



# Case transfer Procedure

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## 1. Purpose

This procedure guides Department for Child Protection (DCP) staff in determining:

- which DCP office is best placed to provide case management to a child or young person, their family or carer
- timeliness of transferring case management following a determination of which DCP office is best placed to provide case management.

This procedure ensures decisions about the transfer of cases from one DCP office to another remain child centred.

## 2. Scope

The following are in scope:

- DCP cases with a current long-term care and protection order and a stable placement that require a case transfer from one DCP office to another for the purpose of effective case management
- DCP cases with a current care and protection order where distance from the allocated DCP office has been identified as a significant barrier to progressing case outcomes.

This procedure should be applied in circumstances where placement stability for the child or young person has been established and therefore does not apply to children or young people in temporary accommodation such as short-term emergency housing, housed within a Placement and Support Package (PaSP) or short-term residential care placements where case management is not hindered by distance from the allocated DCP office.

## 3. Authority

### 3.1 Legislative context

- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(the CYPS Act\)](#)

### 3.2 Whole of Government requirements

Not applicable.

### 3.3 DCP requirements

- [DCP Practice Approach](#)

### 3.4 Principles

- The safety of children and young people is the paramount consideration.



- In keeping with DCP's commitment to ensuring a child centred approach to practice, this procedure is designed to ensure a prompt and continuous service is provided to children and young people in care, regardless of where they reside.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander voices, families and community controlled Aboriginal services remain central to planning and decision making for all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- All negotiations, handover and decision-making regarding transfers will have child centeredness and collaboration as guiding principles as per the [DCP Practice Principles](#).

## 4. Procedure requirements

Children and young people involved with DCP generally receive case management from the DCP office closest to where they reside. Due to the nature of child protection work, housing and placement changes are a regular occurrence. At times these changes can result in difficulty ensuring sufficient support from the allocated DCP office.

### 4.1 Cases suitable for transfer

Requests for case transfer should be considered where living arrangements of the child or young person have remained unchanged for a period of three months or more and where the allocated DCP case worker is confident that longer-term location stability is likely to warrant a transfer of case management responsibility.

For cases where long-term orders are established, and the child or young person is in a stable family-based placement, a request to transfer case management to the DCP office closest to the child or young person's placement can be made.

Children and young people on short-term care and protection orders that do not have a barrier to progressing case outcomes due to distance from the allocated DCP office are out of scope for this procedure and will be managed by the DCP office allocated at the time of the child or young person coming into care.

As residential care placements are intended to be temporary or short-term in nature, with alternate accommodation being actively scoped and/or progressed, case management is to remain with the allocated DCP office. In circumstances where long-term orders are in place and family scoping has not identified a safe placement for the child or young person, a request to transfer case management to the DCP office closest to the child or young person's residential care placement can be considered.

### 4.2 Transfers between country and metro locations

In circumstances where a child or young person has moved a considerable distance from the allocated DCP office (for example, relocation from a country location to a metropolitan location or vice versa) and distance therefore hinders the provision of effective case management, a transfer of the case to the DCP office closest to the child or young person's place of residence should be considered. In circumstances where distance has been identified as a significant barrier to progressing case outcomes, case transfer can be considered regardless of the length of the order.

Requests to transfer case management for a child or young person that has changed placement from a country to a metropolitan location or vice versa can be made once placement stability has been established for a period of three months or more and where it has been determined that placement stability is likely to



remain in place. Discussions with the closest metropolitan DCP office or with the DCP Country Support Unit can occur to negotiate the interim case task support whilst placement stability is being established.

### 4.3 Requesting a transfer

Once a child or young person has been identified as requiring a transfer to a different DCP office, transfer discussions/negotiations can commence between the allocated DCP office manager and the DCP office manager receiving the request to transfer. To support readiness to transfer, the child or young person's case plan must be current.

Appropriate consideration must be given to whether transferring the child or young person's case outweighs continuity of care that has been received to date.

The allocated DCP office manager is responsible for formally requesting a case transfer via C3MS. The [C3MS Guide: Case Transfers](#) provides instruction about how to 'Request a Case Transfer' and how to 'Respond to a Case Transfer Request'. Prior to requesting a case transfer via C3MS, the allocated DCP case worker is responsible for ensuring that all requirements of the [Case transfer Checklist](#) have been completed.

The receiving DCP office must give appropriate consideration of the case transfer request, including undertaking quality assurance and identifying a team/worker that is able to accept the case, within six weeks of receiving the request in C3MS. In the event that a completed requirement on the [Case transfer Checklist](#) lapses whilst awaiting a response regarding transfer, discussions should be held between the transferring office and the receiving office to finalise the outstanding requirement in order to prevent transfer delay.

### 4.4 Exceptional circumstances

Case transfer consideration for children and young people outside the scope of this procedure can be given in exceptional cases and should be managed through the relevant office managers. Managers are to consider the specific circumstances of each child or young person, ensuring they are guided by the principles of child centeredness and collaboration. Prior to making a decision to transfer, appropriate consideration must be given to continuity of service, familiarity with the child and young person's circumstances and positive worker/child relationships and weighed against the ability to provide sufficient service to the child or young person. Escalation to the relevant Regional Directors is to occur where exceptional circumstances are unable to be resolved by the relevant office managers.

### 4.5 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people

DCP is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people receive a culturally responsive, safe and equitable service. Case transfers involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people must uphold the rights of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people to remain connected to family, siblings, community, culture and Country in accordance with the [CYPS Act](#) and the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Practice Paper](#).

Case transfers for all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people must be undertaken in a manner that:

- maintains the child or young person's cultural identity and relationships with family, community and Country
- supports compliance with Part 3, section 12 of the [CYPS Act](#) and the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Practice Paper](#)



- embeds Aboriginal self-determination, partnerships and family led decision making in every case transfer decision
- promotes continuity of care, minimises disruption to service provision and strengthens culturally safe practice.

#### 4.5.1 Identification and cultural connections

Active efforts to establish identification and cultural connections must occur prior to transfer. This includes ensuring:

- guidance is sought from a Principal Aboriginal Consultant (PAC) to ensure accurate identification and appropriate cultural engagement and support
- efforts have been made to establish an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child or young person's clan/language group and kin via confirmation by the child or young person, parents, extended family and/or community
- accurate recording of an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child or young person's identity within C3MS.

#### 4.5.2 Pre-transfer cultural consultation

Prior to transfer, the allocated DCP case worker must initiate early consultation with the:

- relevant PAC
- child or young person's family, kin, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation or the Aboriginal support agency/service supporting the family.

#### 4.5.3 Aboriginal Cultural Identity Support Tool (ACIST)

Prior to transfer, the allocated DCP case worker must review the case plan requirements including:

- ensuring the ACIST is current, relevant and reviewed with family and cultural input
- the child or young person's genogram is up to date, accurate and identifies Aboriginal kinship relationships to ensure the child or young person remains connected to family and culture
- ongoing commitments to support the child or young person's cultural connection post-transfer are documented within the case plan and ACIST.

#### 4.5.4 Handover

Prior to transfer, the allocated DCP supervisor must organise a handover meeting with the office receiving the transfer. An Aboriginal Family Practitioner (AFP) or PAC from the allocated DCP office must be invited to the handover meeting to support continuity of care and culturally safe practice. The meeting must discuss and identify active efforts that include:

- cultural and kinship relationships
- risks and protective factors
- current supports and service connections
- post transfer cultural connections
- any sensitive cultural, community, or family dynamics requiring understanding/knowledge.

Agreed outcomes and responsibilities are to be recorded in the case transfer summary in C3MS by the transferring office.



### 4.5.5 Post Transfer Review

Post transfer the:

- new DCP case worker must meet with the child or young person's family and Aboriginal supports within a timely manner of the transfer to reaffirm cultural connections to family, culture and Country in line with the case plan
- relevant supervisor and PAC must review the case within one month to ensure continuity of cultural connection and service delivery.

### 4.6 Dispute resolution

Declining case transfer requests should only occur in the following circumstances where:

- placement stability has not yet been established
- the requirements of the [Case transfer Checklist](#) have not been adequately met
- a case transfer is not considered child centred based on exceptional circumstances.

In circumstances where agreement regarding transfer cannot be reached within six weeks of the transfer request being made, the following steps are to be taken:

- DCP office managers (from both offices) must prioritise discussions regarding the transfer request and seek to obtain agreement through focusing on the best interests of the child or young person. Should an outcome not be reached within three weeks (nine weeks from point of initial request), the allocated DCP office manager is to refer the matter to their regional director for escalation
- discussions between the regional directors of both DCP offices must be held to reach agreement regarding the transfer request. Where agreement is unable to be reached within a further three week timeframe (12 weeks from point of initial request) or where additional expertise is required to ensure the best outcome for the child or young person, the matter is to be escalated by the regional director of the allocated DCP office to the DCP Case Transfer Review Panel.

### 4.7 Case Transfer Review Panel

The DCP Case Transfer Review Panel (the Panel) is an internal Panel tasked with the systemwide review of DCP case transfers to ensure efficient service provision for all children and young people close to where they reside and to reduce statewide case management issues as a result of case transfer blockages.

The Panel will report on a quarterly basis at the DCP Regional Priorities Meeting and will be responsible for the following functions:

- identifying and raising systemwide barriers preventing effective case transfer
- developing solutions to remove systemwide barriers associated with case transfer blockage
- quarterly monitoring and review of the DCP Case Transfer Data Report with a focus on transfer requests that have been outstanding for a significant period or where distance is a barrier to the provision of case management support
- detailed review of complex or exceptional case transfer requests including requests for transfer that have risen via a complaint's mechanism or incident
- dispute resolution for case transfers where agreement has been unable to be reached via the standard dispute resolution process (refer to section 4.6: Dispute resolution)
- providing the outcome of Panel meetings to relevant parties.



## 5. Related documents

Related documents, forms and templates
<a href="#">Case transfer Checklist</a>
<a href="#">Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle Practice Paper</a>
<a href="#">Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (the CYPS Act)</a>
<a href="#">C3MS Guide: Case Transfers</a>
<a href="#">DCP Practice Principles</a>

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