**Unify Care Arrangements (Placements) – Availability and Matching**

What is the Unify Care Arrangements product?

New Child and Family products are being delivered as part of **Stage 1** of the Unify Program. **Care Arrangements** is one of these new products.

The product aims to ensure a child or young person's current and future needs are better met through improved access to information to support care arrangement decisions.

Improvements to care arrangements will be delivered by the Unify Program over four years. In Stage 1, the scope of the product is focused on **Availability and Matching** for care arrangements delivered by Service Providers who have entered into Service Agreements for outsourced service delivery only. Fee for service arrangements are out of scope for Stage 1.

### Background

The process of finding a suitable, available care arrangement that meets the needs of the child or young person already in care, or coming into care requires:

* timely communication between everyone involved in seeking and making care arrangements for children and young people
* detailed information about the child/young person and their care or support needs
* an understanding of the contracted placement services and their capacity and
* the Service Provider’s available placement vacancies and information about foster carer availability, preferences, and capability.

The need for a care arrangement can often be reactive with little time to prepare and plan, so a reliable, single source of information is critical

to referrals and decision making, and ultimately, provides better outcomes for the child or young person.

Benefits of the new product

* Single source of information about a child or young person - making communications between internal and external placement parties easier.
* Improved visibility of the number of care arrangements and vacancies to enable targeted referrals to service providers.
* Improved visibility of information to enable care arrangement selection to be focused on better meeting the child or young person's needs.
* Increased reporting capability e.g. source of funding, child's current household and other children in that household, future capacity planning outcomes.

Children and young people are at the centre of these changes. The benefits for them include:

* improved visibility of previous care arrangements and support history to better inform decisions for a child or young person, such as whether the child or young person has previously lived with another child or young person
* improved recording and access to children and young people’s care arrangement preferences so they don't have to repeat their story.

### Benefits for Service Providers

The Unify platform uses contemporary technology and will provide Service Providers with:

* easy access to, and sharing of, secure information online in one place
* standard information fields in the referral containing holistic information about a child or young person to assist with matching to care arrangements that best meet the needs of the child or young person
* self service capabilities to easily maintain contact details so Child Safety has the most recent on-call information for Child Safety After Hours to access
* improved information sharing that aims to reduce the need for multiple emails and phone calls.

Service Providers will be able to access all care arrangement referrals securely through a portal (Unify Partner Portal). An email alert will be sent to the Service Provider containing a link directly to the referral in the portal.

Service Provider responses to the referral will also be made through the portal back to the Department. This will include responses advising of no available match, as well as offers for a care arrangement.

Partner Agencies and DCYJMA functions involved

* Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs:
	+ Placement Services Unit / Placement Support Services
	+ Child Safety Service Centres
	+ Investment and Partnership teams
	+ Child Safety After Hours Service Centre
* Service Providers, including Foster and Kinship Care Services, Residential Care Services

### Product design

The product is being developed with input from business representatives, and external partners where appropriate, to ensure the product is fit for purpose.

The way that Service Providers will engage with Placement Services Units / Placement Support Services will change. Town Halls were held in October, November, and March to seek feedback about what the impacts of the new ways of working will mean for Service Providers.

### Launch date

The product is expected to be launched in three releases later this year.

Cultural considerations

Culture is central to the design, development, and delivery of the Unify program. A cultural lens is being applied across all Child and Family products by engaging with relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to help inform the design and build of the product.

The product will improve visibility of the cultural considerations by Child Safety staff to place an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child or young person with family in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, prior to Placement Services Unit / Placement Support Services progressing a care arrangement referral for the child or young person.

### **What is Unify?**

### **Unify is a four-year program to replace the Integrated Client Management System (ICMS), the core information system used by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.**

### **Unify will streamline processes and introduce more contemporary technology to support the work we do with children, young people and families.**

More information

To find out more about the Unify Program and the products being delivered in Stage 1:

* Email Unify@csyw.qld.gov.au
* Visit the Unify website at communitiesqld.sharepoint.com/sites/unify

*(Note: this is primarily an internal site for DCSYW and DYJ staff)*

* We also have a dedicated cultural mailbox for any questions of a cultural nature. Email UnifyCulturalConnection@csyw.qld.gov.au