



Roadmap for reforming the Child and Family Support System

2021-2023

Practitioner Version





"The Aboriginal Cultural Lenses of Practice" Artist Sasha Houthuysen

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect Aboriginal people as the state's first people and recognise Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of lands and waters in South Australia. We acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal people come from their traditional lands and waters, and that the cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws are still of importance today. We are committed to ensuring that the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people are incorporated in the design, development, monitoring and evaluation of deliverable actions.

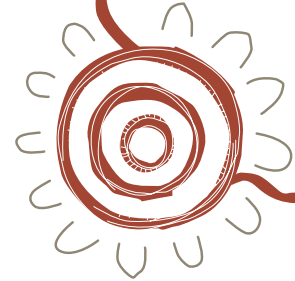
The artwork

The artwork was created as a visual statement piece by Sasha Houthuysen, a Yamatji/Noongar woman. This piece is the representation of Aboriginal voice from a workshop co-facilitated by Dana Shen, a Ngarrindjeri/Chinese woman, DS Consultancy.

The workshop was commissioned by the Department of Human Services to create 'the Aboriginal Cultural Lenses of Practice' for Safer Family Services. The workshop was attended by Safer Family Services Aboriginal staff and allies to give a voice to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, doing and guidance in supporting a culturally safe workforce.

The artwork is used throughout the department's Child and Family Support System policy and practice resources. It incorporates the symbols representing the cultural lenses journey: allies walking alongside Aboriginal staff, families and communities, and meeting and learning places supporting Aboriginal best practice.

DHS commissioned Pat Caruso, an Eastern Arrernte man and the Founder/Director of We Create Print Deliver to digitise and use these elements of the artwork to depict our healing approach. This ensures that we are always keeping children front and centre and working from a culturally safe lens.



Contents

Foreword	4
The whole of government reform	6
Roadmap for reform	7
The case for change	8
The new Child and Family Support System	10
Our priority populations	11
Understanding the system	12
Our healing approach	15
Priority 1: Pathways	
Right support at the right time	18
Pathways to support children, young people and families	20
Priority 2: Service integrity	
Supporting and strengthening our workforce	21
Priority 3: Service investments	
Commissioning for child safety and wellbeing outcomes	23
Priority 4: Building evidence	
Voices and data for system improvement and service outcomes	25
The road ahead – next stages of our journey	27

Foreword

Message from the Chief Executive of DHS

All children deserve to be given the love and care they need to grow up safe and well, in their family, community and culture. Providing the right support to children and families at the right times, can help ensure that more children are able to remain in their families, with less need for the involvement of tertiary child protection services in their lives.

Over the past two years, we have worked closely with our government and non-government partners, Aboriginal leaders, and families of diverse backgrounds to co-design a new Child and Family Support System (CFSS).

This document captures our shared journey of reform, which has been shaped by the voices of over 1000 people from across the system.

This reform is a major part of the State Government's strategy to support vulnerable families to thrive and to keep children safe – *Safe and well: Supporting families, protecting children*. The strategy outlines the actions that will be taken across three focus areas: 'supporting', 'protecting' and 'investing'. The reform of the new CFSS is a key initiative that is being led by the Department of Human Services under the 'supporting' focus area of this strategy.

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and supporting families is a shared responsibility. Our practitioners need to be supported to respectfully, creatively and assertively engage where there are child safety concerns. Most importantly, we need the voices of children and families to continue to be central in the reform of our system.



Lois Boswell
Chief Executive,
Department of Human Services

Foreword

Message from the Chief Executive of DCP

The Department for Child Protection is privileged to be leading the implementation of the State Government's Safe and well strategy. This strategy outlines South Australia's plan to support families whose children are at risk of entering the tertiary child protection system, protect children from harm including when they come into care, and invest in children and young people in care and transitioning from care to ensure they have opportunities for a bright future.

We welcome the development of this Roadmap for Reform. It highlights the significant work that is underway to implement a new system of earlier, targeted, intensive support for families with multiple and complex needs. These services are critical to ensuring we achieve the goals set out in the Safe and well strategy to support vulnerable families to safely care for their children at home and reduce the need for children and young people to come into care.

By working together on the priorities outlined in this Roadmap, we will support more children and young people in South Australia to be safe and well.



Cathy Taylor
Chief Executive,
Department for Child Protection

The whole of government reform

The reform of the child and family support system is an important part of the whole of government reform of South Australia's child protection system – *Safe and well: Supporting families protecting children*.

The strategy recognises that child protection is a whole of government system, requiring collective responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. It outlines extensive efforts across government to implement system level reform, with a focus on the three areas of focus. All of these areas are to be supported by a strong system where all agencies working with vulnerable families are trauma-informed.

Supporting families with multiple, complex needs by providing earlier, intensive, targeted support for families to reduce the incidents of child abuse and neglect and prevent children entering the child protection system in the first place.

Protecting children from harm, including when they come into care, and delivering trauma-responsive, development-focused services for children and young people in care that are designed to meet their individual needs, with an emphasis on family based care, reunification and permanency.

Investing in children and young people in care, and their transition from care to help break intergenerational contact with the child protection system.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for leading reforms and earlier intervention services within the **Supporting** focus area.



Refer to *Safe and well: Supporting families protecting children* for the full diagram.

Roadmap for reform

This Roadmap provides an overview of the significant changes to collaboratively grow a new CFSS that improves support for children and families with complex needs.

The Roadmap reflects our aspiration to create a system built on evidence, that provides the right support earlier, to ensure children are safe and well in their families, communities and culture. At the heart of the new CFSS are children, their families and communities.

The CFSS also includes:

- people working directly with families and support workers and volunteers within the Department of Human Services and non-government organisations
- key service partners in community services, health, education, domestic and family violence services, youth justice, South Australia Police and care and protection services (tertiary child protection services)
- universities providing education to our workforce and researching to improve service model evidence and data capabilities across the CFSS, and
- members of communities who are well placed to assist families in need, provide connections to services and cultural supports.

This Roadmap helps to provide clarity about the critical role they each play in this important system reform.

To create meaningful and sustainable change, the new CFSS has been co-designed by the people who need the services and the people who deliver the services. A comprehensive, state-wide consultation process was undertaken in 2019 to inform approaches and priorities for the reform of the CFSS. Stakeholders across government, the sector and communities have all agreed on how we will work together to better support our state's vulnerable families.

Importantly, the ongoing commitment to bring together knowledge from diverse sources (data, research, practice and lived experience), will continue to create and sustain a more evidence-informed, culturally responsive support system.

The seven shared directions resulting from the co-design process have been distilled to four priority areas, each with a set of programs, services and activities.

Priority 1: Pathways

Right support at the right time

Priority 2: Service integrity

Supporting and strengthening our workforce

Priority 3: Service investments

Commissioning for child safety and wellbeing outcomes

Priority 4: Building evidence

Voices and data for system improvement and service outcomes

The case for change

Across Australia, increasing numbers of children are being removed from their families and placed in care in response to significant safety concerns. This is a deeply traumatising experience that can continue to impact health and wellbeing throughout life and across generations. For Aboriginal families, this is made worse by the intergenerational trauma from children being forcefully taken from their communities and culture.

The continuing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care demands major changes to the governance, design, practice, and workforce of early intervention services. We need to work together to address the impacts of intergenerational trauma from experiences of colonisation, the Stolen Generations, and other past discriminatory government policies.

Currently, one in three children born in South Australia are reported to the Department for Child Protection (DCP) by age 10. We know these relate to matters of genuine concern.

Many of these families have multiple and complex needs that make it difficult to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children. Some of the common challenges which can impact on parenting are: domestic and family violence, parental alcohol and other drug abuse, unaddressed or poorly managed mental health needs, disability, homelessness, as well as financial stress and long-term unemployment.

The evidence from research and practice suggests that the capacity of our service system to help families with complex needs to parent safely has been constrained by a range of factors. Our reform provides an opportunity to create a better alignment between the needs of children and families and the services that aim to support them. Our ability to do this will be enhanced by:

- using an epidemiological approach to reach a more sophisticated understanding of the CFSS population, and
- developing a family complexity measure based on the assessment of risk and protective factors.

What is an epidemiological approach?

1. Monitoring patterns in the population to understand the size and type of service demand, and emerging trends in relation to child abuse and neglect.
2. Capturing a broad range of social ecological risk and protective factors for high risk populations.
3. Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies.

Adopting this approach will improve our visibility of cumulative harm, an important recommendation made by the Nyland Royal Commission, and support our capacity to monitor equity in access to services.

By building new data systems and implementing new tools to measure family complexity and service impact, we will be able to reach new levels of understanding to inform system-wide planning.

We have an opportunity to contribute to the whole of government child protection system that is well equipped to intervene earlier to prevent harm to children, family vulnerability and trauma. This means establishing clearer service pathways that connect families to the right services at the right time.

Through our contribution to the implementation of the Safe and well strategy, child and family support services will be strengthened to work with higher levels of complexity and risk, providing the right service intensity over the right duration, according to the level of complexity faced by families.

We know that positive outcomes for families will be assisted by delivering an interconnected system dedicated to child and family support, working alongside families, DCP and other key agencies including health and education.



The new Child and Family Support System

Many services and programs are playing a role in supporting families to keep children safe and well at home and reduce the need for children to be removed from their families to ensure their safety.

The CFSS is made up of a spectrum of services that are able to respond to different degrees of complexity and safety concerns of children and families. These services span from community capacity building through to intensive case management.

We know that in 2019-20 there were approximately 8,600 families at high risk of continued and escalating contact with the tertiary child protection system. At this stage of the reform, the service system must be strongly focused on these families and be flexible, to enable them to shift between services of varying levels of intensity as their needs change over time.

To support higher levels of complexity and need, we have commissioned new non-government Intensive Family Services and repositioned our government Safer Family Services. Our new approach will ensure our efforts are focused on intervening earlier, and more intensively, to keep children safe in their families and prevent them needing to enter out-of-home care.

Our research has identified four population groups who are likely to experience the most challenges and develop the most complex needs, and therefore require assistance from multiple service systems. As a result, we are focusing our early intervention efforts on these groups and designing services that specifically meet their needs. Prioritising these population groups, particularly at the early stages of parenthood and family formation, is likely to maximise the service impact and disrupt intergenerational vulnerability.

When working effectively with families with multiple and complex needs we must develop and maintain strong connections between the CFSS, DCP, and other key partners in domestic violence, health, education, early childhood and community services. By working together to strengthen families, and by sharing responsibility for vulnerable children and families, we can ensure the best possible outcomes.

The shared vision for the CFSS is that all children are safe and well at home in family, community and culture.



Our priority populations



Infants at risk

Every year, over 1000 families are reported for concerns about unborn children. Of these families, about one third are likely to have one or more children enter care within four years.

Young parents

A large proportion of children in care have a mother who had their firstborn before they were 20 years of age. Often these mothers are at increased risk because of their own child protection history, with about seven in 10 having a subsequent engagement with the system.

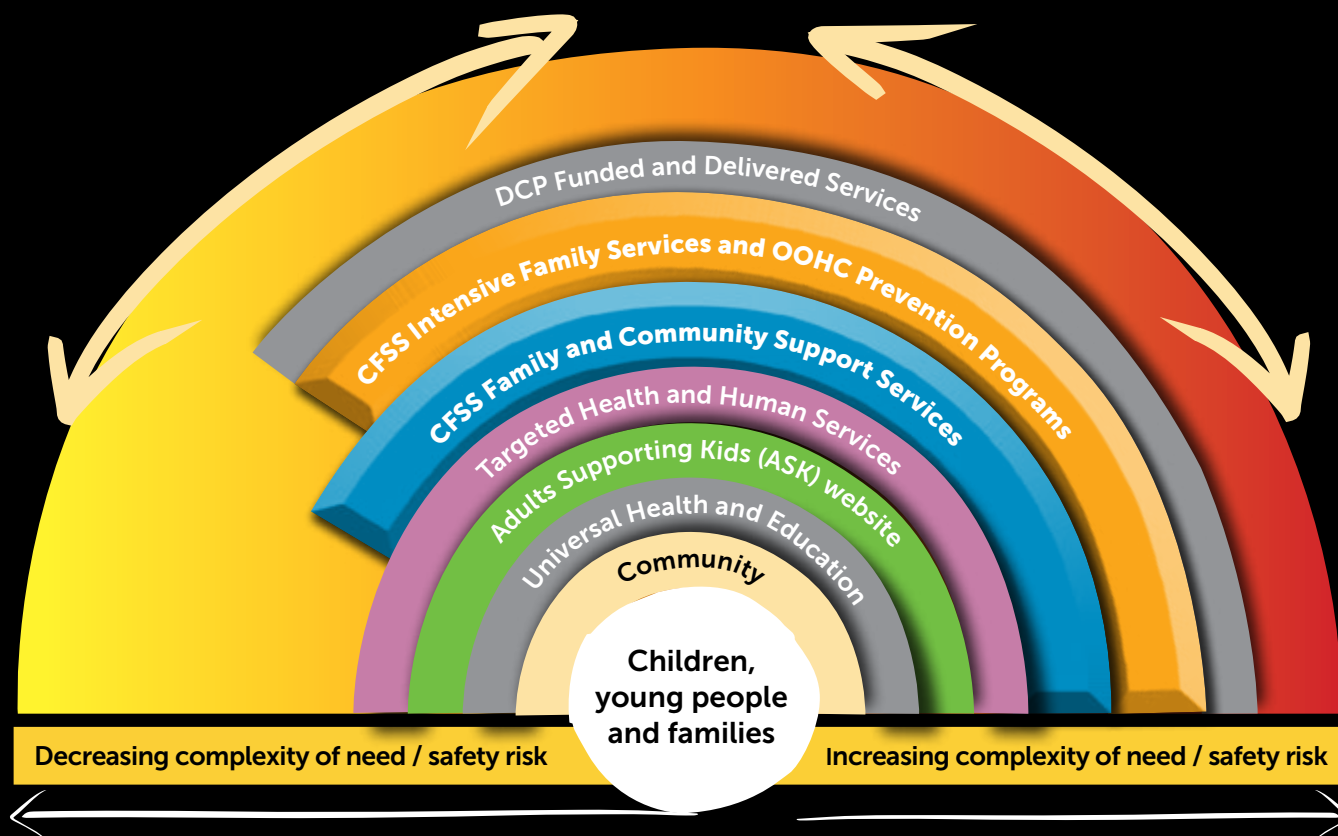
Adolescents with complex trauma

More than half of all child protection reports are about children and young people aged between 8 and 18 years of age.

Aboriginal families with multiple and complex needs

Aboriginal children are significantly overrepresented in the child protection system and represent approximately one-third of all children in out-of-home care.

Understanding the system



This diagram depicts where different services sit across a spectrum of complex needs and safety risks experienced by children, young people and families. Some services may provide support to a child in their first five years of life, while others may provide support at many different stages throughout the life course of a child, young person or family. Importantly, a child, young person or family can move across the continuum as their circumstances change and they receive appropriate services and supports to address their needs. CFSS reform is focused on the services depicted in the coloured bands, between universal and tertiary services.

Working with increasing complexity

Many families will only need early help and support to prevent or reduce vulnerability and keep their children safe and well. This type of support is provided by universal health and education services, and efforts to connect families to other services as early as possible.

Some families will have greater needs and will require more support to keep their children safe and well at home. This includes families at relatively early stages of vulnerability and, who with the help of additional services, can be strengthened to prevent the need for more intensive services. Other families with more complex needs and risk will require help from Intensive Family Services and service partners. Wrap around services provided in partnership are required to keep these families together and reduce the need for out-of-home care.

Children and young people in families with the greatest needs are at imminent risk of removal from their family to ensure their safety. This may occur at different stages of their lives, for a range of different reasons and for different periods of time. All have experienced trauma and many have complex and diverse needs. These children, young people and their families may require intensive continuing support from child and family support services.

Universal Health and Education

Universal Health and Education play important roles in supporting all children and families. They include antenatal care, Child and Family Health Services, as well as child care, playgroups, pre-schools and schools. Universal services provide early identification and referral for children and families who may require targeted support. These services are very well placed to support families early to prevent or reduce family vulnerability and risk to children.

Adults Supporting Kids (ASK) website

ASK is a self-service website that provides information for anyone who has concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, young person or family. It is a safe place to find support and will connect children, young people and families with information, free local support services or with someone to talk to.

Targeted Health and Human Services

Targeted Health and Human Services provide support to children and families with additional needs. These services aim to minimise the effect of risk factors for children and families by building protective factors and resilience. Targeted Health and Human Services include drug and alcohol services, mental health services, collaborative case management services and housing support.

CFSS Family and Community Support Services

Family and Community Support Services provide case management and programs for children and families with lower safety concerns. These families may have had successful outcomes from their participation with Intensive Family Services, and now require a lower level of support, or they may be families who are at an early stage of experiencing difficulties and will benefit from help to reduce the likelihood of escalating risk. Family and Community Support Services include Community Development Coordinators, Families Growing Together and Family and Community Support Services provided by non-government organisations.

CFSS Intensive Family Services and OOHC Prevention Programs

Intensive Family Services are specialist services that provide intensive case management to assist families with high level safety concerns to move out of (or away from) the child protection system to prevent the need for their children to be removed from their care. These services provide a very high level of intensive family support, initially to address immediate safety, then to support improved family functioning. DCP refers families who have been notified and assessed to be at very high risk of their child being placed in care.

Prevention programs are also underway to test service models for families at imminent risk of having their children placed in care. These services provide a very high level of intensive family support initially to address immediate safety, then high intensity to support improved family functioning. DCP refers families who have been notified and assessed to be at very high risk of being placed in care.

Out-of-home care (OOHC) prevention programs include:

- **Safe Kids Families Together** – provided by Anglicare in northern Adelaide
- **Taikurtirna Tirra-apintheta** – provided by Kornar Winmil Yunti for Aboriginal families in western Adelaide
- **Resilient Families** – provided by the Benevolent Society in Adelaide's southern metropolitan areas through to the Murray Lands.

DCP Funded and Delivered Services

The Department for Child Protection directly funds and delivers a range of services for example:

- Family led decision making through initiatives such as Family Group Conferencing
- Protective intervention services
- Reunification services which provide support to families of children in care so that they can safely return to home
- Out-of-home care services
 - family based care
 - non-family based care
- Case management services
- Transition from care services to support young people to transition to adult life
- Post care services to support young people who are no longer in care.

Our healing approach

At the heart of the new system is a healing approach, where all those involved (children and families, practitioners, organisations and funders) are intentionally working together to create a system and practices that support healing and avoid further traumatisation.

This means everyone involved in the system works together to get better at responding to trauma, wherever it is present. A healing approach is critical to creating and sustaining the engagement of families with our services. To build a trauma responsive and healing system, we need to make a number of commitments as individuals and organisations.

Firstly, we must deeply listen and give status to the voices of the children and families that are most affected by this system and often have the least control and power in it.

To do this effectively we need to understand our power and privilege in this system and find ways to support self-determination where possible.

We will commit to truth telling about the impacts of colonisation.

We will acknowledge and work with the strengths and the resilience in children, families and cultures. We will understand ourselves, our privilege and the assumptions within which we live and work.

Our healing approach will be guided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander System Design Criteria and co-design principles developed in the CFSS reform co-design process,¹ and the Trauma Responsive System Framework.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander System Design Criteria for a system:

- where Aboriginal children are front and centre
- that reflects Aboriginal cultural strengths
- that reflects Aboriginal people's right to self determination
- that reflects the truth of our shared histories, the hurts, the strengths and the healing.

Embedding trauma responsiveness to create a healing system

- Trustworthiness
- Safety
- Peer and community support
- Collaboration
- Empowerment and self determination
- Know yourself and learn

The Lived Experience Network will be supported to ensure lived experience insights are in the design of continuous trauma responsive practice.

Our approach to working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities will respect the diverse and unique lived experiences and migratory journeys of individuals and families that may include intergenerational trauma.

We commit to seeing the strengths, hopes and dreams of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and know if we support this vision, it will contribute to building a trauma responsive and healing system for everyone.

¹ See EIRD website for complete versions of [Aboriginal System Design Criteria](#) and co-design principles and the Trauma Responsive System Framework



**Priority 1:
Pathways**
Right support at
the right time

ASK website

CFSS
Pathways
Service

Child and
Family Safety
Networks

Smarter
referral system

**Our
Healing
Approach**

**Building a trauma responsive
and healing system will not
be easy – we know it will be
challenging and hard but we
are up for it.**
- CFSS Trauma Responsive System Framework

**Priority 3:
Service investments**
Commissioning
for child safety and
wellbeing outcomes

Recommissioning
strategy

Research to build
evidence-based
service
improvements

Post-doctoral
fellowship
program

New service
models

ACCO
capability
building



Priority 2: Service integrity

Supporting and strengthening our workforce

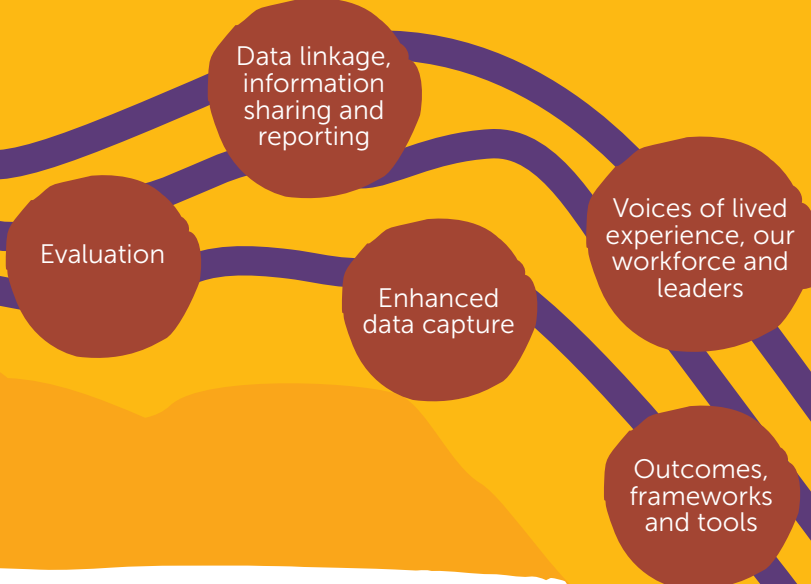


“We want to be protected from re-traumatisation, offered healing and self-determination.”

- Staff member
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation

Priority 4: Building evidence

Voices and data for system improvement and service outcomes



We must deeply listen to the children and families that are most affected by this system and often have the least control and power in it.

- CFSS Trauma Responsive System Framework

Priority 1: Pathways

Right support at the right time

We are creating a system that encourages people to ask early and ask often, and provides families with access to the right service at the right time.

Pathways are being designed to ensure children and families are assisted to reach services that are matched to their needs, ranging from universal services, to targeted and tertiary level services. Families with complex needs who require multiple services will have pathways to coordinated services. Families with safety concerns requiring urgent help will have pathways that fast-track connections to Intensive Family Services.

These new pathways will be built collaboratively with key partners in the CFSS, people with lived experience and cultural authority, and government and non-government agencies— particularly providers of child and family support, health, education, domestic and family violence and care and protection services.



“Together designing new pathways to the right support at the right time.”

-CFSS Practitioner

ASK Website

A new self-service website has been developed to provide information for anyone who has concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, young person or family. It is a safe place to connect a child, young person or family with information, local support services or with someone to talk to. In the next stage of development, a self-assessment tool for families will be included, and a portal for professionals will be established to assist them to identify and make referrals for vulnerable families and individuals.

CFSS Pathways Service

A centralised triage line has been established to provide a single point of entry for family service referrals across the system. This is providing timely assessment, and triage of service referrals for families where high vulnerability and safety risks have been identified. It is providing an alternative, diversionary pathway to the Child Abuse Report Line for families who do not require a response from the DCP.

Strong connections to local level service networks across the state will be an important component of the pathways service. An implementation-in-action approach will be used in the northern area to design and test strategies to ensure pathways lead to well-coordinated services, and share responsibility to support family engagement to the right services in their local area.

As the CFSS Pathways Service is established, further opportunities will be explored to strengthen linkages with other service systems across the service spectrum, ranging from universal services through to care and protection services. The CFSS Pathways Service is to play a central role in assisting us to achieve our vision of creating a joined-up service system.

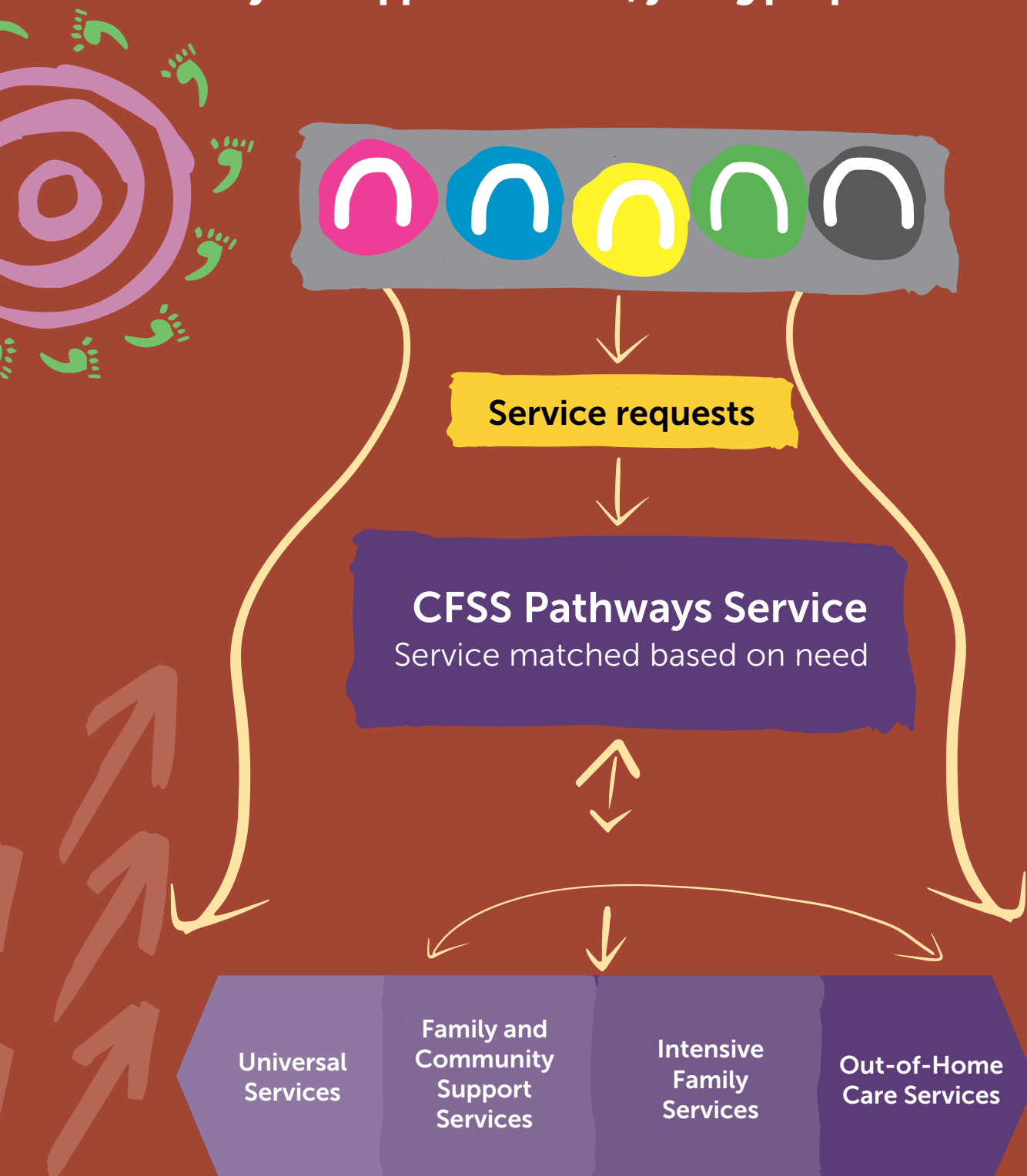
Child and Family Safety Networks (CFSNs)

Pathways and service coordination are supported state-wide through the establishment of local CFSNs. CFSNs will comprise key service partners who are able to assist families facing multiple complex issues that are causing significant concern to the safety of their children. They will focus on families where service attempts to engage with the family have been unsuccessful.

Smarter referral system

We are establishing smarter referral information systems and designing new processes to efficiently process and track referrals, including equitable allocation, and to better understand system performance and outcomes for families. This includes capturing baseline ecological factors for every referral to understand complexity of family needs to match the family with the right type of service with the right service intensity. These developments will also enable us to monitor service engagement following referral, and service impact for families of different levels of complex needs.

Pathways to support children, young people and families



Priority 2: Service integrity

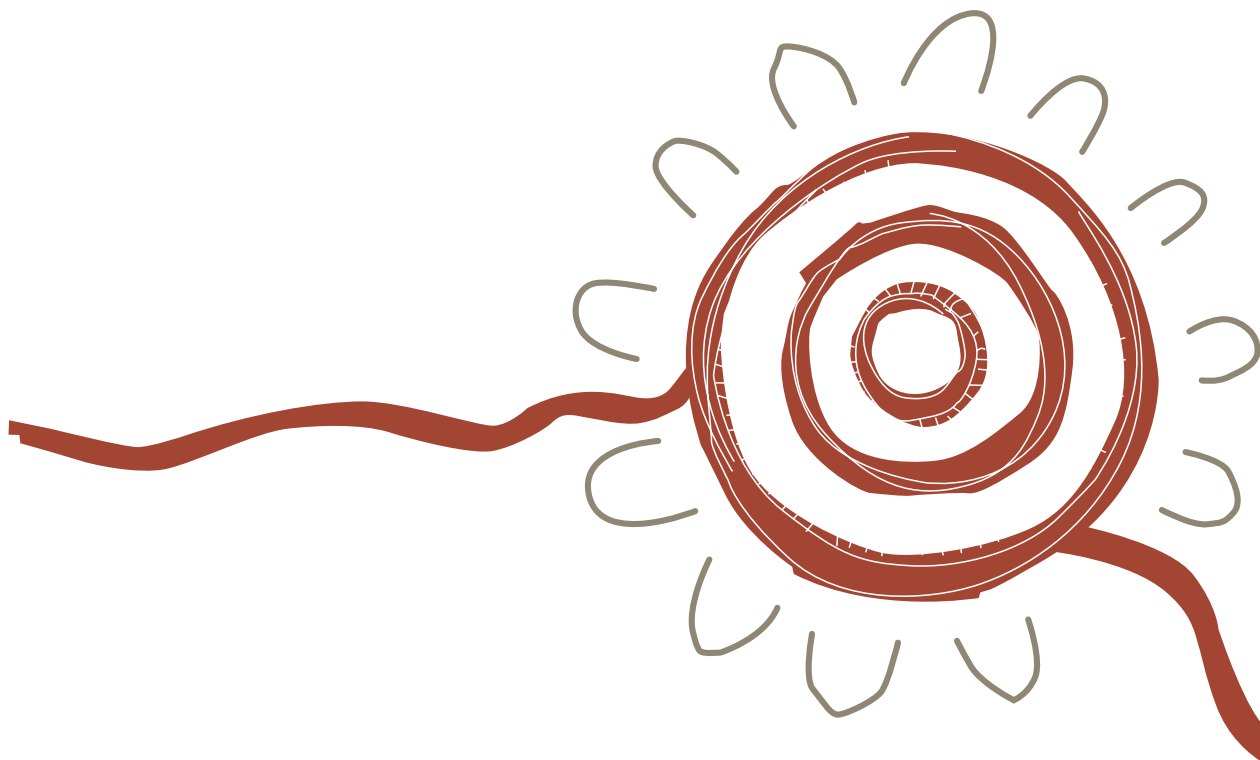
Supporting and strengthening our workforce

To shift the focus of our system to families with multiple and complex needs, we must support our workforce to make this transition. Well-supported, trained, compassionate and motivated workers, able to practice with integrity in difficult situations, are critical in delivering effective service outcomes for children and families.

It is important that the CFSS workforce is operating 'as one' so that all families receive the same healing approach and quality of service, based on a shared foundation of knowledge and practice skills across all services. Shared tools and practice resources will be collaboratively developed to assist at all system levels and steps of the service journey.

Practitioners will be supported to work with higher levels of safety risk in ways that are more collaborative and involve a greater sharing of risk. This includes co-designing new ways of working with the Department for Child Protection to support families and divert them away from the child protection system.

The system will have a purposeful and unwavering focus on building the Aboriginal workforce and supporting non-Aboriginal staff to work well with Aboriginal communities. This will include supporting staff to provide culturally safe practice that embeds Aboriginal-led decision making, supports connection to culture, and promotes self-determination with non-Aboriginal staff working alongside Aboriginal people as allies. This means supporting staff to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle (identification, prevention, partnership, placement and participation).



CFSS Practice framework

We are developing a policy and practice framework to help guide practice across the CFSS. Our practice guidance is to provide an evidence-informed approach to working with children and families. It is being developed in partnership with our practitioners, service providers and people with lived experience. Culturally and trauma responsive practice principles will be embedded in all guidance, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle (identification, prevention, partnership, placement and participation).

Culturally responsive and trauma responsive workforce training

A new training program has been developed by Aboriginal people to build the capacity of the sector's practitioners to work in culturally responsive and trauma responsive ways with Aboriginal people. Yaitya Mingkamingka Purruapiinhi (Indigenous Trauma Healing) training workshops will be offered to CFSS practitioners by South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

Common Elements approach

A Common Elements approach is being used to build the capability of our workforce to form positive, productive relationships with families. Common Elements are discrete techniques or practice, grounded in evidence and can be used to build client engagement and facilitate changes in family functioning to ensure the safety of children. An implementation support phase will assist practitioners to embed these elements in practice across the CFSS.

Communities of Practice

Practitioners and leaders from across the sector will participate in shared learning and reflective discussions about practice and the progress of the reform. These sessions will provide opportunities to share innovation and co-design solutions to any challenges.

Trauma Responsive System Framework

Our trauma responsive framework will be a central resource for our practitioners and leaders to strengthen trauma responsiveness at all levels of the system.

Workforce and sector development plans

Annual action plans will be developed to make sure our future CFSS workforce has the right scale, composition and skills to meet the needs of the families we serve. This includes actions to strengthen workforce recruitment and retention, with specific emphasis on increasing the Aboriginal workforce and strategies for regional areas.

Priority 3: Service investments

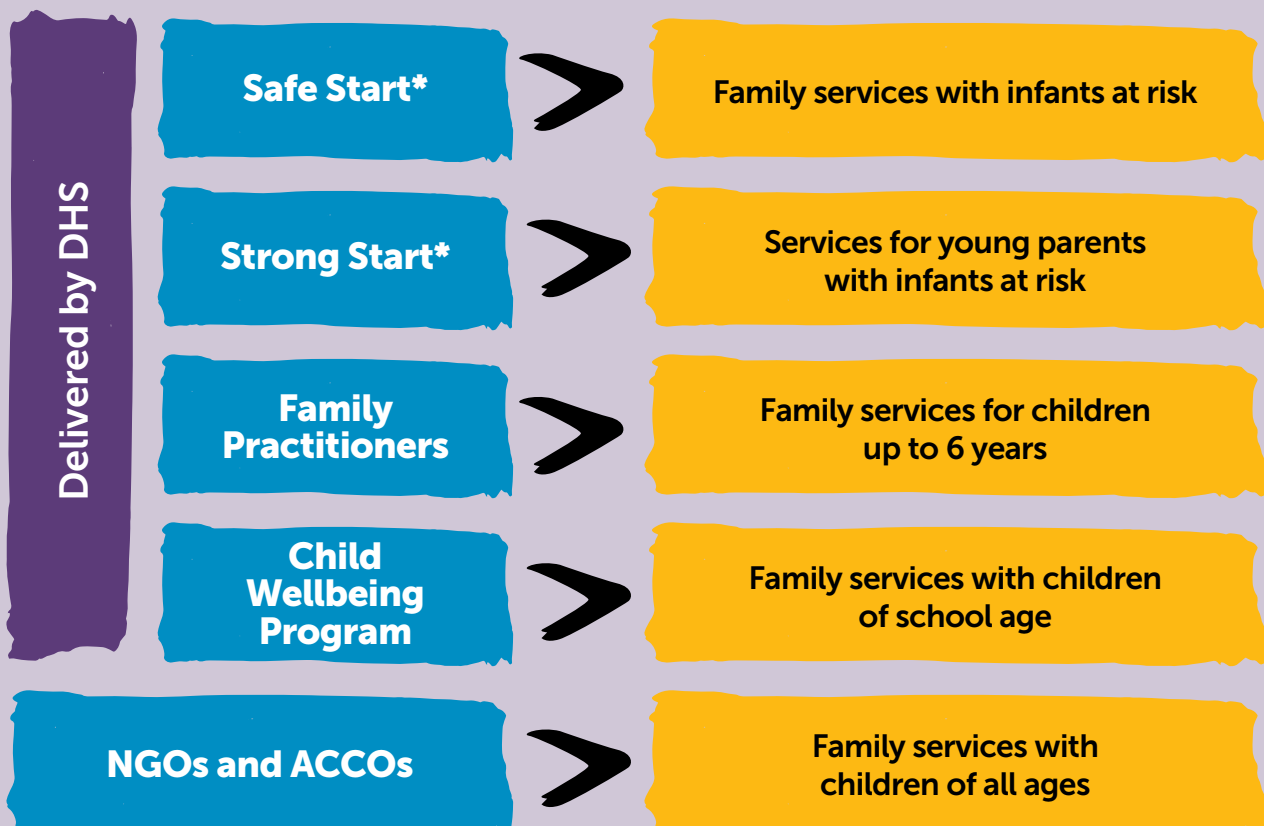
Commissioning for child safety and wellbeing outcomes

When distributing government funds to providers, we will work in the spirit of collaboration with a focus on building the capacity of the non-government sector and keeping the voices of children and families central. Our commissioning will reflect our commitment to building Aboriginal services with Aboriginal people, and will support greater self-determination and an increasing role for ACCOs in the system.

All funds previously allocated to family preservation and targeted intervention services have been replaced by recommissioned Intensive Family Services.

Family support and early intervention services are next to be recommissioned. This will involve investing in evidence-informed service models for families with lower levels of complexity and safety risks. This includes step down services from intensive services as well as services for families who are at earlier stages of vulnerability and risk. Investing in these services will help reduce the demand for more intensive services.

To address the needs of priority populations, DHS provides and funds a range of home-based Intensive Family Services.



*Safe Start and Strong Start also work with families pre-birth

*Safe Start is delivered by a NGO in the inner north and west regions.

Recommissioning strategy

To improve investment in funding services, we have adopted a new approach that fosters collaboration between providers rather than competition, with a stronger focus on evidence-informed service models and outcomes for families with complex needs. This approach makes sure Aboriginal people are able to access Aboriginal-led services. Place-based data is also being used to enable more equitable resource allocation that is matched to population need.

New service models

Being effective at improving child and family safety requires an increase in the range of service types available. New service models will be designed for areas where there are service gaps in the system. Initial focus is on families at imminent risk of having their children placed in care, and programs for population groups with elevated risk of entering the tertiary child protection system. External evaluations will be undertaken to understand the suitability, effectiveness and outcomes of service pilots to inform service improvement and future service investment decisions. These pilots include:

- **Intensive family support (Out-of-Home Care Prevention):** Safe Kids Families Together, Taikurtirna Tirra-apinthe and Resilient Families.
- **Programs to prevent intergenerational trauma:** Breathing Space and My Place.

Over time we will increase attention on service models designed to prevent or reduce family vulnerability, and reduce demand for Intensive Family Services.

Research to build evidenced based service improvements

Research collaborations have been established with universities to help build the evidence base for service responses and service model investments.

ACCO capability building

For the first time, 30 per cent of all funding for Intensive Family Services has been earmarked for ACCOs to deliver services to Aboriginal people. We will support ACCOs to expand and play a larger role in the service provision to Aboriginal children and families, as well as an increasing leadership role in partnerships with mainstream services.

Post-doctoral fellowship program

We continue to support early career researchers in areas of prevention of child abuse and neglect, build mutually beneficial relationships between government and tertiary education sectors, and support culturally informed research to guide policy and service development.

Priority 4: Building evidence

Voices and data for system improvement and service outcomes

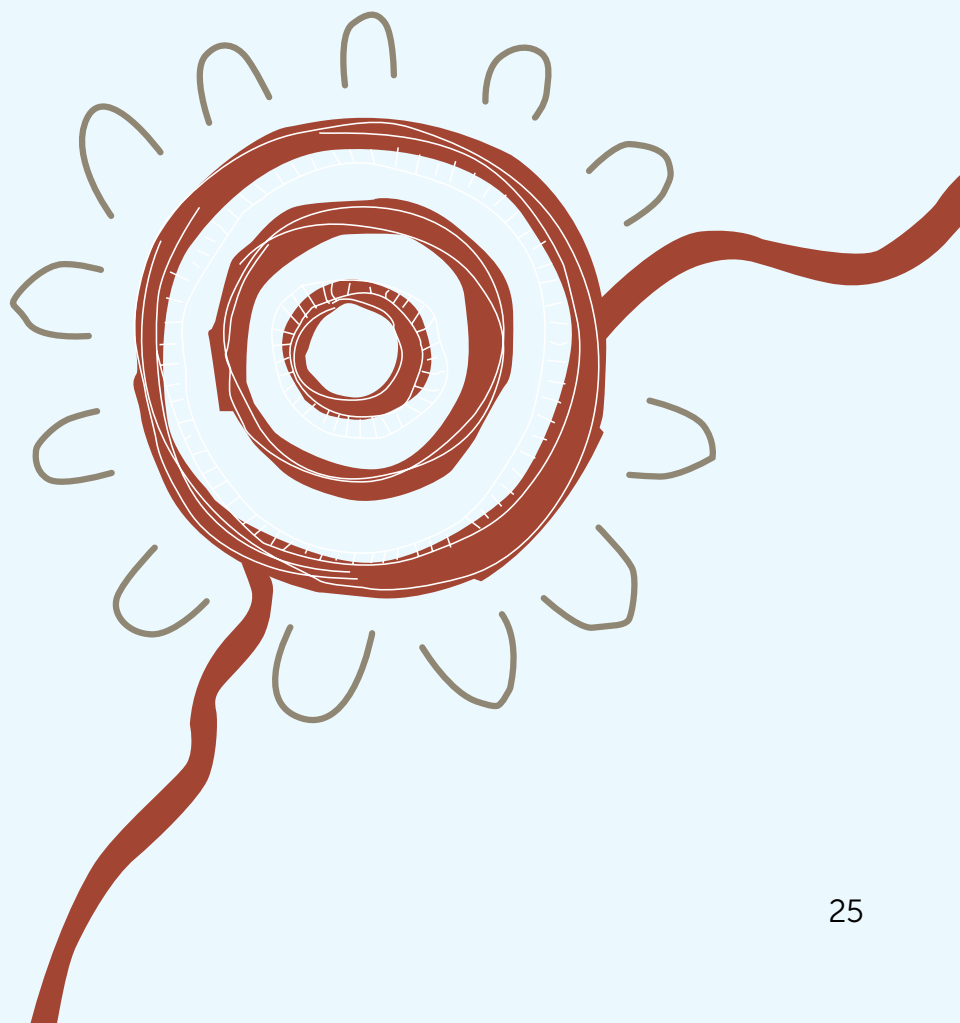
Knowing more about whether our efforts and investments are improving outcomes for the children and families we work with is essential to guide the reforms.

To do this, we need to:

- understand the experiences and views of children, families and our workforce.
- know what works, why and what improvements are needed.
- know what service outcomes are being achieved, to what extent and why.
- know where our service and system investments need to be to provide maximum benefit.

We are building our capability to draw on sources of information and evidence from children and families, our workforce and from data at program and system levels. There will be deep listening to Aboriginal voices with the intent to grow the evidence base for working with Aboriginal families together, using Aboriginal-led processes.

Over time, we aim to capture information that supports a system-level and social epidemiological approach to monitoring, as well as build the infrastructure to support data collection, improved data sharing and reporting across the system. This will enable us to routinely capture information to improve referral prioritisation and service matching. It will inform the ongoing evaluation of demand for our services, which programs work for whom and the service outcomes for families over time.



Outcomes hierarchy

An outcomes framework for the CFSS provides shared outcomes for all services in their efforts to ensure children are safe and well at home in family, community and culture. This includes a focus on improving safety and family functioning. This framework will help align outcome-focused efforts across the system, working for children, young people and parents/caregivers to be: safe and well in families, influencing decisions and reaching potential, and connected and supported in communities and culture.

Aboriginal outcomes tool

An Aboriginal-led research project has been commissioned to inform the development of a culturally informed practice tool to measure the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and families.

Voices of lived experience

A lived experience network of system advisors from diverse ages and backgrounds provides an ongoing mechanism for people with lived experience to be involved in shaping the planning, monitoring and review of the CFSS.

Voices of our workforce and leaders

In addition to providing support to embed evidence-informed practice, the Communities of Practice model will also provide a mechanism for the voices of our workforce and leaders across the CFSS to draw on practice experience and innovative approaches and solutions.

Enhanced data capture

Different families have different strengths and challenges, so knowing how much difference our services make to families depends on having a good understanding of what families were experiencing before they were engaged in services. Having a valid, consistent baseline data capture (or snapshot) at the beginning and at other points of their service journey not only informs service planning but is critical to providing context and helping us to make sense of outcomes. To support this, a range of tools are being developed to capture structured data at key points in the service journey.

Data linkage, information sharing and reporting

We will enhance safe data linkage and information sharing across government and the non-government sector to facilitate more efficient case management. This will help guide system level planning and investment in the CFSS and enhance our capability to better identify families needing support.

Evaluation

Understanding the impact of the CFSS reform is an essential but complex undertaking that requires monitoring and evaluation at program and system levels over the short, medium and longer term. The improved consistent baseline risk assessment and outcomes measurement will be an essential starting point, but we will need to develop new, more sophisticated performance indicators that can show us whether we are making the shifts we are aspiring to in this reform.

The road ahead - next stages of our journey

This roadmap reflects a genuine commitment across communities, government and sectors to broad changes to systems and practice in the CFSS.

We acknowledge our journey of reform will not be easy and will take time, given the complexity involved and the system-wide changes required.

The immediate and longer-term actions that we will be taking in each of our four priority areas are outlined in the tables below.

Our immediate efforts will be focused on ensuring our new services are targeted at our most vulnerable and at risk population groups. At the same time the new information we are collecting across the system will enable us to improve our understanding of who our most vulnerable families are, the challenges they face and their needs. We will continue to trial, test and learn from new and innovative service models and pathways to help us build our evidence base of what works to improve outcomes for children and families, and maximise the impact of the system.

Our next focus will be working in close collaboration with our key government partners to build the service responses to evidence-informed family and community support services to ensure the system continues to evolve and strike a balance between providing services for high risk families to keep children safe, and support for vulnerable families earlier.

Our vision

Children are safe and well at home in family, community and culture

Our priorities

Priority 1: Pathways
Priority 2: Service integrity
Priority 3: Service investments
Priority 4: Building evidence

What is needed

Centering the voices of Aboriginal people and those with lived experience
Service collaboration
Data sharing and evidence
Supporting and strengthening workforce

PATHWAYS: Right support, right time

Next steps		Future steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a portal in ASK to assist services and schools to identify and refer to support services. • Build a self-assessment tool in ASK for families to complete to identify service options to suit their needs and a portal to assist professional to identify and refer to services. • Complete establishment of CFSS Pathways Service (centralised referral triaging and service matching for Intensive Family Services and coordinated local service networks). • Build capacity of CFSS Pathways Service to provide 'hold support' to services already engaged with families needing extra support to keep children safe. • Continue to grow Child and Family Safety Networks state-wide to maximise use of local support pathways and service coordination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish referral data collection systems in the CFSS Pathways Service. • Establish smarter referral information systems to efficiently and effectively process and track service referrals. • Work with key service partners to explore opportunities for integrating multi-agency advice into CFSS Pathways Service. • Review data from CFSS Pathways Service to inform referral system improvements. • Through established Safe and well governance contribute to the strategic alignment of DHS, DCP, Health and Education in providing clear service pathways for vulnerable population groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the scope of the CFSS Pathways Service to incorporate referrals to less intensive support services. • Expand the range of stakeholders able to use the CFSS Pathways Service to make referrals to respond to family vulnerability earlier. • Work with stakeholders for joint approaches to strategic alignment.

SERVICE INTEGRITY: Supporting and strengthening our workforce

Next steps		Future steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch CFSS Trauma Responsive System Framework and associated online training and practice resources. Implement online tool for organisations to build trauma responsive capacity. • Support ACCOs to deliver Yaitya Mingkamingka Purrutipinhi (Indigenous Trauma Healing) training to all Intensive Family Services. • Support staff across the CFSS to embed the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle into their practice. • Co-design practice guides and tools to support working with families with complex needs to address high safety risks to children (phased approach). • Develop annual workforce and sector development plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial 10 Common Elements of good practice with Safer Families Services, Intensive Family Services and ACCOs. • Roll out Common Elements across Intensive Family Services combined with implementation support. • Establish and support Champions of good practice. • Establish and sustain cross sector Communities of Practice to embed evidence-informed practice, support collaborative learning and reflective discussions about practice and CFSS reform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review CFSS policy and practice guidance and tools for less intensive family and community support services. • Support ACCOs to extend provision of Yaitya Mingkamingka Purrutipinhi (Indigenous Trauma Healing) to all family services. • Evaluate implementation and impact of Trauma Framework and Common Elements to inform enhancements.

SERVICE INVESTMENTS: Commissioning for child safety and wellbeing outcomes

Next steps		Future steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide continued support to ACCOs to expand and play a larger role in service provision to Aboriginal children and families, and an increasing leadership role in partnerships with mainstream services. • Undertake external evaluations to understand the suitability, effectiveness and outcomes of service pilots. • Fund researchers, including early career researchers in the fields of child and family safety and wellbeing prevention and Aboriginal-led research to inform service development and investments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop evidence-informed family support service models in collaboration with partners (Health, Education and ACCOs) to respond to vulnerable families earlier. • Review evaluations of Intensive Family Services OOHc prevention pilots to inform adjustments to service models for families at imminent risk of children being placed in care, and to seek further investment. • Evaluate programs for breaking the cycle of intergenerational involvement in the tertiary child protection system (Breathing Space and My Place), to inform service model adjustments and seek further investment. • Invest in the development and implementation of peer support programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommission family and community support services to reduce family vulnerability, informed by service model evidence, stakeholder partners and population data. • Explore opportunities for joint investment by key government partners to support joined up approaches to working with shared vulnerable populations.

BUILDING EVIDENCE: Voices and data for system improvement

Next steps		Future steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish mechanisms to enable people with lived experience to be involved in shaping the design, implementation and evaluation of a broader range of programs and social change initiatives being led by DHS. Improve data capture at point of referral to support appropriate service matching, service prioritisation and monitor service equity. Implement the "Family Snapshot" – a common assessment tool (to capture risk and protective factors) at the point of engagement, and at points thereafter to measure complexity of need and service impact. Develop and implement a culturally informed practice tool to measure the safety and wellbeing for Aboriginal children and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular data reporting. Develop new, more sophisticated performance indicators to show whether we are making the shifts we are aspiring to in this system-wide reform. Establish a data infrastructure at DHS for foundational capability to monitor population level patterns to understand the service demand, emerging trends and system outcomes. Connect new CFSS system data (via ODA) to the EIRD policy dataset for measurement of CFSS service impact on cross system outcomes including Child Protection. Trial KIDS Dashboard in CFSS Pathways Service to enable live access to data in other systems to improve visibility of cumulative harm. Maintain and extend our collaboration with research academics, supporting work investigating the demand and supply of critical adult services (e.g. drug and alcohol, DV and mental health services). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance safe data linkage and information sharing across government and the non-government sector to facilitate more efficient and holistic case management. Work with key partners toward across systems data capability to support joined up understanding of the needs and responses to vulnerable populations. Undertake evaluation of CFSS reform. Continuous system monitoring to inform ongoing service planning and design.



More information

To supplement the reforms outlined in this document, more detailed information about the new Child and Family Support System is available on the Department of Human Services website:

www.dhs.sa.gov.au/cfss

