

Care Services Practitioner

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Service:	Care Services
Program:	Foster Care/Kinship Care
Position Title:	Practitioner
Location:	Cross sites
Award:	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010
Classification:	Social and Community Services Employee
Level:	Level 5
Travel:	Regular travel, local and regional, fleet available.

UMFC is a Child Safe organisation and is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy, and empowered. We support and respect all children as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children.

The Sanctuary Model promotes cultural, physical, emotional, psychological and social safety, as well as psychosocial wellbeing, fostering recovery from adversity through the creation of a trauma-informed community. Through the implementation of this model, UMFC aims to enhance the quality of care we provide and cultivate a workplace where everyone feels valued, supported and able to thrive.

1. CONTEXT AND SUMMARY OF POSITION

Consistent with UMFC's vision for our communities, that every child and young person is cared for, Upper Murray Family Care Incorporated (UMFC) is an independent, community-managed organisation dedicated to the provision of a range of supportive services designed to strengthen individuals and families. Our purpose is that together we support our families and communities so that we hear the voices of our children, young people, families and individuals to support them to heal, rebuild and lead meaningful lives. Care Services is the only local home-based care organisation across the Ovens Murray.

Funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and operating within the frameworks of the Children, Youth and Family Act (2005), Best Interest Case Practice Principles and Trauma Informed Practice, Care Services comprises a range of programs committed to ensuring vulnerable children and young people are safe, supported and provided with every opportunity to thrive.

Care Services works with children and/or young people who have had adverse life experiences and require additional support when they are in either foster or kinship care arrangements. We work collaboratively with the child and/or young person, their carers, families and support services to ensure they are supported to reach their full potential. We provide local support with services ranging from general to intensive support for children and young people who are unable to live with their parents. The programs include foster care, kinship care and carer management and support.

The Foster Care and Kinship Care programs provide support to children, young people, carers and families across the DFFH Ovens Murray region. The programs provide case management, placement support and tailored assistance to promote the safety, wellbeing and stability of children and young people placed in foster or kinship care.

The Care Services Practitioner provides therapeutic, child-centred case management and placement support to children and young people in foster or kinship care. The role works closely with children, young people, carers, birth families, DFFH and other professionals to promote placement stability, safety, wellbeing and positive developmental outcomes.

2. COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS

Position supervised by:	Team Leader
Supervises directly:	Nil
Communicates internally primarily with:	Care Services Leadership Group, Care Services staff, Foster Carers, other UMFC staff
Communicates externally primarily with:	Families, Community members, DFFH, and other Community Service Organisations

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITY AREAS (KRAS)

Consistent with the UMFC values of Unwavering integrity, Considered empathy, Determined advocacy, Passionately optimistic and Bravely collaborative, and the Sanctuary commitments, this position provides high quality, efficient services through the following Key Responsibility Areas:

KRA 3.1 Therapeutic Case Management and Care Planning

Provide high-quality case management in accordance with the Best Interests Case Practice Model, promoting safe, stable and therapeutic outcomes for children and young people in care. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Conducting regular purposeful home visits to support placement stability and promote a safe and therapeutic environment for children and young people.
- Working collaboratively with children, young people and carers to advocate for their needs and ensure their views are represented in all case planning and decision-making processes.
- Establishing, convening, facilitating and participating in Care Team meetings, ensuring key stakeholders (e.g. DFFH, education, health and other relevant services) are engaged in coordinated planning and decision-making.
- Utilising Looking After Children (LAC) processes and documentation, including Care and Placement Plans and Assessment and Action Records, to support structured planning and monitoring of outcomes.
- Engaging respectfully with birth families, kin and significant others to support meaningful participation in planning processes and achievement of permanency and placement goals.
- Promoting and supporting positive relationships between children, their parents and carers, where appropriate and safe to do so.
- Undertaking comprehensive assessments and contributing to placement planning processes, including Part B and Part C assessments, carer reviews and Permanent Care Assessments.
- Providing advice, information and practical support to carers to strengthen placement stability and ensure carers are well supported in their role.

KRA 3.2 Trauma Informed Practice • Deliver services in accordance with trauma-informed practice principles, ensuring that work with children, young people, families and carers is holistic, empowering, strengths-based, collaborative and reflective. • Contribute to a trauma-informed culture within UMFC through reflective practice, collaboration and role modelling, promoting practices that enhance safety, wellbeing and recovery from adversity. • Contribute to creating and maintaining a culture that reflects the Sanctuary Model Commitments, ensuring these principles are embedded in daily practice, decision-making, and relationships with children, families, carers, colleagues, and stakeholders.
KRA 3.3 Legislative and Practice Compliance Undertake all work in accordance with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and the Best Interests Case Practice Principles, applying relevant legislation, policy and practice frameworks to support children and young people to remain safe, develop a strong sense of belonging, and achieve their developmental and life outcomes.
KRA 3.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Advocacy Develop and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders, including DFFH, education providers, health services and community organisations. Work collaboratively and advocate on behalf of children and young people to support their identified needs to be addressed through timely and coordinated access to appropriate supports and services.
KRA 3.5 Documentation, Reporting and Quality Assurance Maintain accurate and timely case documentation and reporting in accordance with DFFH and UMFC requirements. Maintain up-to-date records using relevant systems, including CRISSP/CRISP, and participate in file audits reviews, and quality improvement activities in accordance with home-based care accreditation and quality assurance standards.
KRA 3.6 After Hours and Program Participation Participate in the Care Services after-hours on-call roster and contribute to program activities and service delivery requirements as required.
KRA 3.7 Risk Management and Compliance Work collaboratively with Senior Leadership and Operations team by actively identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks within the role by meeting all compliance-related tasks and expectations, including but not limited to monitoring activity, adherence to organisational policies and procedures and completion of compliance training and promoting a culture of risk awareness and compliance.
KRA 3.8 Child Safety and Cultural Inclusion Proactively promote and support a culture of child safety using the Sanctuary commitment of Cultural Humility to engage and grow cultural connections for all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children who may be gender diverse or children who may be culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD).
KRA 3.9 Organisational Culture and Values Contribute to the creation and maintenance of a culture that reflects the organisational values of Unwavering integrity, Considered empathy, Determined advocacy, Passionately optimistic and Bravely collaborative. Contribute to the creation and maintenance of a culture that reflects the Sanctuary Model Domains.
KRA 3.10 Team Collaboration and Professional Development Actively participate as a team member in relevant meetings and professional development processes such as supervision, training, and quality improvement processes in line with program and UMFC guidelines and requirements.

KRA 3.11 OHS Compliance, Physical and Psychosocial Safety Responsibilities • Actively fulfil all Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) responsibilities relevant to this position, including both physical and psychosocial safety obligations. • Actively identify and report physical and psychosocial hazards in the workplace • Participate in risk assessments and implement agreed controls to reduce physical and psychological harm • Support a positive workplace culture that promotes emotional, psychological, social and physical wellbeing, with colleagues and clients. • Contribute to maintaining a safe, trauma-informed environment consistent with UMFC's policies, values and procedures.
KRA 3.12 Additional Duties Other duties as directed.

4. PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE POSITION

(Key of estimated daily requirements: Not required=0%, Marginal=1-5%, Occasional=6-20%; Regular=21-50%, Frequent=51-70%, Continuous=> 70%)

- Sitting – Frequent
- Computer based tasks – Frequent
- Driving – Regular
- Lifting – Occasional

5. KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

- 5.1 Tertiary qualification in Social Work, Psychology, Social Sciences, Community Welfare or related discipline, or equivalent.
- 5.2 Understanding of, and demonstrated experience in, case management and/or working with vulnerable children and young people with a minimum of minimum 12 months' relevant experience.
- 5.3 Sound knowledge of trauma and attachment theory, including their impact on children and young people and demonstrated ability to apply this knowledge to practice.
- 5.4 Understanding of relevant legislative requirements, standards and practice frameworks within the statutory child and family services and/or out of home care sector
- 5.5 Demonstrated ability to work successfully both autonomously and collaboratively as part of a multidisciplinary team.
- 5.6 Well developed verbal communication skills with the ability to communicate effectively with a diverse range of people including, children, young people, families, carers and other professionals.
- 5.7 Well-developed written communication skills, with the ability to prepare clear and accurate documentation for a range of purposes, including case notes, formal reports, meeting minutes and correspondence. Personal attributes:
 - a. Strong interpersonal skills,
 - b. Highly developed analytical and problem-solving skills,
 - c. Strong organisational skills, adaptability and resilience.

6. ADDITIONAL ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE POSITION FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

- 6.1 A satisfactory Victorian and NSW Working with Children Check
- 6.2 A satisfactory Police Check
- 6.3 International Police Check (if relevant)
- 6.4 Current driver's license

7. WORK CHALLENGES/PRESSURES

- Competing priorities.
- Working with families' expectations and meeting their needs.
- Working with people with a variety of abilities and needs
- Working with distressed clients
- Adhering to timeframes as per workplans.
- Managing competing priorities and deadlines while maintaining safe work practices.
- Maintaining personal resilience and wellbeing while supporting clients and colleagues.

8. REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION

At UMFC, Reflective Supervision is considered to be an integral part of service delivery and ensures oversight over workforce design and psychosocial hazards. The development of skilled and supported staff is dependent on the support and structured reflection opportunities provided by the Reflective Supervision framework. The supervision framework is supported by our Sanctuary commitments such as social responsibility, open communication and democracy.

Reflective Supervision has a number of benefits for staff, clients, and the organisation, including:

- protection and a commitment to quality service provision for clients through case review.
- a forum of accountability for those to whom the staff is accountable (clients, organisation, profession).
- a reflective space for staff to identify their strengths, areas for development and any personal issues that may impact their professional practice.
- an opportunity for staff to build their skills and identify areas for future development in a supportive environment.
- trauma informed, consistent conversations that are a protective factor to decrease the likelihood of developing vicarious trauma when undertaking challenging work.
- reflection on psychosocial hazard exposure, understanding how work impacts wellbeing, and implementing strategies to enhance psychological safety.

Supervision is a requirement for all staff at UMFC and must, at a minimum, be provided:

- on an individual basis
- for 2 hours per month (pro rata) which may be in a single block or in smaller units.