

Position Description

Title	Family Group Conference Convenor
Business unit	Child, Youth and Family Services
Location	418 Wendouree Pde Ballarat
Employment type	Part-time, Maximum term
Reports to	Manager Therapeutic Child Youth & Families

About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church. We've been supporting people and families for over 100 years. We work alongside people of all ages in local communities in Victoria and Tasmania. Our services reach to Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, the Wimmera region in the west, and across Tasmania.

We empower children, young people and families to learn and thrive. We're there for people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction or mental illness. We support people with disability to live the life they choose. We assist older people to maintain their independence and enjoy life. We provide opportunities to access training and meaningful employment. We're proud to welcome and support asylum seekers to our community. We work to empower people with the information, skills and tools they need to live a healthy, happy life.

As an organisation, we work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Our purpose: To inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice

Our values: We are imaginative, respectful, compassionate and bold

1. Position purpose

Restoring Families

Restoring Families is for children and young people from pre-birth and up to the age of 18, and their families, experiencing multiple, complex needs, and who are at elevated risk of pervasive, lifelong harm to their safety, development and wellbeing. Restoring Families is designed to provide children and families with multiple and complex needs with an intensive service response and a pathway into a sustainable network of support.

Restoring Families seeks to connect children to intensive, integrated support as early as possible in their involvement with statutory services to divert or reduce their progression into the system.

Family Group Conference

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is a family-facing, area-based targeted support available to families within Restoring Families.

FGC is a family-led, strengths-based collaborative planning and decision-making process that supports families to identify solutions and develop a plan for promoting stability, safety and healthy development of children and young people, grounded in families' own relationships, culture and lived

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experience, while being informed by relevant professional input. It has a focus on strengthening family authority, family connectedness, capability and support networks.

Access to FGC may occur at various points during a family's involvement, based on assessed need and professional judgement.

Although FGC convenors will contribute to shared planning and coordination processes, they retain independence in their facilitation to preserve family authority and the integrity of the conferencing process.

2. Scope

- Budget: *nil*

People:

- *nil*

3. Relationships

Internal

- Restoring Families Team
- Team leader
- Manager
- Senior Manager
- Other Uniting professionals

External

- DFFH Child Protection
- Child & Family Alliance agencies and Alliance Coordinator
- Restoring Families Coordinator
- Other key stakeholders for Restoring families

4. Key responsibility areas

FGC convenors are responsible for delivering family-led, strengths-based collaborative planning and decision-making process, including:

- Preparing families and coordinating all conference logistics
- Facilitating conferences while protecting family authority and decision-making
- Supporting implementation and review of family plans.

FGC operates through a phased process that supports informed, family-led planning. The convenor's role is to support families to come together, understand concerns and develop their own practical, sustainable plan that prioritises child safety, wellbeing, cultural connection and healthy development. Convenors do not make decisions on behalf of families.

FGC delivery is expected to contribute to continuous learning and quality improvement across the family services platform. As a Service provider we must:

- participate in evaluation and data collection activities
- use client feedback to inform service improvement

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- engage with system-level monitoring and learning processes
- support evidence-informed practice and implementation quality

Service delivery

- Facilitate Family Group Conferences for the Restoring Families teams across the Alliance.
- Establish contact with family members in the lead up to the conference to provide information on the Family Group Conferencing process and all possible outcomes. This can be done through Hybrid modes (online or in person)
- Foster an environment with families that promotes developing a safe and practical plan and ensures that focus is on the current situation and planning for the future.
- Facilitate constructive and outcome-oriented processes.
- Actively seek out the voice of the child and young person in the Family Group Conferencing process.
- Work collaboratively with the Restoring Families Coordinator (RFC) to coordinate access to FGCs across the area, as well as with Lead Practitioners, Child Protection (where relevant) and other key partners to ensure alignment with broader case planning and system coordination processes.
- Advocate for and with service users and community groups.
- Build practitioner understanding and awareness of when an FGC is appropriate.
- Support assessment of family readiness.
- Educate partner services about their role in the FGC process.
- Comply with relevant Occupational Health and Safety standards
- Comply with Uniting policies and procedures to ensure child safety at all times
- Raise and report any concerns about child safety immediately

Program Evaluation and Administration

- Develop necessary processes, procedures and tools within the local area, to fulfil the functions of the role, in line with approved statewide parameters.
- Ensure effective systems, processes and procedures are implemented and monitored to enable and drive positive program outcomes
- Contribute to the ongoing design and iteration of the Restoring Families Service Delivery Model, and to participate in all relevant evaluative activities designed to inform system improvements and future investment.
- Contribute to data collection, reporting and evaluation activities beyond financial acquittals. This includes participation in local implementation or learning forums as required and supporting continuous improvement of FGC practice across the Restoring Families platform
- Prepare Family Group Conferencing reports and provide statistical data as required by DFFH
- Address client complaints and issues effectively and monitor progress and improvements
- Manage task allocation according to strategic and operational priorities and individual workload
- Identify and manage or escalate risk issues, for example client confidentiality, case management and record keeping
- Undertake regular supervision and performance review with line manager, providing feedback to promote collaborative working relationships
- Promote and maintain a positive, respectful and enthusiastic work environment
- Other duties, as requested.

Personal accountability

- Compliance with Uniting's values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.
- Cooperate with strategies to actively ensure the safety, protection and well-being of children who come into association with us.
- Ensure appropriate use of resources.
- Work collaboratively with Uniting (Victoria Tasmania) employees and external stakeholders in accordance with Uniting's values and professional standards of behaviour.

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- Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace.
- Identify opportunities to integrate and work collaboratively across teams.
- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and health and safety of others (to the extent required).
- Promote a positive safety culture by contributing to health and safety consultation and communication.
- Promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to line management
- Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e. equal employment opportunity, health, and safety) and mandatory training specific to position.
- Declare anything that you become aware of through the course of your engagement which may impede your suitability to work with children and/or young people.
- Declare any potential or actual conflict of interest that you become aware of through the course of your engagement:
 - Based on a relationship with a current member of Uniting's workforce
 - Based on my ongoing work with another organisation

5. Person specification

Qualifications

At a minimum, FGC convenors are expected to:

- Hold relevant qualifications in social work, community services or a related discipline
- Have demonstrated experience in child and family services, child protection or related fields
- demonstrate strong skills in engagement, facilitation, mediation and negotiation
- Have experience delivering culturally safe and trauma-informed practice, including with Aboriginal children and families
- Have completed FGC or equivalent facilitation training.

Experience

- The role requires high-level facilitation, engagement and mediation skills and may involve working outside standard business hours to enable participation of family members and kinship networks.
- Demonstrated understanding of Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Demonstrated knowledge of working with Child Protection
- Demonstrated understanding of the principals that underpin Family Group Conferencing
- Proven knowledge of the relevant legislation, regulations and Acts relevant to the role
- Demonstrated ability to provide mentoring to staff
- Demonstrated analytical skills with a proven ability to identify emerging issues and risks
- Highly developed problem solving and solution focused skills
- Strong administration skills, including data management, program reporting and budget analysis
- Demonstrated understanding of Microsoft Office program
- Knowledge of Family Journey CMS is preferred
- Highly developed communication skills (both verbal and written), with a capacity to communicate effectively and in a timely manner with a range of clients, staff, other professionals and advocacy/stakeholder groups
- Advanced knowledge of child development, trauma and attachment theories
- Demonstrated organisational and time management skills
- Computer literacy

Core selection criteria

- **Values alignment:** Ability to demonstrate and authentically promote Uniting's values.

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- **Child safety:** Demonstrated ability to provide safe environments for children and young people and protect them from abuse and neglect
- **Leadership:** Demonstrates authentic leadership as a senior worker within the team, committed to supporting practitioners with complex challenges as required
- **Consumer centeredness:** Demonstrates an awareness of and prioritises the needs of consumers; focus on optimal outcomes for consumers
- **Communication:** Open, honest, articulate and flexible approach to communication – written and verbal. The ability to actively listen.
- **Interpersonal focus:** strong interest in people and respect for others. The ability to suspend judgement.
- **Cooperative:** Demonstrates team behaviours striving for cooperative and professional relationships
- **Conscientious:** High level self-awareness, with the ability to admit mistakes, as an opportunity for reflection, learning and development.
- **Professionalism:** Professional, confident focused and clear about purpose and able to set appropriate personal boundaries.
- **Administrative skills:** Excellent organisational skills; good computer literacy skills including demonstrated experience in Microsoft Office
- Current driver's licence valid in Victoria

6. We are a child safe organisation

Uniting is a child safe organisation and is committed in everyday practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, at all times. As a child safe organisation, employment with Uniting is subject to a satisfactory national (and international where relevant) police check and relevant Working With Children Check (and NDIS Worker Screening Check where relevant) to your State prior to commencement of any paid or unpaid work and/or participation in any service or undertaking.

This position description is subject to review and may change in accordance with Uniting's operational, service and consumer requirements.

7. Acknowledgement

I have read, understood, and accepted the above Position Description

Employee

Name:

Signature:

Date: