

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Position description

OFFICIAL

Position title:	Senior Child Protection Practitioner (Court Officer)
Position number:	DFFH/CPP5.1
Division/Branch/Team:	Child Protection
Work location:	Various (metropolitan and rural locations across Victoria) (Flexible-Hybrid)
Classification:	CPP5.1
Salary Range:	Value range 1 from \$105,479 – \$116,550 (full-time equivalent per annum) plus superannuation
Employment status:	Ongoing / Fixed Term - Full time (76 hours per fortnight). Flexible.
Position reports to:	Practice Leader (Case Planning)
Position contact:	Email: childprotectionjobs@dffh.vic.gov.au
Closing date:	

Role purpose

Metro

The Senior Child Protection Practitioner (Court Officer) is responsible for the management of legal applications listed to be heard in the Children's Court (Family Division) matters. You will work closely with the Child Protection Litigation Office to ensure Child Protection staff across the divisional area receive timely and appropriate legal advice regarding contested and uncontested matters within the Children's Court (Family Division) and other relevant courts and tribunals.

OR

Rural

As a Senior Child Protection Practitioner (Court Officer) you will work closely with the Senior Legal Officer to ensure Child Protection Staff across the divisional area receive timely and appropriate legal advice regarding contested and uncontested matters within the Children's Court (Family Division) and other relevant courts and tribunals. You will provide strategic advice in consultation with senior management, conduct litigation and represent the Secretary of the DFFH before the Children's Court (Family Division).

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing has a dedicated focus on the community wellbeing and the social recovery of Victoria. The Department is working to deliver important work started before the pandemic, while building on opportunities it has presented to lead bold and innovative reform.

We work to create equal opportunities for all Victorians to live safe, respected and valued lives. We lead policies and services dedicated to community wellbeing by empowering communities to build a fairer and safer Victoria.

The Department includes Child Protection, Prevention of Family Violence, Family Safety Victoria, Homes Victoria, Housing and Disability and Seniors and Carers. The Department is also responsible for the key portfolios of Multicultural Affairs, LGBTIQ+ communities, Equality, Veterans and of offices of Women and Youth, enhancing the alignment with policy areas and portfolios focusing on the recovery and growth of our diverse communities. The Department also supports Victorian Disability Workers Commission and Respect Victoria.

We are building an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity and difference. All jobs can be worked flexibly, and we actively encourage job applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people living with disability, LGBTIQ+, veterans and people from varied cultural backgrounds.

Key accountabilities

At this level, the role is developing a reputation as an expert in these capabilities and has consistently demonstrated these capabilities in all settings/ situations. Actively coaches colleagues in the application, theory and practice relating to these capabilities; engages and leads both colleagues and clients in these capabilities.

1. *Critical Assessment and Reflection*

- Risk assessment and analysis - gathers information through a variety of sources and technologies in order to identify, articulate, and plan for the risks relating to each situation. Applies a strong forensic lens, and professional judgement, to analyse the available evidence.
- Case planning review and case management - draws insights from assessment and analysis to formulate a meaningful and effective case plan, and reviews case progress and outcomes. Coordinates and leads the planning, review, and management of casework within DFFH and across other agencies and services.
- Critical enquiry - uses evidence based frameworks to investigate issues, and is able to understand the root cause of each issue as well as the potential implications.
- Standardised reporting - uses standardised reporting frameworks when recording case data, and when documenting care solutions provided.
- Reflective practice - critically reflects on what they are doing in their role, and uses this reflection to influence their practice.

2. *Engaging Others*

- Child centred and family focused relationship based practice - focuses on the child and incorporates the family and social network, to deliver timely and proactive solutions.
- Collaboration - engages, consults, and co-designs solutions with children and their families, other practitioners and teams, agencies, services and the community, in order to deliver the best outcomes for children and their families.
- Knowledge sharing - exchanging critical information across the system, both internally and externally, to ensure shared understanding, and timely and appropriate action for clients.

3. *Delivering Results*

- Problem solving - integrates knowledge and internal insight with leading practice and research to address problems.
- Culturally informed practice and safety - understands and applies culturally informed practice that is focused on the child in the context of their family, in a way that considers situations, activities, decisions, and outcomes from the perspective of each stakeholder's cultural background.
- Business operations - effectively uses business technology, systems, procedures, and financial and political nous, to achieve the best outcome(s) for clients.
- Evaluating and delivering program improvements - works with colleagues and key stakeholder to evaluate programs, identify opportunities, develop solutions, and identify and overcome barriers to continuously improve program outcomes.
- Packaging of support - is able to effectively plan for the purchasing of services, manage budgets, and allocate finances, to achieve the best outcome(s).

4. Leading and Inspiring

- Practice leadership - leads children, families, and stakeholders through child protection assessment and decision making in an open, informed, proactive, and assertive manner.
- Collective leadership - demonstrates how to team with colleagues, in order to provide staff with a deeper meaning and value, as well as a strong leadership team.
- Developing others - Coaches, guides, and shares knowledge with colleagues to encourage learning and reflection.
- System leadership - drives relationships and effective working within DFFH and across other systems, to create a shared purpose, improve standards, and challenge the status quo.

5. Role Specific Accountabilities

- Be responsible for the management of legal applications listed to be heard in the Melbourne Children's Court and other local courts used for Children's Court matters. This will include working closely with the Child Protection Litigation Office to ensure child protection staff receive timely and appropriate legal advice regarding contested and uncontested matters within the Children's Court and other relevant courts and tribunals.
- Model leadership in a range of areas including knowledge of legislation, policy and procedure, the application of the Best Interest Case Practice Model, the development of plans to bring about the changes necessary to ensure the safety, stability and development of children and young people and to promote the achievement of case plan objectives within specified timeframes. and the ability to think critically and analytically to achieve best outcomes for children and families.
- Have experience in and demonstrate, at an advanced level, initiating, preparing and presenting a case in Children's Court or other tribunals.
- Keep accurate and complete records of your work activities in accordance with legislative requirements and the department's records, information security and privacy policies and requirements.
- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety and for that of others in the workplace by working in accordance with legislative requirements and the department's occupational health and safety (OHS) policies and procedures.

Key selection criteria

Knowledge and skills

1. Understands child development - Identifies normal developmental stages within a child's life, and understands attachment and trauma theories as they relate to child protection practice.
2. Identifies risks to children – identifies factors that place a child at risk of abuse or neglect and articulates this risk verbally and in writing to a range of stakeholders including parent, children and other professionals.
3. Understands the legislative and statutory framework - understands and embeds the Child Youth and Families Act (2005) in practice, including the core responsibilities and principles of the Act.
4. Works confidently with families impacted by drug and alcohol abuse - demonstrates an understanding of the legislative, policy, and practice requirements relating to families impacted by drug and/or alcohol abuse, and is able to apply these skills in practice.
5. Works confidently with families impacted by family violence – demonstrates an understanding of the legislative, policy, and practice requirements relating to family violence and is able to apply these skills in practice.
6. Works confidently with Aboriginal children and families - demonstrates an understanding of the legislative, policy and practice requirements relating to Aboriginal children, families, and communities and the ability to apply case practice and decision-making.
7. Operates effectively in a fast-paced and changing environment - operates effectively and delivers results in fast-paced, an ambiguous and changing environment.
8. Confidently prepares for court - initiates, prepares, and presents in Children's Court, or other tribunals.
9. Communicates risk and risk-related concepts verbally - confidently conveys ideas and information in a clear and interesting way. Understands and meets the needs of target audiences (delivers the right information to the right people). Welcomes constructive feedback. Sees things from other's points of view and confirms understanding.
10. Writes professionally and convincingly - prepares complex briefs, letters, emails and reports using clear, concise and grammatically correct language. Edits written communications to ensure they contain the information necessary to achieve their purpose and meet audience needs. Ensures appropriate style and formats are used.
11. Self-management: invites feedback on own behaviour and impact; uses new knowledge or information about self to build a broader understanding of own behaviour and the impact it has on others; understands strong emotional reactions and seeks ways to more effectively manage them

Personal qualities

12. Adaptable: Is flexible and adaptable to change, and accepts and integrates new information as a matter of course.
13. Decisive: Makes rational and sound decisions based on consideration of the facts and alternatives.
14. Emotionally regulated: Regulates emotions in the face of distressing and alarming circumstances, to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for clients.

15. Resilient: Responds thoughtfully and reflectively to distressing information, appropriately seeks guidance and support, communicates effectively with others to undertake child centred work in the face of challenging situations.
16. Open and curious: Adopts an open and curious approach to child protection work
17. Takes initiative: Works proactively in creating solutions and solving problems
18. Teamwork: cooperates and works well with others in pursuit of team goals, collaborates and shares information, shows consideration, concern and respect for others feelings and ideas, accommodates and works well with the different working styles of others, encourages resolution of conflict within the group.

Qualifications

Mandatory

- A recognised Social Work degree or a similar welfare or behavioural related degree which includes:
 - a) a primary focus on child development, human behaviour, family dynamics and/or impacts of trauma; and preferably
 - b) a practical component such as counselling or case work practice

or

- A recognised Diploma of Community Services Work, or similar qualification which is studied over a minimum of two academic years of full-time study (or part time equivalent) and includes:
 - a) a primary focus on child development, human behaviour, family dynamics and/or impacts of trauma
 - b) supervised fieldwork placements (ideally completed within the child and family welfare sector) and at least one unit of study in case management, case work practice or counselling

and

- A valid driver's licence.
- A current Working with Children Check (WWCC) card.

Values and behaviours

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing employees are required to demonstrate commitment to:

The public sector values and behaviours – responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights.

Recordkeeping – The department is committed to good record keeping and requires all staff to routinely create and keep full and accurate records of their work-related activities, transactions and decisions, using authorised systems.

Diversity – The department values an inclusive workplace that embraces diversity and strongly encourages applications from Aboriginal people, people with disability, people from the LGBTQI+ community, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Important information

The salary range for this position is set out in Schedule B of the *Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020*. For further information refer to [Department of Treasury and Finance](#)

Department policy stipulates that salary upon commencement is paid at the base of the salary range for the relevant grade. An executive delegate must approve any above base requests. These will be by exception only or where required to match the current salary of a Victorian Public Service staff transferring at-level.

Individuals who have received a Voluntary Departure Package from a Victoria Public Service department/agency are ineligible for re-employment for a minimum of three calendar years from the date of separation.

Individuals who have received an Early Retirement Package (ERP) from a Victoria Public Service department/agency are ineligible for re-employment for a minimum of 12 months from the date of separation.

The department is a key emergency management partner and contributes significantly to Victoria's emergency management arrangements. As part of a whole-of-government agreement, employees may be required to undertake training in emergency management and support functions during an emergency and may be redeployed to facilitate this need.

The department provides and maintains a safe working environment that does not risk the health of its employees.

Pre-employment checks

All appointments require reference checks, national criminal records checks and pre-employment misconduct screening. Some positions also require a Working with Children Check and screening through the Disability Worker Screening List.

Applicants who have lived overseas in one country for 12 months or longer in the last ten years must provide an international police check from the relevant overseas police agency. Applicants can obtain a check through an organisation providing international police checks via an internet search.

Pre-employment checks may include checking whether an applicant's name is on the Disability Worker Screening List. This incorporates:

- the Disability Worker Exclusion List which includes names of persons unsuitable for employment as a disability support worker in a disability residential service provided, funded or registered by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.
- the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission which has compliance and enforcement actions, including banning orders
- the Victorian Disability Worker Commission prohibition orders.

COVID 19 Vaccination

The department strongly recommends (but does not mandate) that employees maintain their COVID-19 vaccination status in accordance with current [ATAGI \(Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation\) advice](#), given their individual circumstances. As of June 2023, DFFH does not require evidence of COVID-19 vaccination status.

Further information

For further information visit [‘About the Department’ on Department of Families, Fairness and Housing](#)

To receive this document in another format [email COPLWorkforceServices@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:COPLWorkforceServices@dffh.vic.gov.au)

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Koori/Koorie’ is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.