

KEEP THEM SAFE

A shared approach
to child wellbeing

ENHANCEMENTS TO THE SIXTH EDITION OF THE MRG

Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing is the NSW Government's response to the Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW. Keep Them Safe recognises the importance of the wellbeing of all children and young people, with the aim of providing appropriate support to families earlier, to prevent children and young people from requiring statutory child protection intervention. To achieve this, Keep Them Safe encourages families, communities, government agencies, and non-government organisations to work together to support children, young people, and families.

Reason for this factsheet

This factsheet lists a summary of the major changes to the 2014 sixth edition of the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG). The MRG assists mandatory reporters who have become concerned about possible abuse or neglect of a child or young person and must make a decision about whether or not to report their concerns to the Child Protection Helpline.

The sixth edition of the MRG has now been published with updated information that has been endorsed by the Keep Them Safe Senior Officers Group. It includes enhancements that close identified gaps, reduce confusion about the content and make the MRG easier and clearer to use.

The most significant enhancements to this edition are:

- New change that unaccompanied children under 16 years of age who are homeless or at risk of homelessness must be reported to the Child Protection Helpline as a child at risk of significant harm, in line with the Going Home Staying Home reform
- Underage marriage or similar union added to the Psychological Harm Tree. Knowledge of underage marriage or similar union must be reported to the Child Protection Helpline
- Availability of Helpline eReporting for non-imminent suspected ROSH reports – eReports will be delivered securely and automatically to the Child Protection Helpline for assessment.

Summary of changes

1. Reflects changes to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* enacted by the Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2014
 - S122 – additional information about mandatory reporting of a child who lives away from home without parental consent
2. Link inserted on the front page that will guide the reader to the definition for class of children or young people and additional information about the legislative base

3. Information added about reporting an incident of past serious abuse of someone who is now an adult. Includes advice that NSW Health Sexual Assault Service provides counselling and assistance in dealing with police for adult survivors of child sexual abuse and a link to the services
4. Examples added into the neglect definition
5. Examples added into the psychological harm definition
6. Dentistry and optometry added to the neglect: medical care – non-medical professionals tree
7. Female genital mutilation added into the Physical Abuse Definitions
8. Informal care arrangements definition amended for clarity
9. Additional information around when to consult with a Family Referral Service or other professional including their website address.

The MRG is available as an online tool and a PDF document.

Reviewing the MRG: The update process

The MRG is a dynamic document that requires ongoing enhancement to ensure that it remains easy to understand and use for all mandatory reporters in NSW. The updates also ensure that current practice issues are included. The review and upgrade of the MRG is a collaborative process between several government and non-government agencies.