

This guide is intended to assist Foster and Kinship carers (Carers) understand the purpose of a Care Team meeting and how to use this function with the Department for Child Protection (DCP).

Care Team meetings are an important opportunity for Carers to actively ensure their voice is heard with regard to decision making relating to a child or young people in their care. In order to achieve the best outcomes for your child or young person, it is crucial to work collaboratively with all stakeholders involved in their ongoing care and protection. Care Team meetings afford this opportunity.

The Statement of Commitment for South Australian Foster & Kinship Carers states Carers are an essential and respected part of the care team for children and young people under Guardianship of the Chief Executive.

What is a Care Team meeting?

Care Team meetings are a chance for stakeholders to formally discuss the current and future needs for a child or young person under Guardianship of the Chief Executive. Additionally, Care Team meetings are a good opportunity for you as a Carer to review your child or young person's case plan to ensure their ongoing care needs are supported.

Section 156 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 states case plans will be reviewed regularly, over a six month planning cycle.

Care Team meeting discussion topics include, but are not limited to:

- stakeholders consulting with you as Carer, directly with your child, their birth parents and any other person involved closely in your child's life;
- reviewing the progress of your child or young person whilst in your care;
- sharing information about your child or young person's needs and wishes;
- updating your child's Care Plan;
- planning for future needs to assist and support your child or young person;
- discussing conflicts within the care team environment.

Please note: If you are caring for a child or young person who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, careful attention must be applied to ensure their traditions are valued, respected and upheld. Care Team meetings must recognise the child's specific cultural identity and their needs to ensure that they are supported to grow up connected and empowered.

If you are caring for a child or young person who identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, it is important for the DCP Principal Aboriginal Consultant (PAC) to attend these meetings.

Who can attend a Care Team Meeting?

Any individual who has a significant role in your child or young person's life, relating to their health, wellbeing, safety and welfare, may attend a Care Team meeting. This may include the child or young person, their Carer, biological family members, Carer

support worker, DCP case worker, health professionals, school staff and members of the child or young person's community.

Who can call a Care Team meeting?

Typically Care Team meetings are organised by the DCP but may also be convened by the Carer.

What is a Carers involvement in a Care Team meeting?

Carers are an essential member of their child and young person's care team. They undertake a crucial role in their child or young person's ongoing health, wellbeing and development, ensuring they can reach their highest potential.

Section 82 of the *Children and Young Person (Safety) Act 2017* states “*approved Carers are entitled to participate in the decision making process*”. This implies Carers can partake in Care Team meetings to share in-depth knowledge regarding their child or young person's behaviours, strengths, needs and challenges.

Please note: The DCP practice approach states “*Carers must be invited to participate from the commencement of planning*” and “*Carers views must be recorded in every section of the Case Plan*”.

Care Team meetings are used to monitor the progress of these plans over time, ensuring all stakeholders are meeting the current and future needs of the child or young person.

How do I call a Care Team meeting?

CF&KC-SA encourages Carers plan their approach to calling a Care Team meeting well in advance. By using the steps below, Carers can brainstorm their approach to calling a Care Team meeting with their support worker.

The CF&KC-SA Carer Advocate team may assist Carers with the process of preparing for, and calling a Care Team meeting.

1. Clarify the purpose of calling a Care Team Meeting regarding your child or young person;
2. Identify who should attend the Care Team meeting;
3. Contact your DCP case worker to:
 - formally request a Care Team meeting;
 - negotiate a date for the Care Team Meeting, ensuring all relevant stakeholders can attend; and
 - decide where the Care Team Meeting will be held e.g. DCP office, Agency office, Carers house, CF&KC-SA office, virtual platform (i.e. Zoom);
4. Confirm with DCP case worker a couple days before to confirm the Care Team meeting is still set to proceed.

What should I prepare before the Care Team meeting?

Prior to the Care Team meeting, it is encouraged Carers develop a list of items for discussion, in order of preference or need. It is a professional courtesy to provide an agenda (including these items) to all attendees scheduled to attend the Care Team meeting. This provides each attendee a clear purpose for the meeting and clarifies the expectation of what you wish to discuss.

Carers are welcome to bring a support person to a Care Team meeting. A support person can assist by taking notes, keeping you to your set agenda and provide clarity if require. Please read our Carer Guide on The Role of a Support Person available on the CF&KC-SA website for further details on this particular function.

Please note: at the beginning of the Care Team meeting we encourage you to clarify who intends to scribe (minute) the meeting. It is crucial to confirm who will receive the minutes and within what timeframe.

Carer support

For more information, or to discuss your personal circumstances, please contact CF&KC-SA to speak with our team:

Email: support@cfc-sa.org.au

Freecall: 1800 732 272