

Family Intervention Services and Out of Home Care – Care Team Meeting Guidelines

1. What are Care Team Meetings?

Care team meetings occur when parents are working with Inala Community House Family Intervention Service (ICH-FIS) and the children are placed in foster/kinship care, with Inala Community House Out of Home Care (ICH-OHC) supporting the carers. Care team meetings occur between the ICH-FIS worker and the ICH-OHC worker every six weeks.

2. How do Care Team Meetings occur?

During the initial case consultation for an ICH-FIS family, it should be identified if the children/carers are supported by ICH-OHC. If there is a shared case, it is the responsibility of ICH-FIS Case Workers to liaise with ICH-OHC to schedule these regular meetings. Managers of FIS and OHC should be notified of any meetings which occur, for reporting purposes and invited if the matters to be discussed are complex.

When a new child comes into an ICH-OHC carers' home, the Manager and/or SCW should identify whether the child/children are also receiving ICH-FIS support. This can be done via email to the ICH-FIS Manager. Once this information has been passed onto the ICH-OHC Case Worker, it is then their responsibility to liaise with ICH-FIS to schedule the regular care team meetings.

3. Purpose

Recognising both carers and parents play important roles in the lives of children in care, Care Team Meetings provide an opportunity for ICH-FIS and ICH-OHC to develop a consistent approach to providing care for the children within both contexts. These meetings provide an opportunity for Case Workers of the carers and the parents to discuss developing carer/parent relationships if this is deemed to be beneficial and appropriate. Both parents and carers will be supported to communicate effectively, establish a shared parenting approach, and provide regular updates and information pertaining to the child's needs both in placement, during Family Time and in the home of the parents. This helps to support a child to transition between households and maintains consistency during reunification, and safety and security during the placement. It is beneficial for children to feel like the important adults in their life can work together.

Case Workers should discuss whether their respective service users would be willing to communicate with the other party openly. This may need encouragement and scaffolding support from the case workers. Case Workers will draw on shared frameworks (eg PuP, and Crossroads) to build some common language and understanding between the adults to help them to put their own feelings and needs aside and to prioritise the needs of the child. If it is established that open communication between parent and carer cannot occur, Case Workers will meet to share and discuss the views of the parents/carers with the best interests of the child in mind. Case Workers may be able to facilitate actions that could benefit children, resolve misunderstandings between parents and carers and generally support positive progress for children.

4. Sharing of Information

As ICH-FIS and ICH-OHC are part of the same organisation, it is considered appropriate to share helpful information that will positively influence case progression. Case Workers should be mindful to not share private information that does not directly relate to the care of the child. Workers in receipt of information must be mindful of what they on-share to their respective service user to ensure that the sharing of information is not a breach of privacy and/or does not rupture the carer/parent relationship or breach privacy.

No information shared in a Care Team Meeting should be used to disparage a parent and/or carer under any circumstances, or cause one party to feel adversely towards the other.

For example, a parent may disclose the children do not shower or brush their teeth regularly with the carers. Whilst this may be raised by ICH-FIS in the Care Team Meeting, it would not be appropriate for the ICH-OHC worker to tell the carers this was said by the parent. The information could, however, be used for the ICH-OHC to generally check in with the children's hygiene at the next visits. The ICH-FIS worker may share with ICH-OHC that the parent is engaged with drug and alcohol service or some other service provider. It would not be appropriate for the ICH-OHC worker to share the details of the parent's engagement with services, but it would be appropriate to comment in general that the parent is working to address the worries which have contributed to the child being in care.

5. Recording

Case notes pertaining to the Case team meeting discussion must be recorded by both the ICH-FIS and ICH-OHC worker from the perspective that is relevant for their service. Actions must be clearly noted in case notes and followed up.

5. Review

This guideline shall be reviewed every three years.

6. Related Documents

Policies and Procedures

ICH OCH Philosophy
ICH FIS Philosophy
ICH FIS Case Management Policy

References

PuP Program Framework
Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
Qld Human Services Quality Framework
Parents Under Pressure
Crossroads