

Position description

Child Protection Principal Practitioner

OFFICIAL

Position number:	DFFH/PPP6
Branch/Division/Team:	Child Protection
Work location:	Various rural and metropolitan locations
Classification:	PPP6
Employment status:	Ongoing /Fixed Term - Full time (76 hours per fortnight)
Salary range:	Value range 1: \$125,893 - \$147,184 plus superannuation Value range 2: \$147,185 - \$168,474 plus superannuation
Position reports to	Director, Child Protection
Position contact:	Email: childprotectionjobs@dffh.vic.gov.au
Closing date:	

Role purpose

The Child Protection Principal Practitioner has a primary aim to strengthen the skills and knowledge of child protection practitioners and build a child focussed family centred practice culture that integrates evidence from research and critical reflection. The Child Protection Principal Practitioner will undertake specialist assessments and interventions, case reviews, appeals and maintain case records, visit children, their parents, families and carers, and other professionals involved with clients of Child Protection. The Child Protection Principal Practitioner will provide high level expertise and offer secondary consultation and live supervision; facilitate staff mentoring and practice development; and provide leadership in the implementation of continuous improvement strategies based on clinical best practice.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

The creation of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing will allow for a dedicated focus on the community wellbeing and the social recovery of Victoria. The newly formed department will enable us to continue the extraordinary work of supporting Victorians, sharpening our focus on better services for 2021. It will also provide opportunities to deliver important work started before the pandemic and to lead bold and innovative reform. The department includes Child Protection, Prevention of Family Violence, Housing and Disability and Ageing and Carers. The department is also responsible for the key portfolios of Multicultural Affairs, LGBTQI+ 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 Family Safety Victoria, Homes Victoria and Respect Victoria.

Key accountabilities

At this level, the role has significant and deep experience applying this capability, and is recognised around the state as an expert in applying this capability with both colleagues and external stakeholders. Strategically plans for how colleagues/staff can continue to develop in this area, and successfully operationalise these plans.

1. **Critical Assessment and Reflection**

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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. Co-ordinates and leads the planning, review, and management of casework within DFFH and across other agencies and services.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 Standardised reporting - uses standardised reporting frameworks when recording case data, and when documenting care solutions provided.
- 1.5 Reflective practice - critically reflects on what they are doing in their role, and uses this reflection to influence their practice.

2. **Engaging Others**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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**

- 3.1 Problem solving - integrates knowledge and internal insight with leading practice and research to address problems.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Business operations - effectively uses business technology, systems, procedures, and financial and political nous, to achieve the best outcome(s) for clients.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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**

- 4.1 Practice leadership - leads children, families, and stakeholders through child protection assessment and decision making in an open, informed, proactive, and assertive manner.

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 Developing others - Coaches, guides, and shares knowledge with colleagues to encourage learning and reflection.
- 4.4 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

- 5.1 Provide practice leadership, undertake specialist assessments, case reviews and interventions, visit children, their parents, families and carers and other professionals involved with clients of Child Protection
- 5.2 Offer secondary consultation and live supervision; maintain case records
- 5.3 Support child protection practitioners, facilitate staff mentoring and practice development and provide leadership in the implementation of continuous improvement strategies based on clinical best practice

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.

Personal qualities

1. **Adaptable:** Is flexible and adaptable to change, and accepts and integrates new information as a matter of course.
2. **Decisive:** Makes rational and sound decisions based on consideration of the facts and alternatives.
3. **Emotionally regulated:** Regulates emotions in the face of distressing and alarming circumstances, to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for clients.
4. **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.
5. **Open and curious:** Adopts an open and curious approach to child protection work
6. **Takes initiative:** Works proactively in creating solutions and solving problems

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.

Desirable

- Significant operational knowledge and a strong understanding of child protection practice and Victorian child protection legislation and policy.
- Specialist practice knowledge of and clinical experience in areas relevant to child protection work such as child development and the impact of trauma, clinical work with children, young people and families, mental health, drug and alcohol, family violence, sexual assault, and disability.
- Post graduate qualification in child adolescent and family practice, family therapy or working towards completion of such a qualification.

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](https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/home) (<<https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/home>>).

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.

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 Exclusion List.

Applicants who have, in the last 10 years, lived overseas for 12 months or longer in one country must provide an international police check from the relevant overseas police agency. Further information is available on the Department of Home Affairs website 'character and policy certificate requirements' page. Alternatively, 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 Exclusion List maintained by the Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme unit. The Disability Worker Exclusion List 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.

Mandatory Vaccination Policy

The department is committed to providing and maintaining a working environment which is safe and without risk to the health of its workers and clients. The department may require its employees to be fully vaccinated against preventable diseases such as the current coronavirus (COVID-19) based on Victorian Chief Health Officer's Directions as issued and updated from time to time. Vaccination requirements may differ from role to role based on their risk category and the duties performed. The department's policy available via this [link](#) outlines the risk categories and requirements for employees working for the department. Where relevant, proof of immunisation status may be required.

For this role, you are required to submit proof of vaccination prior to commencement.

The department's vaccination policy can found via this link: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/community-services-sector-vaccination-requirements-policy-doc>

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.

Further information

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

To receive this document in another format, [email People and Culture](#).

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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.

Available at careers.vic.gov.au and [Jobs and Skills Exchange](#)