

Assessment Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure provides detailed guidance about the service user assessment process for the Inala Community House (ICH) Family Intervention Services (FIS). The assessment process gathers information from varied sources for analysis by the ICH FIS workers to identify and develop interventions to guide work with service users in achieving their goals. While assessment is an ongoing iterative process throughout the intervention, the most intensive period is upon the commencement and early weeks of initiating work with a family, which is referred to as an initial assessment.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, students and volunteers within ICH FIS. For the purpose of this procedure, these persons shall be referred to as workers.

3. Definitions

Child is an individual under 18 years (*Child Protection Act 1999*).

The Department refers to the Queensland Government Department responsible for Family Services programs and/or Child Protection or Child Safety.

Service User is any parents or family, or carer named in the referral for whom services will be provided, including children.

Assessment refers to the process of gathering information from varied sources to inform interventions with service users to help achieve their goals.

Case Management is a collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation/implementation /coordination, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation for options and services to meet a service user's needs.

Parents Under Pressure (PuP) is an integrated theoretical practice framework that guides how practitioners/caseworkers work with families. It is a case management program designed for families where there are multiple issues that impact on family functioning. It is individualised to suit the needs of each family with supporting materials to help put PuP into practice.

4. Procedure

4.1. Risk assessment and management

Throughout the assessment process, the ICH FIS worker shall consider the risk of harm to a child and the risks to the service user and worker safety. The safety of children, service users and workers are of the highest priority and underpin the delivery of the service.

Risk of harm to a child

While undertaking the service user assessment process (and throughout the intervention),

the ICH FIS worker will also be indirectly assessing harm or risk of harm to a child. While accountability for child safety and delivering child protection services rests with the Department, ICH FIS works in partnership with all stakeholders to prioritise child wellbeing and safety. The ICH FIS worker shall exercise professional judgement and seek guidance from the ICH FIS Manager if there are concerns about the level of risk to a child, noting that FIS also has mandatory reporting requirements. Refer to the ICH FIS Incident Reporting and Management Policy for further guidance.

Risk to service user safety

The assessment process must also consider any risks to service users that may result from the proposed interventions. For example, where there is domestic and family violence, the intervention needs to avoid fuelling a situation where the victim/s of the violence may be at risk of further abuse by the perpetrator as a result of the FIS intervention. The ICH FIS Worker and ICH FIS Manager, in conjunction with Child Safety and any other specialist services will discuss and agree on the best approach for minimising this risk. The agreed approach will be documented in case notes. ICH FIS workers are to use the alert function in SRS to raise service user risks.

Risk to worker safety

If relevant, a Risk Management Plan is developed as part of the service user referral process (or at any time deemed necessary during the intervention) to help ensure worker safety. Refer to ICH FIS Referral Acceptance Procedure for further detail.

While undertaking the assessment process (and at any other point during the intervention), the ICH FIS worker is responsible for scanning for and identifying risks to worker safety, and informing the ICH FIS Manager, and as required, updating the alert function on SRS and the Risk Management Plan. Refer to ICH FIS Personal Safety in the Community Procedure for further guidance.

4.2. Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National)

At the Initial Case Consult meeting, the need to access the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is discussed. ICH FIS will access this service as required to meet the needs of service users where English is not the family's spoken language.

Service users with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds: Child Safety supports fee-free access to interpreters for ICH as a funded service to support working with clients from non-English speaking backgrounds who have difficulties communicating in English.

Quote ICH Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) code when booking a telephone interpreter. This will mean that TIS will bill the Department and not ICH. **TIS Code is C853230**

Service users with a hearing impairment: If the services of Deaf Services Qld are required, proceed with the engagement and obtain an invoice. ICH will have to pay this invoice and seek reimbursement from Child Safety. Finance will then invoice the Department.

Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National)
131450
<https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

Tips:
[Working with TIS National interpreters | Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#)

4.3 Meet and Greet

At the Initial Case Consult meeting, ICH FIS requests that the Child Safety Officer (CSO) contacts the service user to introduce ICH FIS and to advise that the ICH FIS worker will be making contact. The ICH FIS Worker is to call the service user within five business days of the Initial Case Consult meeting (or otherwise agreed). The purpose of this phone call is to make an introduction, start to build rapport and set a time for a 'meet and greet' with the service user.

The 'meet and greet' is usually held at the service user's home or an agreed location. The meeting usually involves the parents and is generally facilitated by the ICH FIS Worker, with support from the ICH FIS Manager. On some occasions, the 'meet and greet' will be undertaken by the ICH FIS Worker and another identified key stakeholder to help facilitate a warm handover (e.g., the CSO and/or the worker from a previous service), upon agreement by the ICH FIS Manager.

The 'meet and greet' provides an opportunity for the ICH FIS Case Worker and ICH FIS Manager to introduce the service. Topics to discuss with the service user include:

- Information about ICH FIS service and that we are a voluntary service
- Values underpinning the way the service operates, including that the child is at the centre of our work, key service activities, and how we support families
- The role of the ICH FIS worker and what the service user can expect in terms of support and transparency
- The service user's rights and responsibilities, including obtaining consent to share information with other service providers, and having the option of limiting or not permitting information sharing with particular services.
- ICH FIS mandatory reporting obligations if we receive information that suggests a child may have been harmed or at risk of harm, and to share any other information with Child Safety which relates to the child (note this can include personal things like the parent's health, drug usage, relationship status etc).
- ICH FIS is obligated to report anything which may pose a significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of a service user or another person.
- ICH FIS requirement to provide monthly reports to Child Safety on progress/worries and to share information about worries as they arise particularly as they relate to children's safety.
- How to make a complaint or provide feedback
- Mitigating risks to service user and worker safety (where relevant)
- Next steps including making time for subsequent appointments.

The service user is provided with the ICH FIS Welcome Pack which includes:

- ICH FIS Support Service Agreement
- ICH FIS Consent Form
- ICH FIS Service Brochure
- ICH Feedback and Complaints Brochure
- ICH FIS Client Rights and Responsibilities Brochure.

If possible, the service user signs the ICH FIS Support Service Agreement and ICH FIS Consent Form at the 'meet and greet'. If this is not possible, the ICH FIS Worker shall arrange another meeting with the service user to build engagement and discuss the service in more detail. Refer to ICH FIS Philosophy.

The ICH FIS Support Service Agreement and ICH FIS Consent Form must be signed by the service user prior to moving to the next stage of the assessment process. The signed documents must be uploaded to SRS and a copy must also be provided to the service user.

4.4 Strengths and Needs Assessment

Using the PUP Framework and the Strengths and Needs Assessment Form, the ICH FIS worker undertakes an assessment of the service user's strengths and needs in the context of the child protection concerns. This should happen within the first four weeks of working with the service user.

As part of this process, the ICH FIS worker shall actively seek out information from known sources, including the review of Child Safety material. The ICH FIS worker shall also undertake interviews/hold discussions with other stakeholders involved with the service user/s, who may be able to contribute to the assessment process. As part of the consent process, service users provide consent for ICH FIS to release and exchange information with other relevant services and identified individuals or groups they are engaged with. Refer to ICH FIS Sharing Information Procedure for further guidance.

Stakeholders can include:

- Family members or significant others
- Service providers who are or have previously worked with the service users; for example, services with a focus on general health and medical, mental health, cultural support, domestic violence, drug and alcohol, housing and employment.
- Schools or childcare providers.

The outcome of the Strengths and Needs Assessment helps to define the service user's goals and will inform the development of a Family Action Plan (refer to Case Planning Procedure for further guidance). It is important to note however that assessment is an ongoing iterative process. The ICH FIS worker is not expected to know everything about the service user before commencing the development of the Family Action Plan.

4.5 Self-report Screening Measures and other Assessment Tools

ICH FIS workers are to draw on a range of measures and tools, including those in the PUP and other tools that help parents and families identify their strengths, hopes, dreams and vulnerabilities. Examples include the Three Houses tool, the Safety House tool and strengths cards. Other tools such as genogram, ecomap, Circles of Safety and Support tool, family and kinship mapping can also be used based on the service user's needs.

4.6 Documentation Compliance

ICH FIS uses the Master Case Management Spreadsheet and SRS, and all assessment information is recorded within these two systems.

5. Review

This procedure shall be reviewed in conjunction with the ICH FIS Case Management Policy.

6. Related Documents

Policies

ICH Privacy Policy
ICH Feedback and Complaints Policy
ICH Confidentiality Policy
ICH Client Protection Policy
ICH Code of Conduct
ICH Risk Management Policy
ICH FIS Case Management Policy
ICH FIS Referral Acceptance Policy
ICH FIS Philosophy

Procedures

ICH FIS Personal Safety in the Community Procedure
ICH FIS Case Planning Procedure
ICH FIS Intervention and Monitoring Procedure
ICH FIS Sharing Personal Information Procedure

Other documents

SRS Checklist
ICH FIS Master Record Spreadsheet
ICH FIS Welcome Pack

Forms

ICH FIS Consent Form
ICH FIS Support Agreement
ICH FIS Strengths and Needs Assessment
ICH FIS Family Action Plan Template

References

PuP Program Framework
Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
Qld Human Services Quality Framework