

# KEEP THEM SAFE

A shared approach to child wellbeing

## FAMILY REFERRAL SERVICES

*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.*

### Why were Family Referral Services established?

The Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW identified the need to improve access to services for vulnerable children, young people, and their families who fall below the statutory intervention threshold, but who would benefit from accessing local support services to address current concerns and prevent escalation to crisis.

The Inquiry also highlighted the unacceptable over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the child protection system.

Therefore, some Family Referral Services (FRS) have an Aboriginal focus, aiming to identify and develop appropriate referral pathways to link Aboriginal children, young people, and their families with culturally appropriate services responsive to their specific support needs.

### What is the role of Family Referral Services?

FRS are intended to link vulnerable children, young people, and families with appropriate available support services in their local area. Government agencies, non-government organisations, and the private sector (e.g. general practitioners, childcare workers) can refer families to FRS where circumstances do not warrant statutory intervention. Consistent with the voluntary nature of this service, some families may self-refer. FRS refer clients to a range of

local support services such as case management, housing, childcare, supported playgroup, drug and alcohol/mental health services, youth services, home visiting, family support, parenting education, and respite care.

Working in partnership with the Health Services, FRS contribute to the holistic care of families in NSW by:

- providing information and assisting entry into a broad range of support services available outside the health system that may assist children, young people, and their families with current issues
- promoting child wellbeing
- aiming to provide appropriate referral in order to prevent escalation to crisis
- fostering the development of supportive, protective, and nurturing environments for children and young people.



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## FAMILY REFERRAL SERVICES

### Contacting Family Referral Services

#### METROPOLITAN NSW

**Illawarra Family Referral Service (Barnardos Australia):** Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, Shoalhaven and Wingecarribee Local Government Areas (LGAs).

**Phone:** 1 800 663 863

**South Eastern and Northern Sydney Family Referral Service (Barnardos Australia in partnership with Centacare):** South East Sydney: Ashfield, Botany Bay, Burwood, Canada Bay, Canterbury, Hurstville, Kogarah, Leichardt, Marrickville, Randwick, Rockdale, Strathfield, Sutherland Shire, Sydney, Waverly, and Woollahra LGAs. Northern Sydney: Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, Manly, Mosman, North Sydney, Pittwater, Ryde, Warringah, and Willoughby LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 800 066 757

**South West Sydney Family Referral Service (UnitingCare Burnside):** Bankstown, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Liverpool, and Wollondilly LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 300 244 826

**Western Sydney Family Referral Service (Relationships Australia NSW):** Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains, Penrith, The Hills Shire, Holroyd, Parramatta, and Auburn LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 800 597 589

#### RURAL & REGIONAL NSW

**Far North Coast Family Referral Service (Northern Rivers Social Development Council in partnership with Interrelate Family Centres):** Ballina, Byron, Clarence

Valley, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley, and Tweed LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 300 338 774

**Hunter Central Coast and Lithgow Family Referral Service (The Benevolent Society):** Cessnock, Dungog, Gloucester, Gosford, Lake Macquarie, Lithgow, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Upper Hunter Shire, and Wyong LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 300 006 480

**Mid North Coast Family Referral Service (The Benevolent Society in partnership with Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation):** Greater Taree, Great Lakes, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Hastings, Kempsey, and Nambucca LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 300 006 480

**New England North West Family Referral Service (Pathfinders):** Armidale, Dumaresq, Glenn Inness, Severn, Gunnedah, Guyra, Gwydir, Inverell, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tamworth Regional, Tenterfield, Uralla, and Walcha LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 800 597 589

**Riverina Murray Family Referral Service (Relationships Australia Canberra & Region in partnership with Mallee Family Care):** Albury, Balranald, Berrigan, Bland, Carrathool, Conargo, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Corowa Shire, Deniliquin, Greater Hume Shire, Griffith, Gundagai, Hay, Jerilderie, Junee, Leeton, Lockhart, Murray, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut Shire, Urana, Wagga Wagga, Wakool, and Wentworth LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 300 307 897

**Southern NSW Family Referral Service (MacKillop Family Services**

**in partnership with Marymead):**

Bega Valley, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma-Monaro, Eurobodalla, Goulburn Mulwaree, Harden, Oberon, Palerang, Queanbeyan, Snowy River, Upper Lachlan, Weddin, Yass Valley, and Young LGAs.

**Phone:** 1 300 339 016

**Western NSW Family Referral Service (Uniting Care Burnside):** Bathurst, Blayney, Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Cabonne, Central Darling, Cobar, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo, Forbes, Gilgandra, Lachlan, Mid Western Council, Narromine, Orange, Parkes, Walgett, Warren, Warrumbungle Shire, and Wellington LGAs, as well as NSW Unincorporated.

**Phone:** 1 300 339 016

### What do I do until Family Referral Services are established in my area?

Staff should continue to use current referral pathways and provide access to services to children, young people and their families. If staff are unsure of what services are available, databases such as the Human Services Network (HSNet) ServiceLink may be used to find details of services available within the local area.

### Further information

- Non-government organisations can contact the KTS Support Line: 1 800 772 479
- Consult your Child Wellbeing Unit, if relevant
- Keep Them Safe: [www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au)
- NSW Health: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/kts/frs.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/kts/frs.asp)
- HSNet ServiceLink: [www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au)