

Child and Family Focus SA (CAFFSA)

Family Support and Reunification Network

Summary of recent meetings

Over the last twelve months, the Family Support and Reunification Network has:

- contributed to CAFFSA's finalised 2022 Election Policies,
- refined an Industry Blueprint and Workforce Development Strategy Paper, noting the critical shortage of a qualified, skilled and available workforce to respond to the needs of the increasing number of children and young people coming into statutory care. It calls for funding to develop and implement a South Australian NGO family support industry blueprint and workforce development strategy
- had input into CAFFSA's paper calling for the adoption and implementation of a Reportable Conduct Scheme in South Australia, based on the NSW model, consistent with recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Such a scheme should provide independent oversight of the handling of child abuse and neglect allegations against sector employees and volunteers. It would oversee how organisations and institutions prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse and misconduct by employees and volunteers. It is required because there is currently no agency in SA that collects and retains information on allegations of all forms of child abuse and neglect, even if it does not reach the criminal threshold. What this means is that people can move across sectors or organisations with a long history of allegations made against them, with no way of organisations knowing this. There is also no organisation that has the capacity to assist agencies to improve their monitoring and responding to allegations of all forms of child abuse.
- engaged with Alisa Willis, Director, Early Intervention Research Directorate, DHS a established after Nyland to examine ways to prevent children and young people at risk from coming into care. System reform relies heavily on system redesign and in 2019, a significant co-design effort occurred across the state. Those requiring a service now come through the CFSS Pathways Service and are sent to universal/family support/ intensive family support/out of home care. Pathways allows the information to be kept to track outcomes and held centrally for research purposes. It also enacts an epidemiological approach to responses to concerns – rather than an incident-based response, incorporating known factors such as young mums/mum has a care history/unborn child concerns in the response. The central data has also allowed the directorate to understand the gap between demand and supply and made it clear where the service gaps are.

Better Start is now undertaking vigorous mapping of the service system and overlaying the data set to examine the gap as member agencies have raised that only having six months to intervene makes it difficult to succeed when the required adult services are not prioritised.

Members agreed referrals are not coming through at a high enough rate, particularly in the regions, and there is a constant reminder needed that schools can initiate referrals, as well as DCP.

Alisa advised that there is a practice guidance on the website about how to work with families, as well as a policy framework around it to address the concern that families are sometimes not aware a referral had been made. The Training and Practice Guidance and the training is on the website in a word document and can easily be changed/adapted/rebadged with agencies own logo etc. Located on the ASK website

<https://dhs.sa.gov.au/services/cfss/cfss-services/adults-supporting-kids-ask>

- contributed to the development of a background paper, prepared with input by each of CAFFSA's Network meetings and including a comprehensive scoping of the issues regarding contracting and licensing. It was prepared by reviewing minutes of all CAFFSA meetings and correspondence since 2019, interviews with key players and circulation of the draft document. The paper was forwarded to Policy and Advocacy Committee for review and then forwarded to DCP for consideration and to serve as a platform document summarising all sector concerns with the processes. DCP are currently working collaboratively with the sector to revise the Contracting and Licencing Framework in consultation with sector representatives.
- received a briefing and gave input into the CAFFSA and SHINE SA issued survey regarding the development of a statewide program of training and other supports for workers and carers in areas related to respectful relationships, protective behaviours, sexual safety and sexual and reproductive health. There were 22 agency respondents to the survey, representing 1,780 workers/carers. Less than half of the organisations had good access to training and other supports re protective behaviours; only 20% had good access to training and other supports re sexual and reproductive health, contraception, sexual safety and a third for respectful relationships. Establishment of a CAFFSA Technical Group will occur if specific funding is made available, which is particularly important for the sector given the interface between complex trauma and sexual development.
- considered CAFFSA's Submission to the Foster and Kinship Care Inquiry and received updates from Connecting Foster & Kinship Care SA
- Contributed to the development of the sector briefing papers for the CAFFSA Members Forum in May, outlining major trends, issues and concerns facing our members and received a briefing on the outcome. "*Improving Family Wellbeing and Child Protection: What are our priorities for the next four years in SA?*" was held on 6 May 2022. Sixty-eight participants attended from 28 organisations with a series of interactive panel discussions. There were also five video presentations recorded especially for the forum.
- provided input for the Policy and Advocacy Committee's consultation with staff from the Office for Data Analytics in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on the review of the Information Sharing Guidelines. The Information Sharing Guidelines are designed to give providers of services to children, young people and adults, confidence in sharing information to prevent harm or respond to current threats to safety and wellbeing and have direct impact on our members.

- received an update on the Alternative Care Sector Workforce Mapping Project which is conducting a sector mapping exercise of Family Based and Residential Care staff across three main priorities areas to identify key challenges faced by the workforce, and identify current gaps in the sector regarding the skills, expertise and knowledge required to improve the outcomes of children, young people and families in South Australia. The three main priority areas are:
 - Workforce Recruitment and Retention
 - Qualifications, Skills and Training
 - Skills, training and development needs and gaps
- consulted with their networks and contributed to the development of CAFFSA's background paper and subsequent submission to the *Children and Young Person (Safety) Act 2017* that was announced by Minister for Child Protection the Hon. Katrine Hildyard on Tuesday 6th September 2022.

consulted with their networks and contributed to the development of CAFFSA's submission to the the Inquiry into the removal and placement of Aboriginal children in South Australia announced on 30 June, the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, April Lawrie.