make decisions regarding service provision. Please contact the Interchange staff member that you feel most comfortable with using the method you choose. We can organise an interpreter for you should you need one through the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50. We aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible and you are able to view our Complaints Policy at any time. Be assured that there will be no retribution for telling us how your experience has been or how you are feeling. We want you to feel safe and heard by us.

As we provide services to children, young people and adults, we are mindful of the risk of exploitation and harm for those for whom we provide a service. We will take all steps to provide an environment that is safe, and will work with you to take action if we think, or you think, there is potential or actual risk of harm to you or your child.

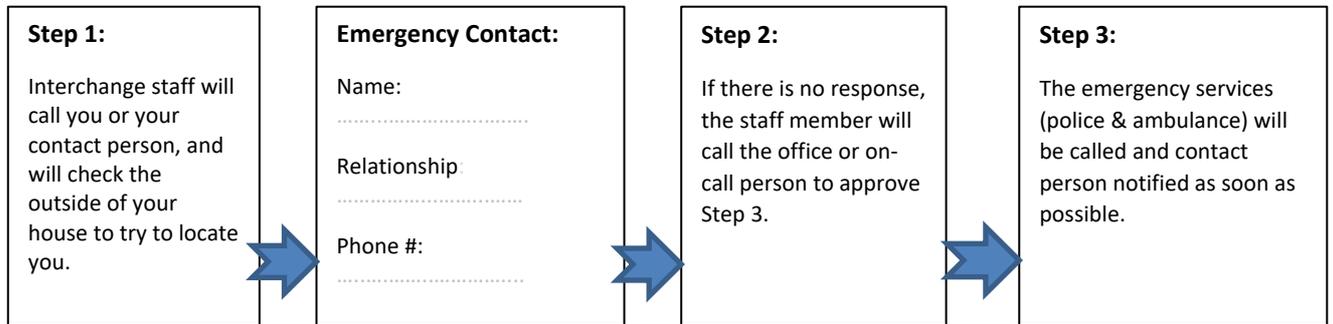
The child protection helpline is 132 111. Also, an e-report is possible through the ChildStory Reporter website. We will take action to prevent abuse- physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.

If you have a concern that you have been unable to resolve with Interchange, you can contact the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission on **1800 035 544** or www.ndiscommission.gov.au for NDIS funded services.

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What happens if Interchange staff attend my house and I don't answer the door?

We take a risk-management approach to prioritising your safety if you do not respond to a scheduled visit. Your non-response plan and emergency contacts details are:



What happens if there is an emergency or an incident when I am receiving a service?

All Support Workers hold a current First Aid certificate. They are able to provide immediate first aid and will contact an ambulance, if required. If an incident occurs, Support Workers will contact Interchange management (who are available 24/7) and/or emergency services, if required. Support Workers must notify Interchange in writing of any incidents and they are recorded in our Incident Register.

Advocacy For Interchange Shoalhaven Participants

Do you know about advocacy?

Everyone has the right to have someone to support them when they are talking to Interchange Shoalhaven. This person is called an advocate.

What will an advocate do?

A good advocate will:

- always act in your best interest.
- keep you informed.
- encourage you to talk about things in the service that affect you.
- keep the service informed about you and your changing needs.
- respect your wishes if you decide to change your advocate.

What are my rights?

- To have your privacy and confidentiality respected;
- To provide feedback, suggestions and comments about the support you receive;
- To inform your Client Manager about how and where your services are to be provided, any change in your needs and/or changes in your health status;
- To be at home, or the agreed place at the agreed time, for your support to occur.

- To have your services provided in an environment free from any form of discrimination, harassment, sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect.
- To access any information that we hold about you. Any requests for information must be made in writing and sent to your Client Manager.

What are my responsibilities?

- To respect the rights of Interchange staff, other participants and people in the community. This includes the right of Interchange staff to privacy;
- To have your medications, if relevant, stored in a Webster-Pak with an accompanying medical practitioner's letter if you require them during your service;
- To refrain from smoking while Interchange staff are providing your support, including in your home;
- To restrain pets on request;
- To be aware that our staff are only authorised to provide the agreed hours and services recorded in your agreement with us;
- To provide us with information that will help us better meet your needs;
- To not offer gifts to Interchange staff;
- To not ask Interchange staff to sign credit card transactions, tell them your personal identification number (PIN) and/or online banking security details;
- To not engage with staff in any financial dealings, including and not limited to requesting support or other services outside the staff member's employment with Interchange.

What are the rights and responsibilities of Interchange Shoalhaven?

- To provide supports according to your needs, choices and preferences;
- To review the provision of supports with you as required;
- To provide supports in a manner consistent with relevant regulations;
- To communicate openly, honestly and in a timely manner;
- To treat you with courtesy and respect;
- To discuss with you all details about how services are provided;
- To give reasonable notice if we have to change a scheduled service;
- To give you the required notice if we need to end the services being delivered;
- To respect and protect your privacy and confidential information;
- To keep accurate records on the supports provided to you;
- To inform you of Work, Health and Safety standards we require for our staff to provide support in a safe work environment;
- To endeavour to respond to your requests for preferred staff, however we cannot guarantee availability of those staff;
- To adjust pricing or rulings in accordance with updated NDIS price guides and policies.
- To immediately act on any issues of concern from you about your safety.
- To respond in a timely way to any feedback or complaint you have made to us.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU

Our contact details are:

Interchange Shoalhaven

37 Holloway Road

South Nowra

02 4423 0255

info@is.org.au

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Interchange Shoalhaven VOOHC Supervision - Policy

DOCUMENT ID: 01-02-13

ISSUE NO: 005

ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE: 5/04/2012

CURRENT ISSUE DATE: 15/06/2020

PURPOSE (*Why do we have this Policy?*)

Interchange is a registered agency providing Voluntary Out Of Home Care (VOOHC) services and accesses the *VOOHC Register* Placement History when a child/young person receives VOOHC with Interchange.

Interchange follows the guidelines of the *Statutory Procedures for VOOHC in NSW* (Statutory Procedures) Section 6: *Supervision of a Child or Young Person's VOOHC* when informed, either through the *VOOHC Register*, from the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) or from a supervising designated agency that a child/young person who receives VOOHC from Interchange has:

- Case management provided by a designated agency or
- Has been in VOOHC for a total of more than 90 days in any 12-month period

RESPONSIBILITIES (*Who needs to know about this policy and procedure?*) Chief

Client Services Team

Site Manager

Support Coordinators

VOOHC Coordinator

Scheduling Team

DEFINITIONS (*What does this Policy and Procedure mean?*) **Child or**

Young Person

- Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* a child is a person under the age of 16 years.

- Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* a young person refers to a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years.

VOOHC - Registered Agency

An organisation registered by the Office of the Children's Guardian to provide and/or to arrange VOOHC

VOOHC Register

The Voluntary Out-of-Home Care Register (VOOHC) is administered by the Office of the Children's

Guardian. The register contains details about a child or young person's VOOHC placements and case plans/reviews.

VOOHC - Arranging and Providing Care

Interchange is a registered agency, registered with the Office of the Children's Guardian to arrange/provide VOOHC.

Arranging Care: Interchange arranges VOOHC care when:

- Care is arranged directly with a parent, either:
 - o At an Interchange facility
 - o Through subcontracting, brokering or direct booking of the child into a VOOHC facility managed by another organisation.

Providing Care: Interchange provides VOOHC care when:

- Interchange is responsible for the care of a child/young person or arranges for an individual to provide the care.

VOOHC - Designated Agency

For the purposes of VOOHC, a designated agency is an agency which may provide statutory and supported out-of-home care by virtue of it being accredited by the Office of the Children's Guardian, or its participation in the Office of the Children's Guardian's Quality Improvement Program. May also provide and arrange OOH.

VOOHC - Principal Care Agency

The agency which currently provides most of a child or young person's VOOHC, as confirmed from the VOOHC Register Placement History and the duration/frequency of care provided by Interchange. The Children's Guardian can advise which VOOHC agency is the principal care agency for a particular child or young person.

Statutory Out-of-Home Care

Court-ordered out-of-home care (OOHC). NOTE: A child in statutory OOH cannot be in VOOHC.

VOOHC - Supervising Agency

A designated agency, or the Office of the Children's Guardian, which is responsible for supervising a child or young person's VOOHC.

Supported Out-of-Home Care

Care provided, arranged or otherwise supported by Community Services after Community Services has formed the opinion that the child or young person is in need of care and protection. NOTE: A child in supported OOH cannot be in VOOHC.

VOOHC Coordinator

The person nominated by the VOOHC agency as its principal point of contact for persons wishing to enquire about the agency's VOOHC placements.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. They collectively show that a child

safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

REFERENCES

VOOHCP 1: Scope and purpose of VOOHC procedures

VOOHCP 2: Key Concepts in VOOHC

VOOHCP 6: Supervision of children and young people in VOOHC

PROCEDURE (*What do we do?*)

Interchange follows the guidelines of the *Statutory Procedures for VOOHC* (Statutory Procedures) in NSW: Part 6 - 'Supervision of a Child or Young Person's VOOHC' as follows:

1. **Supervision of VOOHC of more than a total of 90 days in a 12-month period:** · The Interchange VOOHC Coordinator will check the *VOOHC Register* Placement History when a placement for VOOHC is commenced and will note the number of days the child or young person has been in VOOHC care over the past 12 months;
 - Interchange is aware the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) will raise a notification with the principal care agency for the child/young person if they have been in VOOHC for more than a total of 60 days in a 12-month period. Where a child/young person who is receiving VOOHC from Interchange is noted to have been in VOOHC for more than a total of 60 days in a 12-month period, Interchange will contact the OCG to clarify which agency is the principal care agency for the particular child/young person;
 - Interchange is aware a child/young person must not remain in VOOHC for more than a total of 90 days in any 12-month period unless that care is **provided** or **supervised** by a designated agency or is supervised by the OCG. Interchange will assess the status of the child/young person's Placement History and, where Interchange is the principal care agency, will arrange supervision.
2. **Principal care agency responsible for arranging any supervision which is required:** · Where Interchange is the principal care agency, Interchange will take responsibility for arranging the supervision required;
 - Prior to starting to make supervision arrangements, Interchange will contact the OCG for advice as to whether it is currently the principal care agency for the particular child/young person or, alternatively, the OCG may contact Interchange to inform the agency it is the current principal care agency;
 - Where Interchange takes responsibility for arranging supervision as the principal care agency, Interchange is responsible for arranging any supervision required and may replace a supervising agency with another supervising agency at any time;
 - Interchange, as a registered agency, will begin making supervision arrangements before the child/young person has been in VOOHC for more than a total of 90 days in the preceding 12 month period, if there is no current supervising agency.
3. **Supervision arranged by Interchange as the principal care agency**
 - The OCG will provide the Interchange VOOHC Operations Manager with weekly email alerts where unsupervised VOOHC clients have been in VOOHC for more than a total of 60 days in a 12-month period;

- The Interchange VOOHC Operations Manager will commence making arrangements for supervision as soon as possible after receiving such an alert, unless the Operations Manager knows the child/young person will be leaving care before the 90-day threshold is reached;
- The Interchange VOOHC Operations Manager will ask a specific designated agency which provides/arranges VOOHC to supervise the child/young person's VOOHC. Interchange may use the OCG's website to access the list of designated agencies authorised to supervise VOOHC. Interchange will verify the nominated agency is not subject to a condition which precludes it from supervising VOOHC;
- The Interchange VOOHC Operations Manager may choose to arrange for different designated agencies to supervise the VOOHC of different children within the care of Interchange;
- Interchange will inform the child/young person's parent(s) when supervision has been arranged and will provide them with the name and contact details of the supervising agency.

4. Interchange, as the registered VOOHC agency, will notify the Office of the Children's Guardian where the supervision requirement is not met

Where Interchange provides VOOHC to a child/young person who has been in VOOHC for more than 90 days in a 12-month period and that care is not supervised by a supervising agency, Interchange will notify the OCG. Interchange will complete:

- o The *VOOHC Supervision Alert* form, available from the OCG website and will email the completed form to the OCG on voohc@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au · Where a child/young person enters Interchange care immediately before/after the 90-day threshold is reached, a technical breach may occur and Interchange will contact the OCG to detail the circumstances of such breach.

5. Responsibilities of the supervising agency and lead planning agency · As a registered agency, Interchange does not currently undertake the responsibilities of a supervising agency

6. Supervising VOOHC where the child/young person has a case manager · Interchange is aware supervision and case management **are not** the same thing. Therefore, where Interchange is providing case management per the attached definition, Interchange will prepare and review the case plan for the child/young person. The supervising agency will only take responsibility for ensuring a case plan is prepared and/or reviewed. As a non designated agency, Interchange will have case plans and reviews approved by a supervision agency.

7. Supervising agency must lodge a *Supervisor Notification*

- As a registered agency, Interchange does not currently undertake the responsibilities of a supervising agency and, as such, is not required to lodge a *Supervisor Notification* report.

8. Ending supervision of a child/young person's VOOHC

- The supervising agency who is providing supervision for a VOOHC client for whom Interchange is the principal care agency will remain responsible for supervising all of the child/young person's VOOHC until:
 - o A designated agency becomes the principal care agency for the child/young person and assumes responsibility for supervising all the child/young person's VOOHC or
 - o Interchange arranges for another supervision agency to supervise the child/young person's VOOHC or
 - o The supervising agency otherwise ends the supervision and provides Interchange with reasonable time to arrange alternative supervision.

- When any of the above occur, the outgoing supervising agency must:
 - o Complete the *End of Supervision Notification* form, which is available from the OCG website and email it to the OCG at voohc@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au within 5 working days of ending supervision; and
 - o Inform Interchange, as the principal care agency, or any other agency which may be providing VOOHC to the child/young person that its supervision of the child/young person's VOOHC has ended.
 - o Where Interchange is providing VOOHC for a child/young person who is receiving supervision and where Interchange is not the principal care agency, the supervising agency which is ending supervision will notify Interchange of the change to the supervision arrangements.

Interchange Shoalhaven VOOHC Register - Policy

DOCUMENT ID: 02-01-03

ISSUE NO: 007

ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE: 5/04/2012

CURRENT ISSUE DATE: 13/08/2020

PURPOSE (*Why do we have this Policy?*)

This policy informs the process by which Interchange enters information on the *VOOHC Register* within the time frame determined by the *Statutory Procedures for Voluntary Out-of-Home Care in NSW* (July 2020 version).

RESPONSIBILITIES (*Who needs to know about this policy and procedure?*) CI

Client Services Team

Site Manager

Support Coordinators

VOOHC Coordinator

Scheduling Team

DEFINITIONS (*What does this Policy and Procedure mean?*)

Child or Young Person

- Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* a child is a person under the age of 16 years.

- Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* a young person refers to a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years.

VOOHC - Arrangements which are/are not VOOHC

Voluntary out-of-home care (VOOHC) is out-of-home care for children and young people which is arranged by the parent/guardian of the child with an organisation. VOOHC arrangements may take many forms, including centre-based respite

VOOHC does not include:

- Care provided by an individual in a private capacity
- Care provided outside NSW
- Statutory Out-of-Home Care (OOHC)
- Supported out-of-home care, which is care provided, arranged by or otherwise supported by Community Services, Department of Human Services NSW after Community Services has formed the opinion that the child/young person is in need of care and protection;

- Care excluded from the definition of OOHC by the Act/Regulation, e.g. boarding school, holiday camps, health facility or detention centers
- Care provided to a child under the age of 8 years S.3.6 Statutory Procedures

VOOHC Agency

An organisation which arranges or provides VOOHC, in accordance with an arrangement between the agency and the parent(s) of a child or young person. A VOOHC agency is categorised as either a designated or registered agency.

VOOHC Register

The Voluntary Out-of-Home Care Register (VOOHC) is administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian. The register contains details about a child or young person's VOOHC placements and case plans/reviews.

Statutory Out-of-Home Care

Court-ordered out-of-home care (OOHC). NOTE: A child in statutory OOHC cannot be in VOOHC.

Supported Out-of-Home Care

Care provided, arranged or otherwise supported by Community Services after Community Services has formed the opinion that the child or young person is in need of care and protection. NOTE: A child in supported OOHC cannot be in VOOHC.

VOOHC Coordinator

The person nominated by the VOOHC agency as its principal point of contact for persons wishing to enquire about the agency's VOOHC placements.

Voluntary Out-of-Home Care (VOOHC)

VOOHC is out-of-home care that is arranged by a parent of a child or young person (ie a person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person), or a person authorised by the parent to act on their behalf with an organisation. VOOHC arrangements can take many forms, including out-of-home respite (eg host family or centre-based) or longer-term care arrangements.

A child or young person (under the age of 18) is in VOOHC when:

- he or she stays at a place other than his/her usual home for one or more nights; · he or she is in the care and control of a person other than his/her parent (ie a person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person); and
- his/her parent has entered into an arrangement with an organisation to provide or arrange that care (a voluntary arrangement).

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. They collectively show that a child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

REFERENCES

NDISCPS 1: Rights and responsibility for participants
NDISCPS 3: Provision of supports
NDISCPS 4: Support provision environment
NSDS 1: Rights
NSDS 4: Feedback and Complaints
NSDS 5: Service Access
NSDS 6: Service Management
NSWDSS 1: Rights
NSWDSS 4: Feedback and Complaints
NSWDSS 5: Service Access
NSWDSS 6: Service Management
VOOHCP 3: Principles to be applied in VOOHC
VOOHCP 5: Intake and Assessment
VOOHCP 8: Leaving VOOHC
VOOHCP 9: Interagency Coordination and Information Exchange

PROCEDURE *(What do we do?)*

To ensure all Voluntary Out Of Home Care (VOOHC) placements are placed on the *VOOHC Register* within the specified time and no Statutory Out of Home Care or Supported Out Of Home Care placements (SOOHC) are placed on the *VOOHC Register* in line with the *Statutory Procedures for Voluntary Out-of-Home Care in NSW (Statutory Procedures)*.

VOOHC Placement Parent Notification - Team Coach:

- A standard letter is sent to the carer that has requested VOOHC by the Client Services Team This letter informs the carer of the VOOHC placement and includes the placement:
 - o Date;
 - o Time of arrival;
 - o Address of the VOOHC placement;
 - o Time for collection at the end of the placement;
 - o NSW voluntary out-of- home care Information for families;
 - o Responsibilities of Interchange and the parents with respect to ongoing care.
- When the carer accepts a VOOHC placement:
 - o The specific care information detailing the placement is entered onto a *Scope of Work*

(SOW) by the Interchange VOOHC Coordinator; who consults with the Client Services Team and places a request for support with the Scheduling Team

- o The VOOHC Coordinator Diarises the placement entry and exit dates to ensure a VOOHC placement notification for the child/young person is made to their parents within 7 days of the placement being arranged, to the *VOOHC Register* within 5 working days at the start of each placement (*Statutory Procedures* Section 5.7) and within 5 working days of the placement ending (*Statutory Procedures* Section 8.3).

VOOHC Register Reports:

The process of reporting VOOHC placements using the *VOOHC Register*. The Client Services Team will notify the VOOHC Coordinator of the VOOHC placement by Task on the CRM (Customer relationship management). Upon receipt of this notification, the VOOHC Coordinator will:

1. **Confirm:**
 - Confirm placement entry and exit dates with the The Client Services Team.
2. **Check:**
 - Check the child/young person's unique identification details, including name, place of birth and date of birth using the CRM Profile for the child/young person.
3. **Register log-in:**
 - Log in to *VOOHC Register*.
 - Uses the *VOOHC Register Manual* and associated user name, password and CVG numbers to log in.
 - Uses the VOOHC Quick Links to enter the notification(s) as follows:
4. **Placement and Exit:**
 - Short-term respite (less than 3 nights)
 - Follow prompts for VOOHC 'New Placement'
 - Complete the 'Child and Placement Details' form including:
 - o Child/young person details
 - o Placement details
 - Complete both 'Placement Entry Date' and 'Placement Exit Date' on the same notification, at the time of exit of the client from respite and within 5 working days of the placement starting. NOTE: This will comply with the 5 day requirement for both the start of and exit from the respite placement.
 - Complete 'Placement Type' Confirm details
 - o Submit the placement notification.
5. **Records:**
 - The VOOHC Coordinator will receive email confirmation of the successful placement notification and will save a copy of the successful notification to the Child/young persons CRM Profile.
6. **Internal Notification:**
 - The VOOHC Coordinator will report all VOOHC Placements internally through the weekly Client Services Team Meeting as a standing agenda item. The Site Manager and relevant employees.
7. **Continuity of Service:**
 - All Client Services Team are trained in VOOHC procedures and *VOOHC Register* requirements during induction and through ongoing refresher training. The VOOHC Coordinator and the Site Manager obtain the *VOOHC Register* log-in details. The VOOHC Coordinator keeps an up to-date folder on the *VOOHC Register* requirements and procedures, and in their absence and under the instruction of the Site Manager is handed over to another trained Client Services Team Member.

VOOHC Desktop Monitoring

VOOHC Register

- When providing VOOHC Placements, Interchange must lodge the placement within 5 working days of the placement start date on the *VOOHC Register* to ensure each child/young person's placement history is current. Failure to record a child/young person's placement within the required timeframes may result in a child/young person's placement history being inaccurate and a supervision and/or case plan requirement not be identified until after the 90 days or 180 days in care has been breached.
- Supervising designated agencies must lodge a Supervisor Notification on the *VOOHC Register* within 5 working days of commencing supervision.
 - Where a case plan is required, a designated agency must lodge a Case Plan Notification on the *VOOHC Register* within 5 working days of a case plan or review being finalised.

VOOHC Register Weekly Reports

- Interchange may receive weekly reports from the Office of Children's Guardian (OCG) if any placements entered into the *VOOHC Register* have any conflicts like duplications, incorrect spelling of names and conflicting placement dates. This may require feedback and a resolution to the OCG or prompt an onsite monitoring visit.

VOOHC Register Quarterly Activity Reports

- Interchange will receive an OCG generated *VOOHC Register* Quarterly Activity Report (QAR).
- The QAR captures Interchange's compliance with the *VOOHC Register* and procedures and identifies areas of improvement.
- The QAR is used as a self-monitoring, planning and compliance tool.
- If no placements have been made within the quarter Interchange will still receive a QAR to check against our records and are to advise in writing, by email to the OCG that Interchange had no placements for that quarter.

VOOHC Onsite Monitoring

- The OCG will conduct a scheduled onsite monitoring visit, as part of the Monitoring Framework.
- The visit will be based on the VOOHC Registration and desktop assessment process. · OCG will advise Interchange by writing that a visit is planned.
- Interchange's VOOHC Coordinator and other relevant staff are to be present during the visit with relevant documentation available on placements.
- Interchange will also be required to have the Working With Children Checks register available for review.
- OCG will provide Interchange with a monitoring visit report following the visit. This report will include:
 - o A summary of findings detailing Interchange's compliance with the *Statutory Procedures*; and
 - o Any recommendations for improvement.

VOOHC legislation:

The VOOHC provisions within the following legislation are relevant for Interchange VOOHC placements:

Children's Guardian Act 2019 Part 5

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Section 135

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012 Part 6, Division 5.

MEASUREMENT *(How do we tell this procedure is successful?)*

The VOOHC Coordinator will maintain records of placements from the VOOHC register:

- The number of placements
- Lodgement time frames
- Duplicate placements

STANDARD POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy Title: VOOHC Statutory Procedures

DOCUMENT ID: 01-02-12
ISSUE NO: 006
ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE: 13/08/2012
CURRENT ISSUE DATE: 15/06/2020

PURPOSE

(Why do we have this Policy?)

Interchange arranges and provides Voluntary Out-of-Home Care (VOOHC) for children and young people in NSW. In doing so, Interchange follows the guidelines of:

- The Children's Guardian *Statutory Procedures for Voluntary Out-Of-Home Care in NSW* (June 2020 version)
- The key provisions of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW) ('the Act')
- The *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012* (NSW) ('the Regulation')
- The relevant provisions of the *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (NSW)

Interchange has a set of policies, procedures and practices which support compliance with these procedures. This policy details to the scope and purpose of the Interchange VOOHC procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

(Who needs to know about this policy and procedure?)

Chief Executive Officer
Quality Consultant
Consultants
Operations Manager
VOOHC Coordinator

DEFINITIONS

(What does this Policy and Procedure mean?)

Carer

A person who, through family relationship or friendship, looks after a frail older person, a person with a disability or a person with a chronic illness. Carers look after people in the community or in their own homes.

The *NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* defines a carer as:

- ...an individual who provides ongoing personal care, support and assistance to an individual who needs it because that other individual:
 - is a person with a disability within the meaning of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*,
 - or
 - has a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness) or
 - has a mental illness or
 - is frail and aged.

The Act clarifies a person is not a carer for the purposes of the Act if the person provides care:

- under a contract of service or a contract for the provision of services, or
- in the course of doing voluntary work for a charitable, welfare or community organisation, or
- as part of the requirements of a course of education or training.

The person who in the caring role must identify themselves in this role.

The Act notes a person is not a carer for the purposes of the Act merely because the person:

- is the spouse or de facto partner of the person or
- is the parent, guardian, child or other relative of the other person or
- lives with the other person

Child or Young Person

- Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* a child is a person under the age of 16 years.

- Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* a young person refers to a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years.

Chapter 16A

Chapter 16A of the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

Chapter 16A allows information to be exchanged between prescribed bodies despite other laws which prohibit or restrict the disclosure of personal information, such as the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* and the *Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988*.

Previously this information exchange was generally only possible where the information was sent to or received from Community Services.

Chapter 16A allows for the exchange of information between prescribed bodies without Community Services involvement. In this Chapter, the term "organisation" applies to all "prescribed bodies", whether they are government or an NGO.

VOOHC - Registered Agency

An organisation registered by the Office of the Children's Guardian to provide and/or to arrange VOOHC.

VOOHC - Arrangements which are/are not VOOHC

Voluntary out-of-home care (VOOHC) is out-of-home care for children and young people which is arranged by the parent/guardian of the child with an organisation. VOOHC arrangements may take many forms, including centre-based respite

VOOHC does not include:

- Care provided by an individual in a private capacity
- Care provided outside NSW
- Statutory Out-of-Home Care (OOHC)
- Supported out-of-home care, which is care provided, arranged by or otherwise supported by Community Services, Department of Human Services NSW after Community Services has formed the opinion that the child/young person is in need of care and protection;
- Care excluded from the definition of OOHC by the Act/Regulation, e.g. boarding school, holiday camps, health facility or detention centers

VOOHC Agency

An organisation which arranges or provides VOOHC, in accordance with an arrangement between the agency and the parent(s) of a child or young person. A VOOHC agency is categorised as either a designated or registered agency.

VOOHC Register

The Voluntary Out-of-Home Care Register (VOOHC) is administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian. The register contains details about a child or young person's VOOHC placements and case plans/reviews.

VOOHC - Arranging and Providing Care

Interchange is a registered agency, registered with the Office of the Children's Guardian to arrange/provide VOOHC.

Arranging Care: Interchange arranges VOOHC care when:

- Care is arranged directly with a parent, either:
 - At an Interchange facility
 - Through sub-contacting, brokering or direct booking of the child into a VOOHC facility managed by another organisation.

Providing Care: Interchange provides VOOHC care when:

- Interchange is responsible for the care of a child/young person or arranges for an individual to provide the care.

VOOHC - Designated Agency

For the purposes of VOOHC, a designated agency is an agency which may provide statutory and supported out-of-home care by virtue of it being accredited by the Office of the Children's Guardian, or its participation in the Office of the Children's Guardian's Quality Improvement Program. May also provide and arrange OOH.

VOOHC - Lead Planning Agency

The lead planning agency for the purpose of the VOOHC statutory procedures is the agency with lead responsibility for preparing and reviewing case plans. Where there is a case manager, the agency with case management becomes the lead agency. Where there is no case manager, the principal care agency or another agency which has agreed, with the principal care agency's consent, to prepare or review a case plan.

VOOHC - Management Plan

For the purposes of the VOOHC statutory procedures, a management plan is a plan to address the particular care needs of, or risks associated with, the child or young person (e.g. Health Plan, Nutrition Plan, Behaviour Management Plan, Risk Management Plan, Epilepsy Plan, Asthma Plan or Allergy Plan).

VOOHC - Principal Care Agency

The agency which currently provides most of a child or young person's VOOHC, as confirmed from the VOOHC Register Placement History and the duration/frequency of care provided by Interchange. The Children's Guardian can advise which VOOHC agency is the principal care agency for a particular child or young person.

VOOHC - Service Planning

Planning by a VOOHC agency to address the child or young person's immediate and/or ongoing day-to-day care needs in a VOOHC placement with the agency.

Statutory Out-of-Home Care

Court-ordered out-of-home care (OOHC). NOTE: A child in statutory OOHC cannot be in VOOHC.

VOOHC - Supervising Agency

A designated agency, or the Office of the Children's Guardian, which is responsible for supervising a child or young person's VOOHC.

Supported Out-of-Home Care

Care provided, arranged or otherwise supported by Community Services after Community Services has formed the opinion that the child or young person is in need of care and protection. NOTE: A child in supported OOHC cannot be in VOOHC.

VOOHC Coordinator

The person nominated by the VOOHC agency as its principal point of contact for persons wishing to enquire about the agency's VOOHC placements

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. They collectively show that a child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

REFERENCES

VOOHCP 1: Scope and purpose of VOOHC procedures

VOOHCP 10: Reporting Significant Harm

VOOHCP 2: Key Concepts in VOOHC

VOOHCP 3: Principles to be applied in VOOHC

VOOHCP 4: Summary of VOOHC process

VOOHCP 5: Intake and Assessment

VOOHCP 6: Supervision of children and young people in VOOHC

VOOHCP 7: Planning and Reviewing

VOOHCP 8: Leaving VOOHC

VOOHCP 9: Interagency Coordination and Information Exchange

PROCEDURE *(What do we do?)*

The Interchange policies and practices comply with further NSW and Commonwealth laws, funding body service standards and guidelines relating to community care services, including and not limited to:

- The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW)
- The *Carers Recognition Act 2010* (NSW);
- The NSW and Commonwealth Privacy legislation
- Conventions:
 - United Nations: *Convention on the Rights of the Child*;
 - United Nations: *Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities*

Section 1: Scope and Purposes of VOOHC Procedures

The scope and purpose of the policies used by Interchange in arranging and providing VOOHC services are as follows:

- The Interchange policies and procedures incorporate guidelines for the broad range of Interchange programs, along with details of the specific requirements for children/young people accessing care under VOOHC.
- These policies and procedures detail the Interchange process for:
 - Managing the intake and assessment of children and young people entering VOOHC, per policy *02-02-00: Service - Assessment*;
 - Working cooperatively with the parent(s) and/or those with parental responsibility for the child/young person, per policy *02-01-04: Family Relationships*;
 - Working cooperatively with other organisations in supporting the safety, welfare and well being of children/young people in VOOHC;
 - Co-ordinating decision-making, service delivery and sharing of information with other organisations in accordance with the policy *01-02-07: Chapter 16A Coordination of Services, Compliance and Authorisations*;
 - Making child protection reports where a child/young person is at risk of significant harm, per policy *01-02-08: Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting*;
 - Planning and reviewing the care of children and young people in VOOHC with Interchange, per policies *02-03-00: Service - Care Plan Development* and *02-04-00: Service - Client Reassessment*;
 - Ensuring a designated agency or the NSW Children's Guardian provides or supervises the care of children and young people who have been in VOOHC for more than a total of 90 days in a 12-month period, per policy *01-02-12: VOOHC Statutory Procedures*;
 - Manages the process when a child/young person leaves VOOHC, per policy *02-01-02: Service Exit*.
 - Follows the Interchange policy and procedure for intake and assessment, supervision, case planning and inter- agency coordination framework to:
 - Reduce the risk of children/young people 'drifting' in the VOOHC system without appropriate planning and care and
 - Promote improved quality, consistency, efficiency and coordination in the delivery of VOOHC services.

Section 2: Key VOOHC Concepts

Interchange follows the VOOHC definitions linked to this policy, clarifying the:

- Arrangements which are and are not VOOHC;
- Meaning of a VOOHC agency which, in the case of Interchange, is a registered agency; and
- Definitions for VOOHC including:
 - Arranging VOOHC;

Section 3: Principles to be applied in arranging, providing or supervising VOOHC

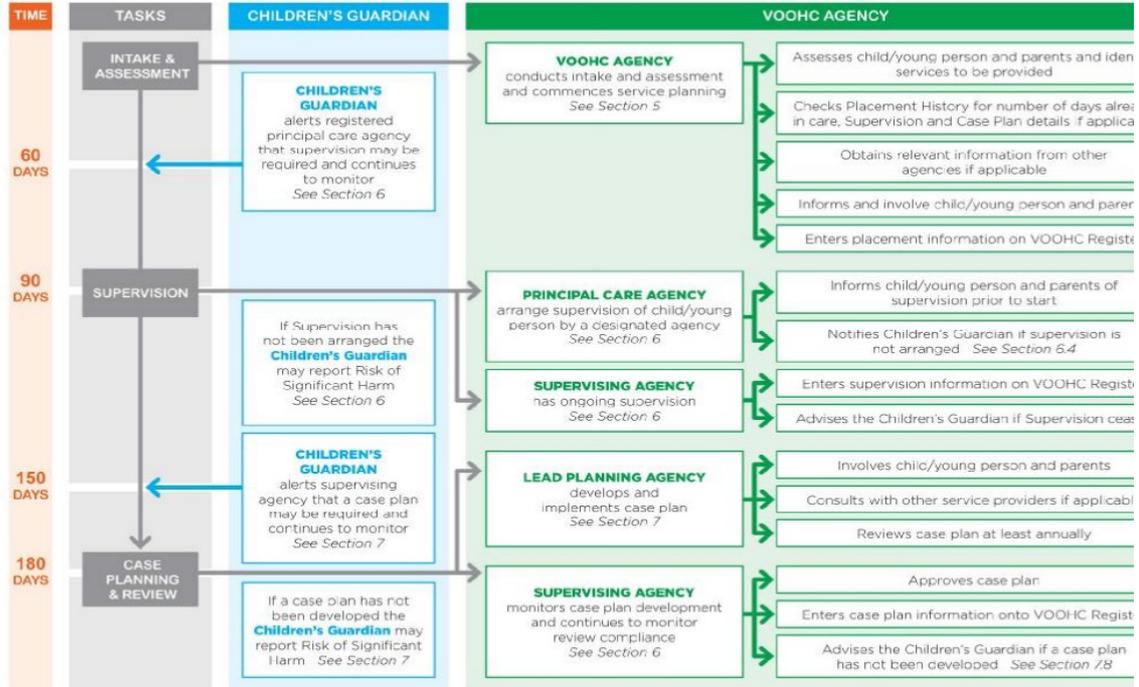
Interchange policies for the Section 3 of the *Statutory Procedures* are as follows:

- **3.1: A family-centred approach will be taken to VOOHC but the safety, welfare and well being of the child/young person is paramount:** Interchange policy 02-01-04: *Family Relationships* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.1 of section 3.
- **3.2: Children and young people and their parent(s) must be able to make informed choices about services and participate in decision-making:** Interchange policy 02-03-10" *Participation* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.2 of section 3.
- **3.3: VOOHC agencies and funding bodies must work collaboratively in coordinating decision-making and service delivery for children/young people:** Interchange policy 01-02-07: *Chapter 16A - Coordination of Services, Compliance and Authorisations* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.3 of section 3.
- **3.4: VOOHC is a critical service for supporting the relationship between a child/young person and their family:** Interchange policy 03-02-30: *Service - Delivery* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.4 of section 3.
- **3.5: Children/young people must not be placed in VOOHC if appropriate services can be provided for them to remain with their families:** Interchange policy 02-03-30: *Service - Delivery* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.5 of section 3.
- **3.6: VOOHC services must be age appropriate:** Interchange policy 03-02-30: *Service Delivery* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.6 of section 3.
- **3.7 VOOHC agencies must support a child/young person to maintain connections with their family and community:** Interchange policy 02-01-04: *Family Relationships* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.7 of section 3.
- **3.8: VOOHC agencies must be respectful of any cultural needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds:** Interchange policy 01-08-00: *Physical Resources* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.8 of section 3.
- **3.9: Children/young people and their parent(s) must have access to fair and equitable procedures for dealing with complaints and disputes concerning VOOHC services:** Interchange policy 03-03-00: *Complaints and Client Feedback* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with point 3.9 of section 3.

Section 4

Summary of the VOOHC Process

4. SUMMARY OF THE VOOHC PROCESS See Section 11 for Glossary of Terms



Section 5: Intake and Assessment

Interchange policies *02-02-00: Service - Assessment* and *02-01-01: Service - Access* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with points 5.1 - 5.7 of section 5 of the *Statutory Procedures*.

Section 6: Supervision of a child or young person's VOOHC

Interchange policy *01-02-13: VOOHC Supervision* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with points 6.1 - 6.8 of section 6 of the *Statutory Procedures*.

Section 7: Planning and Reviewing VOOHC

Interchange policy *02-03-00: Service - Care Plan Development* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with points 7.1 - 7.9 of section 7 of the *Statutory Procedures*.

Section 8: Leaving VOOHC

Interchange policy *02-01-02 Service Exit* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with points 8.1 - 8.5 of section 8 of the *Statutory Procedures*.

Section 9: Service Coordination and Information

Exchange in a Child Wellbeing Context Interchange policy *01-02-07: Chapter 16A: Coordination of Services, Compliance and Authorisation* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with points 9.1 - 9.20 of section 9 of the *Statutory Procedures*.

Section 10: Child Protection and Child Safety

Interchange policy *01-02-08: Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting* outlines the organisational procedures to ensure compliance with points 10.1 - 10.7 of section 10 of the *Statutory Procedures*.

MEASUREMENT

(How do we tell this procedure is successful?)