

# KEEP THEM SAFE

A shared approach to child wellbeing

## FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT

*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.*

### What is Family Case Management?

Family Case Management stems from recommendation 10.7 of the report of the Wood Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW. It is now a key initiative in the NSW Government's *Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing* action plan.

FCM is an integrated case management (ICM) response to families that are "frequently encountered" by a number of government agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs).

Keep Them Safe commits to a staged implementation of FCM. It is currently operating in three regions and wider implementation will be informed by the final evaluation.

### Who are frequently encountered families?

These are families who come into contact with multiple agencies and services and show little or no improvement in their situations. FCM focuses on those families that include a child or young person at risk of harm, rather than risk of significant harm.

Our combined knowledge of these families as a cohort is not strong. Using Community Services data, the Wood Commission estimated there could be 2500 - 7500 of these families in NSW. FCM will help to better understand these families and their needs.

### What are the aims of FCM?

FCM aims to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people and

strengthen overall family functioning. In addition, the first phase aimed to improve joint working practices to make ICM easier. This should allow front-line staff in the future to focus more on their work with families, rather than trying to overcome procedural, policy or systems barriers

### Who is involved in FCM?

FCM will rely on local groups of senior managers from government agencies (human services and justice areas) and local (NGOs).

The involvement of NGOs in local groups may change over time. Initially between two and five local NGOs will join each group to help develop the approach and identify families. Additional NGOs may then become involved to help meet the various needs of the families involved.

Members of the local groups will link back to front-line staff within their organisations, who in turn will access other service providers if required.



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The NSW Department of Family and Community Services will provide overall program management along with monitoring and evaluation.

### Where are the current sites?

There will be eight sites across three regions:

- SW Sydney: Fairfield, Bankstown, and Liverpool
- SE NSW: Queanbeyan, Goulburn, and Bega Valley
- Western NSW: Orange and Leeton/ Narrandera.

Between 45–90 families will be case managed by the local groups (15–30 families in each region). The whole family will be case managed. The local groups will be responsible for selecting families, developing plans together with the families, and ensuring agencies deliver on agreed actions.

An independent evaluation has been undertaken. Further monitoring and evaluation will inform further improvements and implementation

### How will FCM be supported?

A FCM Coordinator will support local teams in each region. These roles will be based in human services agencies in

Sydney and SE NSW and an NGO in Western NSW.

Coordinators will provide administrative and organisational support to the teams as well as some case management input (if needed). They will also play an important role in identifying barriers and resolving issues to improve joint working practices.

The evaluation will consider whether or not these, or similar, positions continue.

### How will services be provided?

By definition, FCM families will already be using, or imminently require, services – potentially from many agencies. Addressing their needs now should reduce longer-term demand. Agencies will deliver services within current resources and this may involve some re-prioritisation of services. Local groups will select families to ensure a mix of needs, so the demand is spread across agencies.

NGOs will not be expected to deliver services they are not funded to provide.

Brokerage funds per family are also available if needed. Local groups, including NGOs, will advise how

brokerage is spent (e.g. purchasing an individual service or pooling funds for a program for all families).

Brokerage and program funding comes from the FCM component of the Keep Them Safe budget (FCM has been allocated \$1 million each year for five years). Having brokerage funds allows us to test the ideal solutions for these families and identify current gaps. However, funding doesn't cover longer-term activity for the full number of eligible families (potentially 7500).

### Is this just another pilot?

No. FCM is being designed to become a mainstream way of working in the future. We are planning to make improvements to make it easier in the future.

### What will happen during statewide roll-out?

The evaluation recommendations will be presented to NSW Government and any broader implementation will be informed by a process of aligning existing integrated case management models for children and families to streamline an already complex service system.