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| Frequently Asked Questions |
| Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response - Phase Two Implementation  OFFICIAL |

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Contents

[What is the Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response? 1](#_Toc70321703)

[What are the key features of the Response? 2](#_Toc70321704)

[What will change in Phase Two? 2](#_Toc70321705)

[The Response is continuing and expanding 2](#_Toc70321706)

[The Response will be delivered by more service providers 2](#_Toc70321707)

[Many existing child and family programs and activities will be transformed to align with the Response 3](#_Toc70321708)

[Why is it changing? 3](#_Toc70321709)

[*We are actioning the reform agenda* 3](#_Toc70321710)

[*We are delivering services that are evidence and culturally informed* 3](#_Toc70321711)

[*We are using data to target services more effectively* 4](#_Toc70321712)

[When will changes occur? 4](#_Toc70321713)

[Which programs and activities are in scope for the change? 4](#_Toc70321714)

[How did you determine which programs and activities would be in scope? 5](#_Toc70321715)

[Will all programs and activities in scope be transitioning to the Response? 5](#_Toc70321716)

[What happens to programs and activities in scope that are not transitioning to the Response? 6](#_Toc70321717)

[When will I receive formal advice about how these changes impact my organisation specifically? 6](#_Toc70321718)

[How can I find out more? Who should I contact if I have any questions? 6](#_Toc70321719)

# What is the Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response?

The Victorian and Aboriginal Family Preservation and Reunification Response (the Response) is an evidence-based, outcome focused intensive child and family support model that aims to promote strong families - with children who are safe, healthy, resilient and thriving; and parents and caregivers who are supported to create a safe and nurturing home environment.

The Response provides responsive, evidence-based and sustainable support to children and families in partnership with Child Protection to:

* keep children safely at home
* prevent children and young people entering care services
* support children and young people currently in care to safely reunify with their family.

# What are the key features of the Response?

Key features of the Response include:

* funding for intensive intervention support (averaging 200 hours), followed by step-down support   
  (averaging 40 hours)
* practice modules known to be effective in supporting children to remain safely at home and to sustain change
* Aboriginal cultural practice elements that are culturally safe and inclusive for Aboriginal children and families
* implementation support for practitioners to deliver evidence-based services
* Child Protection Navigators who identify, target and engage children and families most in need of support and who facilitate collaborative practice between the Response teams and Child Protection
* sophisticated monitoring and modelling capabilities to ensure that the Response is well targeted and that service models and future investment is continually informed by evidence.

Find [more information](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-and-aboriginal-family-preservation-and-reunification-response) on the Providers website: <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-and-aboriginal-family-preservation-and-reunification-response>>

# What will change in Phase Two?

## The Response is continuing and expanding

In the 2020-21 State Budget, the Victorian Government announced $335 million over four years to continue the transformation of the children and families service system to focus on early intervention and prevention, including the expansion of the Response. This allows for the Response to continue and expand over the next three years to 30 June 2024.

## The Response will be delivered by more service providers

The expansion of the Response is made possible through the transition of existing funding for intensive child and family services into a new service model.

This approach allows us to achieve the aims of the reform agenda while:

* maintaining capacity of service delivery in earlier intervention and diversionary services
* minimising disruption to service continuity and workforce stability.

## Many existing child and family programs and activities will be transformed to align with the Response

This expansion will allow the streamlining of several existing child and family programs into one evidence-based and outcome-focused approach, reducing complexity of referrals and enabling improved collaboration and coordination across service providers.

The transformation of existing child and family programs will also allow:

* the expansion of the Response to reach an increased number of children and families across Victoria; and
* the creation of new service activities reaching a broader group of children and families in need of intensive support.

Implementing these reforms involves a change to Victorian Government policy. It means that the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) will no longer fund certain programs and activities which some organisations deliver under their current service agreements. All organisations funded to deliver impacted programs and activities will be offered the opportunity to deliver the Response and/or the new intensive child and family support activities.

# Why is it changing?

## *We are actioning the reform agenda*

*Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children* is the Victorian Government’s blueprint for transforming the child and family system, from one that is weighted towards crisis response to one that invests more in early intervention and prevention.

In line with *Roadmap for Reform*, the department is transforming the way services are delivered to be person centred, culturally informed, outcomes oriented and embedded in evidence.

The Response marks an important milestone in the reform journey, bringing together a range of system, service and practice changes into the service delivery environment, and laying the foundation for building and scaling evidence-informed service models across the children and families service platform.

The Response features:

* a social investment approach for better targeting and greater impact
* a model of support built on evidence and culturally informed practices, supported by implementation science
* integrated governance
* collaboration across child protection and family services.

## *We are delivering services that are evidence and culturally informed*

We are shifting children and family service delivery towards evidence-informed practice.

Practice modules are embedded in the service model. These modules are designed to equip practitioners with techniques and strategies shown to be observable, measurable and impactful.

These modules are informed by evidence generated from trials and systematic reviews of placement prevention programs and research on common factors for building and sustaining engagement and motivation.

## *We are using data to target services more effectively*

Practice modules are selected to address the needs of specific priority cohorts and risk factors as identified for families most at risk of entry to care. As the modules are rolled out and we begin to collect data about outcomes and impact, we will be able to adapt and tailor as necessary using data-driven continuous quality improvement processes.

# When will changes occur?

The funding changes will take effect from 1 August 2021.

We are undertaking a staged approach to reforming services, commencing with intensive programs and activities. Over time, we will extend the outcomes-focused, evidence based, and implementation science supported models, across the whole child and family services platform.

# Which programs and activities are in scope for the change?

Programs and activities in scope for the change are those that have been identified as intensive child and family services. These are detailed in the table below.

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| **Activity** | **Sub-activities** | **Affected programs** |
| 31435  Individual, Child and Family Support | * Intensive (200 hours) - Family Services * Sustained (110 hours) - Preservation and Reunification * Intensive (200 hours) - Preservation and Reunification | * Cradle to Kinder * Stronger Families * 200 Hours Intensive Family Services * Changing Futures * Aboriginal Kinship Reunification (Loddon Mallee Area Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations) |
| 31438  Specialised Interventions | * Aboriginal Family Preservation Services * Stronger Families – ACCOs * Family Preservation Services | * Aboriginal Family Preservation Services * Families First * Aboriginal Stronger Families * Local Preservation and Reunification programs including:   + Choices   + Together Again Program   + Kinship Placement Prevention modelled on Families First   + Family Preservation (Brimbank Melton Area)   + Early Intervention and Prevention Services (Bayside Peninsula Area) |
| * Testing Evidence-Based Programs | Intensive Evidence Based programs that are part of the Evidence Based Trials   * Multi-systemic Therapy * Functional Family Therapy * Rapid Response (Southern Melbourne Area) |
| * Placement Prevention Supervision | * Cradle to Kinder |
| 31218  Placement Prevention Programs | * Innovative Support Services | * Families First |
| 31437  Flexible Funding | * Family Services Flexible Funding – Packages * Family Services Flexible Funding – Expenditure | * Cradle to Kinder * Stronger Families and Aboriginal Stronger Families * Aboriginal Kinship Reunification (Loddon Mallee Area Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations) |

# How did you determine which programs and activities would be in scope?

The programs and activities in scope are more intensive child and family services, that share similarities to the Response in terms of their target group and intent.

Programs and activities that are not in scope are largely less intensive child and family services that are intended to be earlier intervention or diversionary. Maintaining these programs ensures that we retain a focus on earlier intervention for groups of children and families suitable for this approach.

# Will all programs and activities in scope be transitioning to the Response?

Most, but not all in-scope intensive intervention services will transition to the Response. A small number of these programs will transition to a new intensive service model.

Prioritisation for transition to the Response will be based on the principles of:

* programs whose **target groups** are most like the Response
* **meeting projected demand** in an area, based on entry to care data and the data modelling of children most likely to enter care
* **advancing Aboriginal self-determination,** allowing for an Aboriginal Response, operated by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) in each area
* Response teams within an organisation being sufficiently large enough to be **operationally feasible** – this may include partnership approaches and coverage across multiple areas – and consequently able to be effectively supported by Mobile Implementation teams
* **local governance** arrangements that can grow to accommodate multiple providers of the Response in a local area
* wherever possible, **avoiding partial transition** of programs and activities
* a Response in each area that can accommodate the needs of children across different age groups.

# What happens to programs and activities in scope that are not transitioning to the Response?

While significant investment is being made to expand the reach of the Response to more families across Victoria, it is important to recognise the need to reserve capacity in the system for intensive support for a broader range of children and families, with differing needs.

Programs and activities that do not transition into the Response will instead transition to a new intensive service model.

Detailed design work will be required to shape this new intensive model and we will continue to involve you in this process.

# When will I receive formal advice about how these changes impact my organisation specifically?

Organisations funded to deliver child and family services will receive a letter prior to 30 April 2021 that outlines the programs and activities that are in and out of scope of the reform changes and how this will impact on service agreements generally.

For organisations directly impacted by the changes, formal written advice will be provided in May 2021 detailing what this means for each organisation.

# How can I find out more? Who should I contact if I have any questions?

We are committed to providing you with information and updates as this work progresses and will do so through a range of communication and engagement channels.

We are working closely with divisions and areas, and our finance and service agreement colleagues, to detail these changes at an area and organisational level. We will facilitate and support more targeted conversations as needed, once detailed organisational level information has been issued.

We will continue to update these frequently asked questions and we will let you know when a new addition has been posted.

**Your primary point of contact will be your local area Agency Performance and System Support teams. In the first instance, please direct any queries to your APSS Adviser. Local Area APSS teams will be supported by divisional Implementation Managers.**

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| To receive this document in another format, phone the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email the Child Safeguarding team](mailto:child.safeguarding@dffh.vic.gov.au) <child.safeguarding@dffh.vic.gov.au>.  Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.  © State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, 2021.  In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.  ISBN 978-1-76096-344-6(online/MS word)  Available at the [DHHS Providers website](mailto:https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-and-aboriginal-family-preservation-and-reunification-response) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-and-aboriginal-family-preservation-and-reunification-response> |