



**Their  
Futures  
Matter**

# **Moving the system from crisis to early help: connecting children, young people and families to the right support at the right time**

**Access System Redesign discussion paper**

December 2018



# Minister's foreword

The NSW Government is committed to investing in children, young people and families by providing the right support, at the right time, to improve whole of life outcomes. This discussion paper provides an opportunity for the many people working in, and interacting with, the human services sector to help us shape a better system for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

The 2015 Independent Review of Out of Home Care in NSW (the Tune Review) found that the service system for vulnerable children and families is skewed towards crisis and statutory interventions – it focuses on responding to harm once it has occurred, whether that be in child protection, health, justice or education. For many, the responses come too late, after too much damage has been done.

As part of our response to the Tune Review, the Government has committed to a comprehensive redesign of the child safety and child wellbeing intake, assessment and referral system – referred to as the 'Access System'.

This whole-of-system redesign is about ensuring that children, young people and families can access the services and supports they need when they need them. The aim is to deliver a system that better aligns the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families to timely responses across the service spectrum so we can intervene earlier, prevent harm and keep families together where it is safe to do so.

This means a system that is flexible, evidence-based and child-focused. It requires all government and non-government agencies across the human services sector to work together to better identify and respond to the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families.

We began the redesign in 2018. This discussion paper summarises insights from the reform journey so far and outlines key themes and findings from a review of the evidence and consultation to date. It provides an opportunity to explore innovative ideas for a future Access System and seeks your views on the vision, guiding principles and direction of the next phase of reform. We will continue to work in genuine partnership across the human services sector, and with children, young people, parents and communities to improve our systems and services.

I look forward to hearing from children, young people, parents and service providers as they share their views on the system changes needed to improve the lives of vulnerable children, young people and families.



**Pru Goward MP**  
Minister for Family and Community Services

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# Introduction

## Designing the future access system for vulnerable families

For vulnerable children, young people and families, timely access to services and support is essential to address child wellbeing or safety concerns. The system needs to give people a pathway to early support when they need it, both early in life and early in need, and must intervene to protect children identified to be at risk of significant harm. This is happening for some children and young people, but not all.

The 2015 Independent Review of Out of Home Care in NSW (Tune Review) confirmed that while the current system responds to immediate crisis, it does not adequately address the complex needs of vulnerable children, young people and families, improve their lives, or arrest the devastating cycles of intergenerational abuse and neglect. The review found that:

- The system is not client-centred; it is designed around programs and service models instead of the needs of vulnerable families.
- Vulnerable children and families have needs that cross the boundaries of government agencies.
- Family and Community Services (FACS) holds primary accountability for very vulnerable children and their families with little influence over what drives vulnerability or the levers for change.
- Expenditure is crisis-driven, not well-aligned to the evidence and does not effectively target clients.

The review concluded that whole-of-system reform is necessary to achieve the fundamental level of change required. In response, the NSW Government established Their Futures Matter (TFM), a multi-agency approach to improving the lives of current and future generations of children, young people and families. It brings together government agencies, non-government organisations and the community to deliver the right supports to vulnerable children and families at the right time.

TFM is tasked with the Access System Redesign – a process of designing an evidence-based access system that effectively facilitates the early identification and assessment of protective factors, need and risk, and engages families to connect with appropriate services and supports to meet their needs before circumstances escalate to the point of crisis. This includes looking at how best to:

- strengthen the entire human services sector's capacity to provide appropriate and timely responses to vulnerable children, young people and their families
- build capability to offer multi-disciplinary evidence-based supports earlier to children, young people and families
- empower the community to provide support and resources.

## The case for change: what our early work has identified

To inform the redesign, our early work has focused on reviewing the available evidence and convening stakeholder workshops to better understand the current system's strengths and weaknesses. This has involved:

- **Evidence-led reviews:** We have commissioned seven expert reviews, completed two design workshops, undertook desktop research (including a review of more than 300 documents), and participated in more than 20 meetings with service providers and other jurisdictions.
- **Stakeholder consultations:** We engaged with over 300 stakeholders, including at more than 20 workshops across NSW. This work validated some findings from the research literature and challenged others. It enabled stakeholders to provide feedback on initial conceptual frameworks.
- **Data analysis:** Our preliminary data analysis helped us get a picture of service demand and capacity, and the pathway of child protection and wellbeing reports through intake, triage and allocation processes.
- **'Try, test, learn' pilots:** In collaboration with agency partners in two locations, we are trialling different response pathways for children and young people assessed to be at risk of significant harm.

A report that synthesises the research evidence is available from the Their Futures Matter [website](#). This Evidence Review highlights a well-documented link between adverse childhood experiences and intergenerational patterns of poor physical and psychological health. People who experience childhood trauma too frequently become high users of emergency services, drug and alcohol services, mental health services and homelessness services. They often have repeated contact with the criminal justice system, suffer mental ill health and/or become victims or perpetrators of family and domestic violence. This is symptomatic of a system that has not paid adequate attention to prevention and early intervention.

Our evidence review and stakeholder consultation also reinforced that the current service system for vulnerable children and families is skewed towards crisis and statutory interventions, focusing on harm once it has been done, whether that be in child protection, health, justice or education. The system misses opportunities to support families who show early signs of vulnerability before risk and need escalate.

A crisis-focused system has, over time, meant that some children and young people cannot safely live with their family, and move to environments that often subject them to different, more complex risks. Over the two years to 2017/18 the number of children entering out-of-home care in NSW has fallen by 44.5%<sup>1</sup>. However, despite this, and the ongoing efforts of government and non-government agencies to implement evidence-based preservation programs, strategies and initiatives aimed at better responding to children, young people and families in need, the system is still disproportionately focused on crisis and risk. This typically leads to poor outcomes for children, young people and families, and higher long-term costs.

It is important to recognise that Aboriginal children and families are significantly over represented in the child protection system and face significant disadvantage compared with non-Aboriginal children and families. Aboriginal children are:<sup>2</sup>

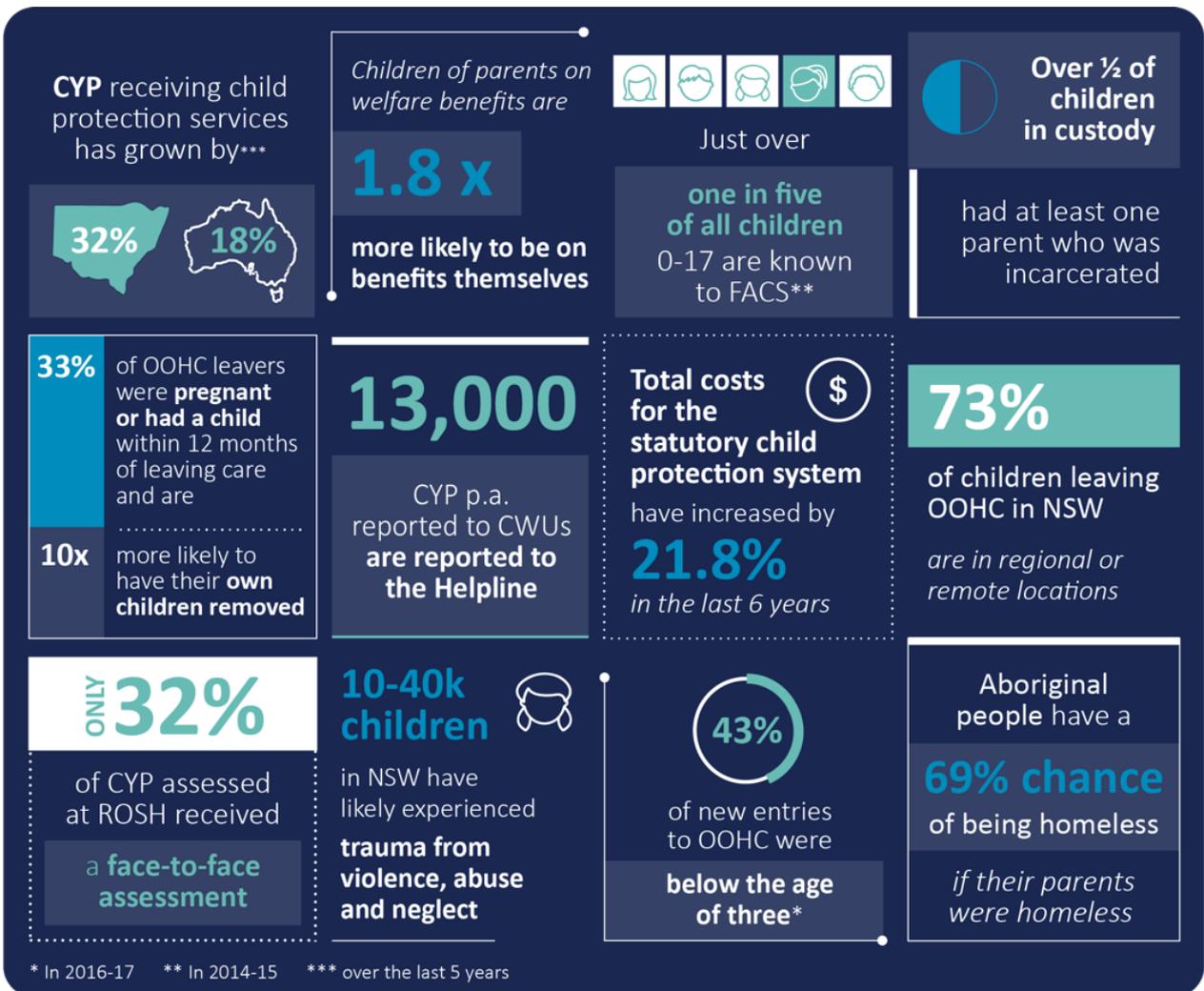
- 7.3 times more likely to be receiving child protection services
- 8 times as likely to be the subject of a ROSH\* report and assessed by FACS to be in need of care and protection
- 9.7 times more likely to be in out-of-home care.

\*ROSH means risk of significant harm, the threshold for statutory child protection intervention

<sup>1</sup> NSW Family & Community Services, Annual Report 2017-18 – Volume 1: Performance activities report, page 23, accessed from [https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/637241/2017-18-Volume-1-Performance-and-activities-report.pdf](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/637241/2017-18-Volume-1-Performance-and-activities-report.pdf), 17 December 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat and FACS, Co-design Plan on a Page for Aboriginal Children and Young People 2015-2021, accessed 2 November 2018, <https://www.absec.org.au/images/downloads/Plan-for-Aboriginal-Children-and-Young-People.pdf>

The figure below illustrates the failings in the current system and underscores the need for change.



**Key abbreviations**

CYP means child and young person

OOHC means out-of-home care

ROSH means risk of significant harm, the threshold for statutory child protection intervention

CWU means child wellbeing unit (Health, Education, Police)

## Where we are heading

This discussion paper is the start of a new vision for the Access System. We know the status quo is not an option; we know we can achieve better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families. Recognising the significant expertise and knowledge across the human services sector, we will undertake the next phases of detailed design in genuine partnership.

Over the coming months we will draw on the responses to this discussion paper to inform and develop options for the Access System Redesign. This will include further opportunities to test and refine proposed solutions, particularly with:

- **young people, families and communities**, to reflect what they really need in the redesign
- **service providers**, to build on what's working and address the limitations of the current system
- **experts and peaks bodies**, to build on evidence of what works and respond to the needs of communities, particularly Aboriginal children, young people and families
- **government agencies**, to create a genuinely multi-agency system and facilitate cross-government collaboration including across Health, Education, FACS, Justice and other relevant government departments.

## Have your say

This collaborative consultation process over the following months begins with this discussion paper. We seek comments, feedback and ideas relevant to the reform directions outlined in the paper. We are particularly interested in hearing about successful models, innovations or practices that have been, or are currently being considered or implemented in NSW or in other jurisdictions.

**We have set out questions to guide comments throughout the paper. You may wish to comment only on matters of interest or on all questions raised.**

We welcome your submissions and comments by:

- Online through the Their Futures Matter [website](#) (follow the link to the survey)
- Email to [TFM-info@theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au](mailto:TFM-info@theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au)
- Letters to the following address:  
Their Futures Matter  
Department of Family and Community Services  
Locked Bag 10  
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Please send your feedback by close of business on **29 March 2019**. To find out more about Their Futures Matter, visit [www.theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au](http://www.theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au).

# Part 1. Guiding principles

A central theme of our initial consultation was the need for guiding principles to underpin the Access System Redesign work. This was echoed in the research literature. Table 1 outlines the design principles identified at initial workshops as fundamental to our Access System Redesign which we would like you to consider and provide feedback.

Table 1 | Design Principles

Design principle	Description
<b>Children, young people, families and communities at the centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and acknowledging that children and young people are rights holders themselves and that these rights need to be respected.</li> <li>• Hearing from children and young people in their own words and placing their needs and their rights at the centre of everything we do.</li> <li>• Understanding, listening to and acting on the voices of families and communities when determining their needs and improving the system.</li> <li>• Clearly defining when and how to consider the voices of children, young people, families and communities in practice, legislation and process.</li> <li>• Building community capability by recognising and supporting the work that community members do in acting as ‘first responders’ to worries or concerns about child wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<b>Culturally safe and accessible services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system works for, and is trusted by, Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities.</li> <li>• The design of the system and the system itself are culturally competent.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus on prevention and early intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system shifts from crisis response to holistic assessment and response to strengths, needs, protective factors and risks.</li> <li>• Any child or family seeking assistance or observed to have a need is never stigmatised and can access timely advice and evidence-based support.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance and accountability mechanisms across a multi-agency system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-established governance structures clearly articulate the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for outcomes across all government agencies and non-government partners.</li> <li>• Agreed outcome and output indicators are developed, collected and routinely analysed to measure system performance and inform continuous improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>Building trust in the system through an ethical approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The system builds trust and promotes respect and dignity through an ethical framework and approach, including in relation to sharing information and using assessment tools.</li> <li>• The system uses evidence to ensure that prioritisation of service responses is appropriate, ethical and well-targeted to identified needs.</li> </ul>

## Discussion questions:

- Q1** Are these principles a suitable framework to guide the Access System Redesign?
- Q2** What, if any, additional principles should be considered for the Access System Redesign?

# Part 2. Key themes from the evidence

Our evidence review and preliminary stakeholder consultations helped us understand what is working well in the current system, any barriers and what changes could improve the wellbeing and safety of vulnerable children, young people and families. We have summarised the themes and supporting evidence from our work to date below. Please refer to the Access System Redesign: Evidence Review for a comprehensive overview of the evidence base available from our [website](#).

## 2.1 Understanding the drivers of vulnerability

The evidence review and stakeholder workshops identified how important it is to have a sophisticated understanding of what drives vulnerability – this is essential to creating an Access System that is well equipped to identify and address underlying needs, protective factors and risk. Key themes included:

- Some sub-populations are more likely to experience vulnerability. Identifying them and understanding their needs should underpin the redesign of a targeted, client-centric Access System.
- Access and service systems should not be designed around vulnerability alone. Service design and delivery should consider evidence-based practice models that build on people's strengths.
- Considerable evidence exists on the individual, parental, family and environmental risk and protective factors that drive vulnerability; knowledge of them helps to monitor and predict wellbeing. Risk and protective factors can relate to individual, family or social and environmental factors and can be inherent or circumstantial.
- Risk and protective factors never exist in isolation. Certain combinations can rapidly increase the risk of harm and reliance on the statutory system. The existence of multiple risk factors for a person or family has a cumulative effect, increasing the level of vulnerability and risk of harm. This is particularly true when there is the presence of domestic or family violence, mental illness and drug and alcohol misuse – the most dangerous combination for safety and poor child developmental outcomes.
- Intergenerational trauma and disadvantage are the most significant drivers of long-term and multi-generational reliance on child and family services; health services; mental health services; drug and alcohol, homeless and domestic violence services; and, particularly, crisis and statutory responses. Evidence shows that trauma-informed approaches in families and communities that suffer from intergenerational trauma and disadvantage are critical.

## Discussion questions:

- Q3** Do you agree with the themes and issues identified in section 2.1?
- Q4** Should we be considering other themes or issues?
- Q5** What evidence supports the additional themes or issues you think should be considered?

## 2.2 Engaging with children and families earlier to bring about change

The evidence review and stakeholder workshops identified the importance of working with families at the earliest opportunity in the trajectory of risk and need so as to build rapport and will give the best chance at effecting a positive change in family circumstances. Key themes included:

- Early childhood is a critical developmental period and has lifelong impacts on health and cognitive, educational and employment outcomes. Positive exposures and experiences of a developing foetus and child in the first 2000 days of life – from birth to age five – have a profound impact across their lifetime, including on physical and psychological health, cognition, education and employment. Conversely, negative experiences during this period can lead to long-term disadvantage in these areas.
- Early childhood represents a significant and modifiable period of change to reduce vulnerability and improve outcomes. Effective interventions can have substantial cognitive, behavioural and health impacts, including higher adult earnings, better health outcomes and prevention of disadvantage.
- Some stakeholders told us they want to see a greater emphasis on community development to build protective factors. Others want to address stigma and build awareness of trauma through community education and awareness campaigns.
- Some stakeholders believe that community hubs, co-located services and embedded roles (e.g. the Family Referral Services (FRS) in schools) support prevention and early intervention could potentially be strengthened or scaled up.

### Discussion questions:

- Q6** What are your thoughts on the themes and issues identified in section 2.2?
- Q7** Are there additional themes or issues that we should consider?
- Q8** Can you suggest further evidence to support these additional themes or issues?
- Q9** Given the many factors that can increase vulnerability, what can mandatory reporters and service providers do differently to identify and respond to worries or concerns at the earliest possible opportunity? What are the challenges? What are the opportunities?

## 2.3 Integrated, multi-agency responses are critical to address complex needs

The evidence review and stakeholder workshops identified that integrated multi-disciplinary and multi-agency services responses are critical to addressing complex needs; from this, we know the Access System needs to connect families to these services in a coordinated way. Key themes included:

- It is impossible to isolate the child and family system from overlapping service systems. Siloed responses do not recognise the common causes, multi-dimensional nature of risks and complexity of needs.
- Evidence shows that siloed responses to complex social issues are less effective than collaborative, multi-agency responses.
- Preliminary analysis of some social services and health responses indicates overlap in client need and offers evidence on what works to respond, such as trauma-informed practice.
- Inflexible referral pathways, capacity constraints and capability gaps are major barriers to multi-agency coordination.
- Overdependence on statutory, crisis and emergency responses, mandatory reporting and strict program guidelines, limit community referrals and the ability of providers to work with families as their needs change.
- Access to information is limited and information-sharing often problematic due to the lack of a centralised referral platform, technology constraints and the inconsistent application of section 16A in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.
- Neither specialist providers nor mainstream services can consistently and effectively identify and holistically assess need due to the overemphasis throughout the system on risk and safety.

### Discussion questions:

- Q10** What do you feel the benefits and opportunities are from the themes and issues identified in section 2.3?
- Q11** Are there additional themes or issues that we need to consider?
- Q12** What evidence supports the additional themes or issues you suggested we should consider?

## 2.4 Socio-ecological approaches to supporting child and family wellbeing

From our review of the evidence and stakeholder workshops we have identified that socio-ecological approaches to child and family wellbeing could help us to re-calibrate the system towards prevention and early intervention. Key themes included:

- A socio-ecological framework translates the public health approach to promote a human services system that focuses on wellbeing and prevention, rather than only responding to crisis, abuse and neglect.
- Under a socio-ecological framework, we can target efforts to individuals, families, communities and societies, with a focus on prevention and early intervention to prevent poor outcomes across human services portfolios.
- Stakeholders provided examples of promising practice initiatives, including, for example:
  - Family Referral Services in schools, which provide embedded, non-stigmatising support and referral in a universal, community-based setting
  - District leadership and empowered joint-agency groups that improve multi-agency collaboration and referral pathways no matter where vulnerable children and families touch the human service system
  - Universal pre-natal and early childhood community services and programs that act as early identification and soft entry points, such as pre-natal screening, nurse home visiting, community playgroups, parents or mothers' groups and early childhood centres.

### Discussion questions:

**Q13** What are your thoughts on the socio-ecological approach to responding to vulnerability?

**Q14** What evidence supports your view?

## 2.5 Regional and remote areas face specific challenges

Our stakeholder consultations and evidence reviews confirm the well-documented fact that regional and remote areas face unique service delivery challenges. Key themes and issues identified include:

- Access to services is more difficult in regional and remote locations due to transport issues and/or service gaps.
- Workforce challenges are more acute in regional and remote locations due to labour-market constraints, contracting practices and limited access to training.

### Discussion questions:

**Q15** What are the challenges you face in improving service delivery in regional communities?

**Q16** What evidence-based and innovative solutions can you propose to address these challenges?

# Part 3. The system elements

A successful Access System Redesign requires a change to the foundations of the NSW child and family system. We have not landed on a system design and are keen to hear the sector's views in order to assist with this process. The evidence review and stakeholder consultations identified eight system elements that warrant investigation and consideration in the next phase of design.

## 3.1 Early targeted support, advice and case management

We want to explore options for better early targeted support, advice and case management to children and young people with identified needs who are below the statutory threshold<sup>3</sup>. This should focus on how to best engage children, young people and families before their needs escalate to crisis and connect them to appropriate support. This element acknowledges that some children may have complex needs requiring a coordinated, multidisciplinary response at the outset. For example, children, young people and families may benefit from out-posted/place-based initiatives in universal settings (such as child care centre networks). This could mean that families are identified, engaged, assessed and coordinated to services directly without the need to be reported and assessed through the statutory child protection system. This element also considers how to engage families in a non-stigmatising way by building relationships and connecting to evidence-based services earlier.

### Discussion questions:

- Q17** What can the entire Human Services system (inclusive of all government and non-government agencies) do differently to better identify, engage and respond to the risks and needs of vulnerable children, young people and families?
- Q18** What can the human services system (inclusive of all government and non-government agencies) do differently to better connect families to services and supports as early as possible?

<sup>3</sup> This is where a child or a young person has an identified need or risk that does not meet the threshold for risk of significant harm. Service provision is dependent on voluntary participation by the service recipient. Also known as a non-statutory response.

## 3.2 Community hubs

This element involves understanding the role and function of existing community hubs that provide universal services such as early childhood education and healthcare, given their potential to be non-stigmatising, soft-entry access points for children, young people and families. We want to identify where existing community hubs are working well and explore opportunities to strengthen these, for example, through coordinated cross-sector governance, so that local needs are identified and services are provided.

### Discussion questions:

- Q19** Can you provide any examples of well-functioning community hubs in NSW or other jurisdictions?
- Q20** What are the opportunities to strengthen or expand the capacity of existing community hubs?

## 3.3 Multi-agency service coordination

This element involves considering options to improve assessment and referral across a multi-disciplinary family services network. This includes leveraging technology, human resources and governance mechanisms to better effect, and exploring options for:

- children, young people and families to access support in a timely way
- coordination, oversight and escalation of systemic issues
- collectively identifying local service gaps
- enhancing existing service directories and referral pathways.

### Discussion questions:

- Q21** How can we build on the strengths of the current system?
- Q22** What models of evidence based service responses should we consider?
- Q23** For children and families with complex needs and contact with multiple service providers, what are the barriers and opportunities to improve service coordination within and across agencies?

### 3.4 Need is matched to the right response

This element involves investigating options to enhance needs identification beyond a narrow focus on risk, and supporting cross-agency prioritisation, so that it matches the motivation, strengths and abilities of the child, young person and family - meaning the right evidence-based service response is provided. We believe this could reduce the likelihood of referrals based solely on local service availability and capacity while giving all agencies a common language and commitment to identifying need and providing targeted service responses. We will continue to examine existing approaches and identify inconsistencies in practice and approach. This element is underpinned by a trauma-informed, strengths-based, culturally sensitive approach that incorporates the rights and voice of the child, and principles of self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

#### Discussion questions:

- Q24** How can we build on the strengths of the current system to identify and holistically assess child, young person and family needs?
- Q25** What opportunities are there to streamline and strengthen pathways to appropriate support services, particularly for children who do not meet the statutory threshold?
- Q26** What evidence-based models of better practice and innovation should we consider?

### 3.5 Pathways for early help and advice, and child abuse and neglect

This element involves considering how to better leverage universal responses through a de-stigmatised, streamlined and accessible front door that links children, young people and families to the appropriate pathway as fast as possible. For both mandatory and non-mandatory reporters, this element requires consideration of how to ensure that they receive consistent support and advice to be empowered to help families earlier. This could include options for better-targeted interventions, in the first instance, to determine the pathway for the most appropriate response, including:

- *Early help and advice:* Access to advice and support for concerned members of families, communities and mandatory reporters on appropriate referral pathways and how to respond to worries or concerns, while preserving current specialised response functions (for example, Health, Education and Police).
- *Child abuse and neglect:* Pathway for reports that only meet the statutory threshold.

## Discussion questions:

- Q27** What system changes are needed to help people respond when they have concerns about a child?
- Q28** As we transition to whole-of-government, non-government and community responsibility for child protection and wellbeing, what's needed to build the capacity of concerned people and mandatory reporters to become mandatory responders?

## 3.6 A monitoring and outcomes framework

The Access System should measure outcomes to support continuous improvement, which requires us to consider how best to:

- enable service providers to monitor client outcomes while building a culture of continuous learning, innovation and quality improvement
- guide stakeholders to clearly connect service delivery to system and client outcomes not just inputs and activities
- create a feedback loop to government regarding the service availability and mix required to meet families' and communities' changing needs
- make investment decisions that respond to families' needs and evolve as required
- help the sector to monitor and report on lifetime outcomes across the seven domains of the Human Services Outcomes Framework.

## Discussion questions:

- Q29** How can we build capacity within the system to routinely collect, measure and meaningfully analyse outcomes data for quality assurance and continuous monitoring?
- Q30** What models of better practice and innovation should we consider?

## 3.7 Aboriginal collaborative partnerships and community controlled services

An Aboriginal collaborative partnership approach can help us understand how to build a system that is culturally safe, appropriate and fosters individual choice and self-determination. This element involves exploring how together, with Aboriginal communities, we can improve systems to deliver better outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families.

We will also explore governance, capabilities, engagement and evidence-based models that support local Aboriginal communities. We want to build a stronger system, in collaborative partnership with Aboriginal organisations and community controlled services which empowers children, young people and families and respects choice, to help address underlying trauma and break intergenerational disadvantage. Underpinning this approach, is the acknowledgment that it is local Aboriginal communities which are best placed to understand local needs without a 'one size fits all' service system response.

### Discussion questions:

- Q31** What is essential to an Aboriginal partnership approach to the design and implementation of the future Access System?
- Q32** How can we ensure that Aboriginal children, their families and communities have the opportunity to shape, deliver and promote accountability in evidence-based service design and delivery?
- Q33** What are the strengths of the current system and how can we build on them?
- Q34** What models of evidence-based practice and innovation should we consider?

## 3.8 Awareness and capability development

This element involves exploring what is needed to build the capacity of families, communities, mandatory reporters and other professionals to identify and respond to trauma, needs, risks and protective factors for children and their families. Understanding the long-term impacts of trauma and that what happens in early childhood can alter the course of a person's life, and that is important.

We also need to look at how to assist children and families learn about where and how to access help, and increase confidence within community networks to have conversations about individual and family needs, while also increasing capacity to link families to early help. This may, for example, include strategies such as universal and targeted education campaigns and training packages through formal and informal settings, and utilising different modes of delivery.

### Discussion questions:

- Q35** What is needed to build the capacity of individuals, families, mandatory reporters and other professionals to respond to vulnerable children and families?
- Q36** What is needed to build the capacity of community members to identify when children and families need support and help them access early support?

# Part 4. System-wide enablers

An Access System that meets the needs of children, young people, families and communities requires enablers, or supporting structures. Through our evidence review and consultation, we have identified several enablers that we'll investigate further:

- **Governance and accountability:** This involves a system-wide, person-centred outcomes framework with agreed indicators and measures by which agencies and service providers can meaningfully measure results. These results then inform quality assurance and continuous service improvement. Governance structures within each agency must embed accountability, roles and responsibilities against agreed system-wide objectives.
- **Funding and strategic commissioning:** NSW is developing a new strategic commissioning framework to provide a consistent model for policy, planning, service design, procurement and monitoring. It will aim to articulate the end-to-end business processes, their linkages and accountabilities. Outcomes monitoring will be central.
- **Streamlined and improved processes:** This enabler reduces duplicated processes across government and non-government partners by streamlining and improving processes that are a barrier to timely service responses.
- **Technology:** Technology platforms will allow timely availability and retrieval of information, standardisation and protection of sensitive information, and a greater ability for agencies to be more accountable.
- **Workforce:** A highly skilled and capable workforce across the government and non-government sector is essential. Children and families with complex needs are likely to interact with multiple sectors of the workforce across many different agencies. This enabler requires us to consider workforce needs and the capacity building required to implement reforms of this scale. This also requires us to consider a 'community of practice' across all agencies to support consistency, share best practice and provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn from each other.

## Discussion questions:

- Q37** What are the challenges or opportunities of these enablers?
- Q38** Should we consider additional enablers?
- Q39** What is needed to support the human services sector for a reform of this scale?



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## **Thank you for taking the time to consider and provide feedback**

Please submit your feedback by close of business on Friday 29 March 2019.

Visit [www.theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au](http://www.theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au) to find out more,  
or contact [TFM-info@theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au](mailto:TFM-info@theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au).

