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| Office of the  Children’s Guardian | |  | |
| Evidence Index | |  | |
| The Evidence Index is designed to help agencies prepare and present evidence to demonstrate how the agency meets the Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care | | |
| July 2022 | www.ocg.nsw.gov.au | |

## Evidence Index

The Evidence Index is used by the Office of the Children’s Guardian to organise, reference and confirm the location of indirect and direct evidence. Direct evidence will be assessed during accreditation renewal when members of our Accreditation and Monitoring team visit the agency or assess by remote.

This template has a separate page for each standard. The indicators of compliance for each standard are shown in the left column with space to record the location of the evidence as proof of compliance on the right.

This template should be used in conjunction with the Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care and the Accreditation Guide.

Information about types of evidence can be found on our website on the [Accreditation framework page](https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/statutory-out-home-care-and-adoption/about-statutory-out-home-care-and-adoption/accreditation#section-target-3) under Statutory out-of-home care and adoption.

The location of the evidence will vary depending on the type of evidence but needs to give enough information for Accreditation assessors to independently find the information.

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# Section 1 Children and young people - care and wellbeing

## Children’s rights

The rights of children and young people are the primary focus for their care

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people have access to copies of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and where relevant to the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. |  |
| 1. Governing authorities ensure that staff understand their obligations in promoting the best interests of children and young people |  |
| 1. Children and young people are given information about their rights; in a manner they can understand, including the right to access their personal file. |  |
| 1. Children and young people are given information in a manner they can understand about access to organisations or individuals who will advocate on their behalf. |  |

### Providing a positive care environment

Children and young people receive appropriate care relevant to their circumstances, in a safe environment

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The agency cooperates with other agencies to provide an integrated service for each child or young person and their family. |  |
| 1. Children and young people are placed in care environments that support their need for permanency and stability. |  |
| 1. The care environment is assessed for safety and suitability prior to a placement commencing, including the safety of swimming pools and outdoor areas. |  |
| 1. There is ongoing monitoring of the safety and suitability of the care environment |  |
| 1. The care environment is altered when the specific needs of a child or young person require it. |  |
| 1. Staff allocation in the care environment supports continuity of care and relationships |  |
| 1. Children and young people have privacy in their personal space and their belongings are safe and respected. |  |
| 1. There is a range of age-appropriate activities and experiences in the care environment. |  |
| 1. Critical incidents occurring within the care environment are reported, recorded and managed within the agency’s required timeframes and in accordance with mandated responsibilities. |  |

## Child protection and child safety

Children and young people are safe and protected from harm

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The agency is aware of its responsibilities to protect the children and young people in its care. |  |
| 1. The need to protect children and young people from abuse and harm underpins all areas of the agency’s work with children and young people. |  |
| 1. The agency complies with current child protection legislation and relevant government requirements. |  |
| 1. People who work with and care for children and young people undergo suitability assessments prior to being engaged by the agency. |  |
| 1. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and reporting obligations and are supported to fulfil these obligations. |  |
| 1. People who work with and care for children and young people receive training on child protection and child safety. |  |
| 1. Children and young people are educated and supported to recognise behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable and are encouraged to report concerns. |  |
| 1. Children and young people receive support when making allegations or raising concerns. |  |
| 1. All reportable allegations are reported, recorded and managed within the required timeframes. |  |

## Identity

Children and young people have a positive sense of identity

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Placement decisions take into consideration children and young people’s cultural needs |  |
| 1. Family details and personal histories are recorded and available to children and young people where appropriate |  |
| 1. Children and young people’s preferences to identify with particular names, places or people are respected |  |
| 1. Events of significance to the child or young person and their family are celebrated |  |
| 1. Children and young people have opportunities to exercise personal choices in their appearance, personal living space and life story work |  |
| 1. Aboriginal children and young people and children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are supported to maintain meaningful connections with community, culture, language and spirituality |  |
| 1. Children and young people are supported to make informed, personal choices |  |
| 1. Children and young people have opportunities to participate in activities and experiences relevant to their background, culture and identity |  |
| 1. Children and young people’s case plans or adoption plans include strategies to assist them to maintain meaningful connections with family, community, culture and language |  |
| 1. People who work with and care for children and young people receive adequate training and support to undertake life story work |  |

## Family and significant others

Children and young people remain connected to significant people and places in their lives

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| Children and young people maintain relationships with family and other significant individuals in accordance with their wishes, where it is safe and appropriate |  |
| 1. Where possible and appropriate, children and young people are placed within reasonable proximity to their family and community |  |
| 1. Families contribute to decision-making processes that concern their child |  |
| 1. Families are provided with an appropriate level of information about their child’s placement and care arrangements, in accordance with legislative requirements |  |
| 1. Families are provided with ongoing information about the progress of their child |  |
| 1. Where relevant and appropriate, parents and significant others are provided with appropriate supports to facilitate restoration of the child or young person to their family |  |
| 1. Where guardianship or adoption orders are under consideration, parents are provided with appropriate information, counselling and support to participate in decision-making processes |  |
| 1. A parent’s consent to adoption is sought in accordance with the legislation |  |

## Participation in decision-making

Children and young people contribute to decisions relating to their lives

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Children and young people are informed about how and when decisions that affect them will be made |  |
| 1. Children and young people are consulted before decisions are made and their views are recorded on file |  |
| 1. Where a choice is available, children and young people may choose the level of their participation in decision-making |  |
| 1. To the extent that it is possible, children and young people’s preferences are reflected in decisions |  |
| 1. Children and young people are provided with information in a manner they can understand regarding decisions that affect them and processes for making a complaint |  |
| 1. Children and young people considering consenting to adoption or guardianship orders are provided with information, support and counselling, in accordance with their age and capacity to make informed decisions |  |
| 1. The consent of a child or young person to adoption or guardianship orders is received in accordance with the legislation |  |

## Confidentiality and privacy

The organisation’s practices are underpinned by rights to privacy and confidentiality

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Personal information about children and young people and their families is securely stored and treated with confidentiality |  |
| 1. There are systems in place to ensure that confidential information regarding children and young people and their families is protected from unintentional release |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people uphold the children and young people’s rights to confidentiality and privacy |  |
| 1. There is provision of appropriate spaces for confidential discussions |  |

## Emotional and social development

Children and young people are emotionally healthy and are supported to achieve their developmental potential

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Children and young people’s emotional and social development and behavioural needs are assessed and recorded and addressed |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people are provided with information and resources to meet the specific needs of each child or young person |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people share information about the child or young person’s social and emotional development as required and where appropriate, with the consent of the child or young person |  |
| 1. The social and emotional development of children and young people in out-of-home care is reviewed regularly, and at least annually |  |
| 1. Children and young people are supported to establish and maintain peer relationships |  |
| 1. Children and young people have opportunities to participate in age appropriate social and recreational activities |  |
| 1. Adoptive parents and guardians are provided with information regarding community resources to support children and young people’s social and emotional development |  |

## Health

Children and young people are healthy and have access to appropriate health and support services

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The health and development needs of children and young people in out-of-home care is monitored and regularly reviewed, at least annually |  |
| 1. Identified health, medical, dental, optical, auditory, nutritional, psychological and developmental needs are addressed as required |  |
| 1. Adoptive parents and guardians are provided with information regarding community resources to meet the health and developmental needs of children and young people |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people share information about the child or young person’s health and development as required and where appropriate, with the consent of the child or young person |  |
| 1. Children and young people are provided with age and developmentally appropriate information about access to health and development support services |  |
| 1. Aboriginal children and young people are supported to access culturally appropriate health services where possible |  |

## Education

Children and young people’s educational outcomes match those of their peers in the general population

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Children and young people attend an appropriate educational institution |  |
| 1. Children and young people have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning and have opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities which promote learning |  |
| 1. Children and young people in out-of-home care have their progress at school or other educational institutions assessed and reviewed, at least annually |  |
| 1. Children and young people are provided with additional learning support in cases where a review or an education institution has identified a need |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people engage with schools or other educational or vocational institutions to support the child or young person’s education |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people share information about the child or young person’s educational progress as required and where appropriate, with the consent of the child or young person |  |

## Behaviour support

Children and young people are supported to manage their own behaviour

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The agency has a behaviour management policy that articulates its views on behaviour management practices and the administration of psychotropic medication |  |
| 1. Behaviour support and management practices have a positive focus and are aimed at developing children and young people’s capacity to manage their own behaviour |  |
| 1. Behaviour support and management plans for children and young people in out-of-home care are developed by suitably qualified professionals in consultation with the child or young person |  |
| 1. Behaviour support and management plans for children and young people in out-of-home care are reviewed and updated regularly using current information from relevant professionals |  |
| 1. Plans and implementation strategies are communicated to all relevant parties |  |
| 1. The agency has clear protocols regarding the use of police as a behaviour management strategy or in response to risk taking behaviour by children and young people |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people are trained and supported to manage challenging behaviours and to implement behaviour support and management plans |  |
| 1. People caring for children and young people are supported to manage their own feelings and responses to children and young people’s behaviour and to understand how previous experiences can manifest as challenging behaviour in children and young people |  |

## Living independently (OOHC only)

Young people successfully transition to independent living

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Young people are encouraged and assisted to develop independent living skills |  |
| 1. Strategies for young people to manage everyday issues in their lives are included in leaving care plans |  |
| 1. Young people have leaving care plans which include support for accessing accommodation and financial assistance |  |
| 1. Upon leaving care, young people are provided with their original identity documents and life story material and are provided with information on how to access their files, if they wish |  |
| 1. Upon leaving care, young people are provided with information about their entitlements to continued support and assistance, and how to access these services |  |
| 1. After they have left care young people are provided with additional support or are referred to a relevant service, where their circumstances require it |  |

# Section 2 Casework practice to support care

## Initial assessment and permanency planning

Children and young people are in stable and secure placements that promote their safety, welfare and wellbeing

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The initial assessment of a child or young person occurs prior to the placement, or immediately after for crisis or emergency placements |  |
| 1. The initial assessment considers the reason for the placement, family details, social and medical history and the cultural identity of the child or young person |  |
| 1. Placement decisions take into account the needs of children or young people already in the care environment |  |
| 1. Placement matching decisions are informed by an assessment of the capacity of the proposed placement to meet the identified needs, interests and wellbeing of the child or young person |  |
| 1. Where residential care is considered for a child under the age of 12 years, a placement rationale is documented which sets out and reviews alternate care arrangements considered prior to the placement in residential care |  |
| 1. The permanent placement principles are applied to all placement decisions |  |
| 1. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principles are also applied to all placement decisions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people receive the necessary information, resources and support to provide appropriate care |  |
| 1. Parents considering adoption for their child are supported wherever possible to participate in the selection of the approved, adoptive family |  |

## Case planning and review

Children and young people have stable, secure placements that meet their changing needs

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. A designated worker is allocated to coordinate a case plan for each child or young person |  |
| 1. The transition of children from emergency or short-term placements to their long-term care arrangements is well planned and appropriate to the child’s age and maturity |  |
| 1. Case plans include a permanent placement plan for each child or young person, with clear tasks to achieve permanency planning goals |  |
| 1. Plans for moving in care are based on the continuity of existing health, education and social arrangements and the child or young person’s significant relationships |  |
| 1. A thorough assessment of the child or young person’s individual circumstances and best interests, including education stability, health care, cultural needs and social arrangements, the views of the child or young person and where appropriate his or her family are considered when planning for permanency |  |
| 1. Case planning includes a review of all aspects of the child or young person’s care and his or her changing needs and interests, and all participants are provided with a copy of the updated case plan |  |
| 1. Children and young people in out-of-home care receive a regular, formal review of their case plans, at least annually |  |
| 1. Case meetings or other planning processes include all significant parties and their views (including dissenting views) are recorded |  |
| 1. Decisions are recorded on each child or young person’s case plan and the records include the timeframe and person responsible for planned actions |  |
| 1. Leaving care plans are developed for each young person prior to leaving care and planning for leaving care begins when the child or young person reaches 15 years of age |  |

## Casework and monitoring placements

Children and young people have stable placements that meet their changing needs

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Monitoring practices include regular contact and consultation with children and young people and the people caring for them |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people are supported to provide permanent and stable placements |  |
| 1. Caseworkers act to resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner to avoid disruptions to placements |  |
| 1. Where appropriate, respite arrangements are provided to support placements |  |
| 1. Where an agency believes respite or another support or action is necessary to support the placement but is refused by the carer, a placement review is undertaken |  |
| 1. Changes to placement arrangements are kept to a minimum |  |
| 1. Children and young people are supported through all placement changes, whether planned or unplanned |  |
| 1. All relevant information about a child or young person is provided to the designated agency that is assuming responsibility for the child or young person, and to the people who will care for the child or young person |  |

## Post-adoption support (adoption only)

People affected by adoption receive appropriate information and support

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Information is provided to children and young people, their adoptive family and their birth family regarding post-adoption support services |  |
| 1. Where relevant, referrals are made to post-adoption support services or other specialist services |  |
| 1. The support agreed in the adoption plan is implemented |  |
| 1. People affected by adoption are provided with support when accessing their adoption information |  |
| 1. Adoption information is provided in accordance with relevant legislation and guidelines |  |

## Documentation and record keeping

Children and young people have access to records of their care arrangements

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. All available information, documents and records about a child or young person are collected and maintained |  |
| 1. Information relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people is shared with other organisations responsible for the care of the child or young person |  |
| 1. Records pertaining to a child or young person and their family are securely maintained for a time specified by relevant legislation |  |
| 1. Children and young people have access to their information when it is requested |  |
| 1. Children and young people are provided with support when accessing information about their personal and family histories |  |
| 1. Upon leaving care, young people are provided with their original identity documents and life story materials and copies of any other relevant documents |  |

# Section 3 People who work with and care for children and young people

## Recruitment of staff and volunteers

Children and young people are cared for by skilled and caring adults

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Staff have appropriate qualifications, personal qualities, skills and experience to perform their role |  |
| 1. There are strategies to recruit staff and volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds |  |
| 1. Staff and volunteers are provided with sufficient and current information about their responsibilities within the organisation to allow them to form their own views and decisions about working with the agency |  |
| 1. Recruitment processes and employment conditions are fair and transparent and comply with relevant legislation and industry awards |  |
| 1. Appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken, including reference checks with previous employers |  |
| 1. Working with Children Check requirements are met for each staff member or volunteer in a child-related role |  |
| 1. There are appropriate processes to manage staff members and volunteers who receive a Working with Children Check bar or an Interim Working with Children Check Bar |  |
| 1. Comprehensive records are maintained for all staff and volunteers which include the rationale for employment, personal details, performance management history and details of any allegations or complaints against the person and other information relevant to the employment of the person |  |
| 1. Staff and volunteer employment records are stored securely and treated with confidentiality |  |
| 1. Staff and volunteers are aware of their right to access information about themselves held by the agency, and can access that information on request |  |

## Assessment and selection of carers, guardians and adoptive parents

Children and young people are cared for by skilled and caring adults

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The agency has a recruitment strategy relevant to its circumstances including the cultural background of children and young people in its care |  |
| 1. The assessment and authorisation of carers, guardians and adoptive parents is undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements and includes mandatory pre-authorisation checks |  |
| 1. The agency has appropriate processes to manage carers, guardians, adoptive applicants or adult household members who receive a Working with Children Check bar or interim bar |  |
| 1. Agencies that provide both out-of-home care and adoption services have processes in place to support the dual authorisation of foster carers and adoptive applicants |  |
| 1. Information regarding the authorisation of carers and their household is recorded on the Carers Register in accordance with the relevant guidelines |  |
| 1. Information regarding the approval of adoptive applicants is recorded on the Adoption Register |  |
| 1. Comprehensive record for each carer, guardian or adoptive applicant are maintained, including details of the rationale for authorisation, personal details, the details of any allegations or complaints against the person and other information relevant to the engagement of the person |  |
| 1. Personal information about carers, guardians and adoptive applicants is securely maintained and treated with confidentiality |  |
| 1. Carers, guardians and prospective adoptive parents are aware of their right to access information held about them by the agency and can access that information on request |  |

## Training and development

Children and young people are cared for by skilled and caring adults

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. People who work with and care for children and young people are provided with training to assist them in meeting children and young people’s health, education, social, emotional and cultural needs |  |
| 1. The agency has a planned approach to training |  |
| 1. Planning includes initial and ongoing training and make provisions for additional training where required to meet the changing needs of children and young people |  |
| 1. People who work with children and young people receive training at the commencement of employment |  |
| 1. People who care for children and young people participate in training before their final authorisation or approval |  |
| 1. Training for authorised carers and adoptive parents corresponds to the type of care they provide |  |
| 1. A range of training opportunities is provided including on-the-job training, internal workshops and external training opportunities |  |
| 1. There are opportunities to request further training and professional development |  |
| 1. An up-to-date register is maintained of training undertaken by each person who works with and cares for children and young people |  |

## Supervision and support

Children and young people are cared for by skilled and caring adults

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Supervision is regular and planned |  |
| 1. Supervision processes include opportunities for discussion, planning and skill development |  |
| 1. The agency is responsive to the needs of people caring for and working with children and young people and acts to resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people are supported to manage difficult situations and are provided with practical assistance if required |  |
| 1. The agency clearly articulates its expectations regarding the behaviour and conduct of people who work with and care for children and young people |  |
| 1. Prospective adoptive parents and guardians are supported to develop independence in their caring role |  |
| 1. Carers providing short-term placements in preparation for restoration are supported based on an understanding of their particular needs |  |
| 1. People working with and caring for children and young people are provided with information about organisations or individuals that will assist them with grievance or complaint procedures and are referred to an independent advisor where appropriate |  |

# Section 4 Child safe organisations

## Governance

Agencies operate legally and ethically and in the best interests of children and young people

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The agency maintains current information about the members of the governing authority including biographical information, their interest in the agency, and their contribution to the balance of the governing authority membership |  |
| 1. The governing authority maintains systems and procedures for the administration and management of the agency |  |
| 1. There are clear delegations and lines of responsibility throughout the agency |  |
| 1. The governing authority is aware of its reporting obligations and complies with relevant legislation |  |
| 1. There is a well-defined and transparent recruitment process for members of the governing authority, which clearly sets out roles and responsibilities |  |
| 1. The governing authority employs or has access to people with expertise in out-of-home care or adoption legislation and contemporary practices |  |
| 1. The agency has a clearly defined process for managing conflicts of interest |  |
| 1. The governing authority ensures all people working with and caring for children and young people have the necessary supervision, resources and support to fulfil their role |  |
| 1. The governing authority has processes to ensure that suitable people are appointed to the principal officer role |  |
| 1. The agency nominates appropriate individuals within the organisation to be notified of a Working with Children Check bar or interim Working with Children Check bar in respect of any staff, volunteers, carers, adoptive applicants or their adult household members |  |
| 1. The principal officer and members of the governing authority comply with Working with Children Check requirements |  |
| 1. The governing authority ensures that the agency is promoted within the community and maintains connections with other service providers and organisations in the sector |  |

## Strategic planning and evaluation

Agencies strive to provide the best possible service to their clients

| Indicators of compliance | Location of evidence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Strategic planning, evaluation and continuous improvement systems are in place |  |
| 1. The focus of strategic planning and continuous improvement is to improve outcomes for children and young people |  |
| 1. The plans and systems are evaluated and updated regularly and any changes are reflected in practice |  |
| 1. The governing authority undertakes an assessment of the agency’s capacity to maintain ongoing compliance, prior to expanding its provision of services |  |
| 1. The governing authority seeks opportunities to participate in whole of sector improvements and initiatives, where these are relevant to the services they provide |  |