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| Overnight Safety Plan |
| Improving safety for children and young people in residential care |

# Overview

## Purpose

The Overnight Safety Plan is part of a broader initiative to ensure residential care provides a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. From 1 October 2016, all residential care homes funded at the complex RP3 level must have an Overnight Safety Plan in place; this includes four (or more) bed homes and less than four bed homes. For four bed homes this is in addition to having a stand-up staff member in place overnight, every night.

The purpose of the Overnight Safety Plan is to articulate how the community service organisation will pro-actively assess and respond to the care, safety and supervision requirements of children and young people placed in residential care overnight, every night.

The Overnight Safety Plan will articulate the range of strategies that the agency will use to respond to the dynamic nature of residential care homes and to the diverse needs of children and young people in residential care overnight.

The Overnight Safety Plan is a plan for managing the variable dynamics of the house/s and it will take into account individual client plans (for example, behaviour management or crisis management plans). It is not intended to replace existing case management and planning processes for individual children and young people, or the mix of clients residing in residential care. It is intended to be a tool that will inform and enhance these dynamic planning processes. The plan will complement, and be used alongside, existing safety and quality processes and procedures that the agency has in place.

Whilst some elements of the Overnight Safety Plan may be consistent at an agency-wide level, it is expected that other elements of the Plan will be specific to the department area, aligning with the department’s area-based approach to placement planning and agency management. The plan will also outline overnight safety and supervision strategies that are specific to particular home/s within the area where necessary.

The Overnight Safety Plan will articulate how the agency will:

* Meet the care, safety and supervision requirements of the group of children and young people within the home/s overnight to support the active overnight staff member, taking into consideration dynamics between children and young people within residential placements, their supervision, and the support needs overnight to minimise and manage the likelihood of incidents occurring overnight.
* Provide a timely and proactive response (within 30 minutes) when required overnight to supplement and support the mandatory active “stand-up” staff member.
  + Support children or young people’s sense of safety as well as their sense of connection and belonging to the residential home where they reside as far as possible.
  + Make arrangements via an overnight response system operated by experienced staff familiar with residential care, to provide advice to the mandatory active “stand-up” staff member and/or attend to supplement the mandatory active “stand-up” staffing in the home when required overnight. This includes arrangements to enable the collection of young people from unsafe locations and transporting them to the home or another location (for example hospital); and/or to attend significant incidents involving children and young people, such as hospital admissions or incidents involving police.
* Consider when the indicators of need are met and a sleepover staff member is required in addition to the active “stand up” staff member overnight to respond to situations and dynamics within the home.
* Safety considerations include the safety of both the young person and staff members.

## Approval

In line with the area-based approach, the Overnight Safety Plan will be approved by the most senior Agency manager in the area and the respective department Area Director where the services are provided. Area Director approval will reflect consultation with relevant work areas/programs within the department.

Once approved, the Overnight Safety Plan will be used to inform the planning for residential homes that it covers. The Overnight Safety Plan should not, in itself, be used to preclude the placement of children and young people in vacant placements. Placements of children in vacant placements will be negotiated as per usual business practices.

Where the overnight safety and supervision needs of an individual client or client mix within a home necessitate variations or adjustments to the Overnight Safety Plan, the variations will be negotiated between the agency’s Regional Program Manager and the relevant department Manager, Local Connections. In the event that these parties are not able to reach an agreement, line management should be utilised for resolution.

Review

The Overnight Safety Plans will be formally reviewed by the relevant Agency manager and department Area Director who will convene the reviews on a quarterly basis, unless specific circumstances warrant an extraordinary review, such as significant or frequent Category 1 incidents occurring overnight or the placement of a young person with needs that require a significant change to the plan. Reviews may be carried out without the need to meet, provided there are no variations required to the Overnight Safety Plan or significant safety or supervision issues that warrant face to face discussion.

## Considerations for additional staff support

Uplifting intermediate RP2 placements to the RP3 level will remove the need for individual negotiated supplementation of overnight staffing arrangements. There may continue to be exceptional circumstances, as agreed between the department and the agency, where additional staffing support may be required in order to meet the needs of a particular child or young person, or to respond to the diverse needs of a particular home. Where such exceptional circumstances exist it is expected that time-limited funding arrangements will be agreed between the agency and the department, as a matter of urgency, before implementation commences. These arrangements will be: client-specific, time-limited, for a specific purpose, and closely monitored and reviewed by both the agency and the department.

There is an expectation for CSOs to outline how and when additional staffing capacity will be mobilised to support the stand-up staff member as part of the complex RP3 level of funding, including consideration of situations when sleep over staffing would be required in addition to the active stand up staff member.

Overnight Safety Plan Framework

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| Purpose  The purpose of the Overnight Safety Plan is to ensure residential care provides a safer and supportive environment for children and young people, particularly at night. |
| Section 1: Agency Level  This section of the plan outlines how the overnight care, safety and supervision requirements of children and young people in residential care are ensured by the community service organisation. This section may be consistent at an agency wide level. |
| Section 2: House Level  In completing this section, identify the homes that have specific overnight safety and supervision requirement and the strategies that will be put in place to respond to these requirements overnight, over and above those articulated in section 1. Where the care, supervision and safety requirements of a home are adequately met through the strategies identified in section 1, no further information is required. |
| Section 3: Approval  This section identifies who from the agency and the department has endorsed the plan at each critical point. |
| Section 4: Variations  This section identifies any variations to the plan that have been negotiated between the agency and the department to meet the overnight safety and supervision needs of an individual or the mix within a home. |

## Overnight Safety Plan

| Agency | [enter full name of agency] |
| --- | --- |
| Department area | [enter department area covered by this plan] |
| Property/s | [enter the location/s of properties covered by this plan] |
| Period of this plan | [enter the quarter this plan applies to] |
| Date of approval | [enter the date this plan was first approved] |
| Date of last review | [enter the date this plan was last reviewed] |

## 1.Agency/CSO level

### How are the overnight care, safety and supervision requirements of children and young people in residential care ensured by the organisation?

In responding to this question please outline how the community service organisation will meet the care, safety and supervision requirements of children and young people both within residential care homes, as well as those absent from residential care placements overnight. This includes outlining the overnight response to provide additional staffing support when required.

Key requirements of the overnight response include:

* + Providing additional staffing support within 30 minutes once a decision has been made that this is required.
  + The overnight response is to be operated by experienced staff familiar with residential care homes.
  + Presumption that staff will pick-up and return young people back to residential homes overnight, unless this is not the safest and/or fastest method. This will be at no cost to the child/young person. Safety considerations include the safety of both the young person and staff members.

Children and young people should be involved in safety planning, as appropriate to their age and development, and are to be made aware of the strategies in place to support them to return home safely.

Children or young people’s sense of connection and belonging to the residential home and continuity of care should be supported as far as possible.

#### Stand up staff member

All four bed residential care homes which receive RP3 level funding (minimum of four RP3 placements per home) are required to have a stand up staff member who remains awake overnight, every night.

#### Additional staffing support

Indicators for the consideration of the need for additional staffing in addition to the stand-up staff member (over and above the overnight response) to respond to situations and dynamics within the homes, could include the following or a combination of:

* Where there are multiple, complex & high risk behaviours for more than one young person.
* Re-occurring use of on-call and/or mobile support team
* High level of significant/concerning incidents reported overnight; and/or
* Need for more immediate support in the home (i.e. less than 30 minutes) or the on-call support team is not able to provide a timely response (i.e. isolated homes).

For four bed homes there is an expectation for CSOs to outline how and when additional staffing capacity will be mobilised to support the stand up staff as part of the complex RP3 level of funding, including consideration of situations when sleep over staffing would be required in addition to the active stand up staff member.

For homes with less than four beds, the circumstances for consideration of additional staffing support (above) apply to determining additional capacity that is needed, for example, activating a stand up staff member.

Where additional capacity is required above the RP3 complex level of support, the different funding structure that applies to 2 and 3 bed homes will be recognised in discussion with department divisions.

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| Outline your organisation’s area based overnight response, including how and when additional staffing capacity will be mobilised to respond to situations and dynamics within the home, or to help children and young people return home safely? |
| [enter text here] |

### How will these responses/strategies be triaged?

In responding to this question please briefly outline what will trigger the move to a more intensive strategy/response and how these will be activated/approved?

If this information is already articulated in existing documentation, such as operational manuals, referencing an attached document is appropriate.

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| [enter text here] |

### Any further information relevant to this Overnight Safety Plan

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| [enter text here] |

2. House level

### Residential care house level

Briefly outline the homes which have specific overnight safety and supervision requirements and the strategies that will be put in place to respond to these needs overnight, over and above those articulated in section 1. This section is not intended to replace existing case management and planning processes for individual children and young people.

Where the care, supervision and safety requirements of a home are adequately met through the strategies identified in section 1, no further information is required.

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| House | Summary of the specific needs of House | Summary of the specific Response (beyond the strategies identified in section 1) |
| *For example: Lonsdale Street*  *50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne* | *The home is particularly unsettled at present which is difficult to manage with one active stand-up staff member due to frequent requirement to support an individual who is self harming whilst also managing potential distress to other children and young people residing in the home.* | *Activating additional hours in the roster in evening between 9-11pm to provide additional assistance to settle children and young people into a night time routine and support to those experiencing difficulties during the evening.* |
| 1: [name and location of house] |  |  |
| 2: [name and location of house] |  |  |
| 3: [name and location of house] |  |  |
| 4: [add further rows as required] |  |  |

3. Approval

In line with the area-based approach, the Overnight Safety Plan will be approved by the CSOs most senior manager in the area and the relevant department Area Director. Area Director approval will reflect consultation with relevant work areas/programs within the department.

Once approved, the Overnight Safety Plan will be used to inform the planning for the residential homes that it covers. However, the plan should not preclude the placement of children and young people in vacant placements.

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| . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Signature of CSO delegate |  | . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Signature of Department Area Director |
| . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Name (block letters) |  | . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Name (block letters) |
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| . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Organisation (block letters) |  | . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Department Division (block letters) |
| . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Date |  | . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Date |

## 4. Variations

Where a variation of the Overnight Safety Plan is required outside of the quarterly review process, these variations must be negotiated between the CSO’s Regional Program Manager and the relevant department Manager, Client Support or equivalent. In the event that these parties are not able to reach an agreement, department line management should be utilised for resolution. Once variations have been agreed they should be noted in the section below.

Examples of when a variation may be required include when changes are needed to the area based approach or when a residential care home needs to be included as part of the area’s plan. Where there are significant or frequent Category 1 incidents occurring overnight or significant changes are required to the existing strategies in the plan for a period of time, this may also warrant a variation. In some circumstances a review of the Overnight Safety Plan will be more appropriate, which is undertaken by the relevant CSO manager and department Area Director.

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| # | Note of agreed variation | Date Approved | CSO Approver (Name and Title) | Department Approver  (Name and Title) |
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