

Families ACT and the Youth Coalition of the ACT Briefing Meeting with Senior Manager, Strategy and Purchasing, OCYFS, CSD

30th November 2011

Background

This is a summary of the briefing meeting of 30 November between the Senior Manager, Strategy and Purchasing, Office of Children, Youth, and Family Support, and the two sector peak bodies, Families ACT, and the Youth Coalition of the ACT. Briefing meetings with the Senior Manager, will continue on a fortnightly basis, with the aim of supporting the change process and clear communication to and from the sector.

Attending: Janelle Wheatley, Emma Robertson, Will Mollison.

Transition Planning

Transition Planning Document

Emma and Will raised the issue of progress on the transition plan. Workers and agencies outside the sector are wanting to know key details such as when services will be closing or opening.

Janelle indicated that the result of the Best and Final Offer (BAFO) process will be known over the next week. This is mainly for group programs, but also for CALD youth engagement and therapeutic services. Janelle said that the draft transition plan presented at the CYFS Directors meeting on 25 November will be refined to incorporate the outcomes of the BAFO and as further information is provided by the sector. In addition the Directorate is also drafting an operations manual for the CYFS program which will provide direction for services on:

- the rationale for the new model;
- the policy and legislative context;
- consent and information sharing protocols;
- data collection;
- service delivery principles;
- case management principles;
- records management;
- partnerships/collaborative practice;
- brokerage guidelines;
- common assessment framework guidelines; and
- service descriptions.

Communication about the Transition

The Youth Coalition is preparing a document capturing what the new service framework will look like in layman's terms and addressing concerns of the sector. This document aims to communicate to the broader sector what is happening, and it is anticipated that this will be finished in the next week or so.

Workforce Planning

Sector organisations have indicated they are adopting different approaches to staffing new services these range from declaring all positions vacant to selective recruitment. Some agencies are now saying that staffing will not be as big an issue as they originally thought it would be. Other agencies report that they are losing staff who are leaving the sector to find alternative employment.

At this stage Families ACT has not received many staffing information sheets back from agencies, but will be sending out a follow up reminder shortly.

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Workforce Development

Emma flagged the issue of workforce development targeted at program/middle manager level. She said that the program manager role was a demanding one, particularly in the current context of rapid change and that it would be worth jointly exploring the possibility of seeking alternative external funding, agencies pooling/contributing training funds, with a contribution from CSD to establish professional development programs for program managers.

Will said that Families ACT & the Youth Coalition had already discussed the establishment of a leadership forum and peer group mentoring as possible joint collaborative projects for the coming year.

Practice Framework Pilot Training

The Children, Youth and Family Services Training and Workforce Development Sub-Group has recommended the allocation of funds for training to support the piloting of the Practice Framework. The pilot process is intended to test and refine not just the Framework, but the accompanying training. Following the pilot phase and evaluation, it is envisaged that the training will be rolled out to the sector.

Service Framework Evaluation

There was discussion at the Workforce Development Sub-Committee meeting about the need to plan for program evaluation, both at a system level and for service user outcomes. It was proposed that a sub-group be formed with representatives from both Government and the sector to consider the scope of the evaluation.

It was acknowledged that the evaluation needed to be conducted by an independent source, and the importance of the evaluation plan taking into account the significant change, and 'tweaking', of services and practice in the initial implementation phase of the new Service Framework, so what will be evaluated needs careful consideration.

It was noted that funding for the Evaluation would be separate to the funding already committed for CYFS Workforce Development.

OCYFS Staffing

Sonia Ellem is no longer working for OCYFS; the team is now Janelle, Alison, Jeremy and Morgan.

YCACT and Families ACT Planning for 2012

The Youth Coalition has invited Families ACT to participate in their end of year planning process to explore joint work in 2012.