



# Welcommmunity

Building Stronger, More Resilient Communities

## OUT-OF-HOME CARE ASSESSMENTS

*Information Guide*

# The Welcommunity Way

Firstly, welcome, and thank you for downloading our OOHC Assessments, Information Booklet.

Contained in this booklet, you will find more information about the OOHC assessments, currently offered by Welcommunity.

We do assessments differently. Included in all our assessment packages are; initial consultation with the referring individual or agency to establish your unique assessment needs, a comprehensive, robust assessment process and the provision of a quality report that reflects all assessment outcomes. Following this, we include in our assessment costs, ongoing consultations with the referrer as required, and an implementation report and recommendations to support the agency in future decision making and care planning.

The service delivery of our OOHC assessments is largely dependent on the needs of the referrer. In the current COVID-19 climate, we have made a number of adaptations to the service delivery of all our assessments to ensure we can continue to meet your needs.

If you have any questions about any information contained in this booklet, or would like to schedule an assessment, please contact us, and we will aim to accommodate you.

We hope to hear from you soon!

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## Parenting / Restoration Assessment

A Parenting Assessment is the assessment of a parent, or parents and their capacity to facilitate, and adequately respond to the specific care and support needs of a child and/or children, in their care.

Thorough parenting assessments should clearly capture a parent/s strengths, and weaknesses, and assess any identified, or foreseeable risk involved with a child, or children, remaining, or being placed in their care.

Findings and outcomes of Parent Assessments are reflected in a comprehensive report as well as an implementation report that includes any recommendations for the referrer, based on the findings of the assessment.

The data, and outcomes of a Parenting Assessment, may inform the assessment of a parent, or parents suitability to have a child restored into their permanent care.

## Guardianship Assessment

The purpose of a Guardianship Assessment is to produce data that informs the Children's Court, and guides them in their decision in establishing whether guardianship is a suitable permanency option for a child.

Guardianship Assessment reports, and suitability statements are currently offered by Welcommunity in the Central West, and Far-Western areas of New South Wales.

For more information in relation to Guardianship Assessments, please contact us directly.

## Foster Carer Assessment

A Foster Carer Assessment, is the processes of compiling relevant information, data, and other evidence, to assess a prospective carer, and their suitability to become an authorised Foster Carer. The assessment process includes a large-scale investigation to elicit information about a carer, their history, their family and relationship dynamics, and their home, to assess their suitability, and capacity to care for a child OOHC.

The assessment also aims to highlight particular types of care arrangements a prospective carer, or applicant, may be best-suited to. Potential placement outcomes include: short-term and long-term placements, foster care placements, respite placements, and/or other, short-term placements such as emergency-based care arrangements.

## Kinship Carer Assessment

Approximately 1 in 4, or 20% of children who live in OOHC, are currently placed within a Kinship placement. A kinship carer is generally a biological or cultural family member of a child.

A Kinship Carer Assessment is a similar process to Foster Carer Assessment in that, the primary purpose is to clearly establish a family member, and their capacity to care for a child who has been removed from their care of their birth family.

Kinship Carer Assessment includes the process of establishing the prospective carers strengths, and weaknesses, and their capacity to provide a safe and secure home for a child, or children, and adequately provide for, and respond to the specific needs of a child/ren, should they be placed in their primary care.

# Placement Suitability Assessment

In OOHC, Placement Suitability Assessments, and Placement Reviews, assess the suitability of the placement for a child. The assessment factors in the carers, and their capacity to meet the specific needs of a child, and the suitability of the environment, and other factors that influence the suitability and sustainability of a placement arrangement.

Recent research suggests that children living in OOHC placements, experience, on average 10.53 placements. Children who experience a significant number of placement changes, or placement breakdowns, often experience further harm, and face a range of other challenges that significantly impact their capacity to heal from their past trauma experiences, and develop the quintessential skills required for adulthood.

A key focus area for development in the OOHC industry, is to reduce the harm that children experience while they are in care. Robust assessment processes reduce the risk of children experiencing further placement breakdowns, by highlighting the specific care and support needs of a child, and ensuring their placement can adequately meet, and respond to their needs. Quality Placement Suitability Assessments also support agencies and increase their capacity to facilitate regular assessment and monitoring processes, to work towards achieving more desirable outcomes for children they support.

As a child develops, naturally, their care and support needs change. Regular Placement Review Assessments are also an essential component of the regular re-assessment of the suitability and sustainability of a placement arrangement to ensure the placement, and the carers maintain their capacity to provide adequate care and support for a child.

## Child-Carer Matching Assessment

As mentioned above, a key area of development for the OOHC industry, is to reduce placement breakdowns, and significant placement changes children living in OOHC experience.

A key element to ensuring the suitability, and sustainability of a prospective placement, is to conduct a comprehensive Child-Carer Matching assessment.

A Child-Carer Matching Assessment is designed to take into consideration the child, their strengths, and weaknesses, as well as their specific care, and support needs, and 'match' these assessment outcomes, to their current, or prospective carer.

These assessments are designed to ensure a carer can respond to, and adequately provide for a child, and their needs. Quality Matching Assessments should take all reasonable measures to ensure the suitability of the carer, to the child, and ensure the sustainability of a placement arrangement.

## Carer Review Assessment

Carer Review Assessments are designed to assess the suitability of a carer to continue providing the primary care and support for a child, or children, currently in their care.

Secondly, Carer Review Assessments can identify any changes, in the care and support needs of a child, or children, and support the assessment of the carers capacity to respond to any changes in the needs of a child/ren.

Regular Care Review Assessments support agencies to ensure children remain supported in their placement, placements remain suitable, sustainable and responsive to their needs.