

**POSITION:** Response Practitioner – Family Preservation and Reunification Response

**REPORTS TO:** Team Leader – Family Preservation and Reunification Response

**DATE CREATED:** August 2021

## ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Melbourne City Mission (MCM) is a leader and innovator in the provision of services to the community. Established in 1854, Melbourne City Mission is a diverse community support organisation that supports thousands of Victorian people and communities to overcome barriers and disrupt disadvantage to live their life, their way.

As a service provider Melbourne City Mission's work is focussed on supporting people to take charge of their own lives and participate fully in community life. Melbourne City Mission's service profile includes Children, Youth, Adult and Family; Disability; Employment, Education and Training; Homelessness; and Palliative Care. Our Healing Oriented Framework guides us in our trauma informed knowledge to enhance trauma responsiveness across all programs and deepens the capacity of teams and services in complex environments to provide healing-oriented care.

As a social change agent Melbourne City Mission advocates for social policy change and works across all sectors in seeking to achieve sustainable outcomes for communities experiencing disadvantage.

## JOB CONTEXT

The Victorian Family Preservation and Reunification Response (the Response) is funded by the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH). The Response enables progress toward the 'Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children' which outlines the Victorian Government's strategy for the reform of the children, youth and family service system.

The Response:

- Is an innovative approach to delivering relational, evidence-informed and coordinated support to vulnerable children and families through a strengthened partnership with Child Protection;
- Embeds evidence-informed practices such as 'The Common Elements Framework to promote strong families – with children who are safe, healthy, resilient, and thriving; and parents and caregivers who are supported to create a safe and nurturing home environment;
- Provides responsive, intensive and sustainable support to children and families where children are at imminent risk of entry to care or where safe and rapid reunification is appropriate.

The Response is implemented by MCM in Western Metro and North/East Metro areas of Melbourne. Teams are placed within the Family Services area in the Homelessness and Family Services Portfolio. Teams support families where children are subject to an unborn report or are birth to 5-years of age.

## JOB PURPOSE

The Response Practitioner will deliver rapid, culturally safe, flexible and intensive services to children and families using a case management and care team approach. This includes the provision of therapeutic and trauma-informed supports that engage the voice and choice, cultural identity and lived expertise of children

and their families and carers. Response Practitioners will also work within a comprehensive evidence-based and monitoring and evaluation framework.

## JOB OBJECTIVES

### **Duties of this role may include but are not limited to the following:**

- Rapidly engage families to provide intensive, therapeutic, trauma and evidence informed support that is centred around creating wellbeing and safety for the child, building parental/caregiver capacity and improving family functioning.
- Provide high quality child-centred, family-focussed case management and casework to expectant parents and families with children aged 0 -5 years.
- Undertake child and family assessments using evidence-based tools such as the Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training, with a focus on strengths, needs and risks. The assessment will reflect the family's motivation for change, known barriers, resources to build upon and child and family safety planning.
- Monitor and review child and family assessments on an ongoing basis.
- Develop and implement child and family action plans that build on child and family assessments and are tailored to the needs of participating families. Plans are to be co-developed with children (as appropriate), families and carers, care team members and other relevant professionals.
- Focus on frequent and agile engagement which is delivered in a way that benefits the family and is attuned and responsive to their needs and circumstances.
- Provide families with practical and emotional support, coaching and skill building and connections to social and economic resources.
- Develop and maintain effective partnerships with a wide breadth of services including specialist and mainstream services in child, youth, family, health, employment and training and disability.
- Work closely and collaboratively with Child Protection Practitioners and coordinate shared visits with the child and family.
- Participate in regular, multidisciplinary care team meetings to provide continuity of care and integrated support for the individual needs of children and families.
- Prioritise working with families in their home settings and/or use virtual technologies to support families.
- Engage specialists to support and address families' needs as required, including therapeutic, Family Violence or Mental Health supports. These professionals may also act as secondary consults.
- Conduct regular reviews of service delivery with the care team. This includes the level of service provision intensity, including decreases that are proportionate to the needs of families and reflective of development towards increasing self-management and connection in community.
- Make decisions regarding case closure or transition to other services in consultation with the team leader, family, Child Protection and other services.
- Use flexible funding for practical needs and specialist services to meet child and family needs and goals.
- Provide referral and advocacy for children and families.
- Provide information to, and link families in with services and supports such as; health and community services, NDIS, family violence, drug and alcohol and mental health services, housing and homelessness supports and educational settings including childcare.

- Assist with activities that support the successful implementation and evaluation of the Response.
- Provide a safe environment for questioning and reflective practice with care team members.
- Participate in professional development activities as negotiated with the Team Leader.
- Participate in education to understand and apply evidence informed practice approaches including the Common Elements.
- Participate in networks, meetings, debriefing, supervision, training and forums.
- Work together with Aboriginal people and organisations to embed culturally safe and inclusive practices.
- Provide tailored and appropriate responses to parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Provide tailored and appropriate responses to parents who live with disability or learning difficulties.
- Work in line with a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to inform continuous improvement and build the evidence base for Victorian and Aboriginal family preservation and reunification services.
- Ensure services are delivered within the framework of MCM’s policies and procedures, legislative requirements and meet the relevant service standards. All employees are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards.
- Maintain accurate files, case notes and databases using relevant platforms and systems.
- Perform other duties and responsibilities, as directed by the Team Leader or delegate.

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

This position may have relationships with a diverse range of MCM employees, external service providers, organisations and stakeholders within the community, with the view to providing the most appropriate and effective services and supports to the people they support. Examples of key relationships are detailed in the following table:

<b>Internal Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Response staff</li> <li>• MCM Corporate Services</li> <li>• Homelessness, Justice and Family Services programs and staff</li> </ul>
<b>External Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection Staff and Child Protection Navigator</li> <li>• External partners and other key stakeholders</li> </ul>

## KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

### Essential:

- A bachelor qualification in early childhood development, youth work, psychology, social work or related tertiary qualification.
- Experience in family services, youth work, early childhood services, social work or a related field.
- Sound understanding of the issues facing vulnerable parents which impact on their ability to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their children.
- Sound understanding of child development and the factors that can impede a child’s healthy development.

- Extensive experience in providing risk and needs assessment, intervention and risk management.
- Significant experience in working with and providing active and assertive engagement in casework with children, young parents and their families, particularly for those with complex needs and those who are reluctant to accept services, especially young people.
- Knowledge and experience with the child, youth and family sector and mainstream services.
- Sound understanding of the service system for vulnerable young parents and their children and experience in working in partnership with key agencies.
- Extensive knowledge and experience of casework principles and practice.
- Capacity to deliver group work initiatives.
- Strong communication skills including effective interpersonal, conflict negotiation and resolution skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work autonomously and within a small team.
- Knowledge and/or experience in Action Research and other related participatory engagement strategies.
- Proven flexibility, adaptability and able to respond and adjust easily to change in work demands, including the ability to work flexible hours.
- Computer literacy, including proficiency in the Microsoft suite of programs.
- Satisfactory completion of safety screening including a National Police check, International Police check (if required), a current Victorian Working with Children Check (Employee), current Victorian Drivers Licence, and the right to work in Australia.
- Internet-enabled device for Time & Attendance when working offsite.

## ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

### **Workplace Health & Safety:**

MCM's strategy is to create a working environment in which we have zero tolerance for compromised worker safety. As an employer we endeavour to provide a working environment that is safe for all employees and clients and adheres to Occupational Health & Safety regulations as an employer.

As an employee, you also have Occupational Health & Safety responsibilities as follows:

- To comply with all MCM policies related to Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace.
- Take reasonable care of your own health and safety in addition to the health and safety of your colleagues and clients who may be affected by your acts or omissions in the workplace.

### **Client Wellbeing and Safety:**

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, people with a disability and other vulnerable people. We have a zero tolerance of abuse and neglect of all vulnerable people and are committed to actively contributing to a safe organisation in which children, young people, people with a disability and vulnerable people are protected from violence, abuse and neglect. All employees are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards.

### **Operational Accountability:**

MCM is committed to operating efficiently, ethically and remaining operationally and financially sustainable.

As an employee you are expected to operate within the requirements of our accreditation, registrations, delegations and work responsibilities as detailed in our various policies and procedures, Code of Conduct and regulatory guidelines.

## COMPLIANCE

As an employee, you are expected to comply with the following:

- Comply with and actively support all position, division and organisational policies and procedures.
- All employees are subject to MCM's Employment Safety Screening Procedure.

## LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

In addition to the key selection criteria, applicants should be able to demonstrate the following attributes:

KEY AREA	BEHAVIOURAL CAPABILITIES
<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<p><b>Customer Focused</b> We do our best work when we understand people and enable them to direct their own lives. We partner with others to provide access to what they need locally.</p>
<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<p><b>Collaboration &amp; Cooperation</b> Seeks to find the right solution for all. Stays connected and works together with colleagues and customers to achieve great things.</p>
<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<p><b>Resolves Disagreements</b> Addresses and resolves conflict constructively. Defuses dispute to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties.</p>
<b>REPUTATION</b>	<p><b>Provable Results</b> Is accountable. Delivers measurable outcomes. Driven and energetic; striving to meet targets and quality outputs for customers and colleagues.</p>
<b>REPUTATION</b>	<p><b>Disrupting Disadvantage</b> Promotes fairness and seeks to provide added advantage and opportunity to those who would normally be disadvantaged.</p>
<b>PEOPLE</b>	<p><b>Resilience &amp; Bounce Back</b> Deals effectively with unexpected challenges and adversity. Quickly recovers to take a positive stance to setbacks and disappointments.</p>
<b>PEOPLE</b>	<p><b>Builds Capability &amp; Realises Potential</b> Plays an active role in their own and others' development. Encourages and inspires others to realise ambitions and potential.</p>

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**PEOPLE**      **Safety First**  
Always puts safety first. Creates a safe, healthy and caring workplace that is expressed in all operational activities and interactions with others.

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## OUR VALUES

Employees are expected to commit to and demonstrate MCM's values:

**Together**      We are inclusive and accepting of difference.  
We work in highly effective teams and our people are connected across our organisation.  
We engage proactively with others to deliver outcomes.

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**Courageous**      We speak up constructively in line with our convictions.  
We pursue our goals with determination.  
We are passionate about our advocacy role.

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**Curious**      We are inquisitive and ask why.  
We challenge the status quo.  
We actively explore the alternatives.

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**Open**      We are transparent and have genuine, honest interactions.  
We listen and hear people's voices.  
We value and respect the autonomy of clients.  
We trust one another.

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**Accountable**      We act safely in all our interactions.  
We manage within our financial and resource boundaries.  
We own our outcomes and decisions.  
We are proud of the work that we do.