**Meeting Notes Childcare Q and A with DET (Quality Assessment and Regulation Division or QARD)**

**July 19th 10.30am-12pm**

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Present: Suzanne Graham- Area manager -Southern Metro Division, Julie Campbell- Area Manager- Gippsland Division, Wendy Hiam -Community House Network Southern Region, Kim Peterson- Berwick NC, Leanne Craven-Blind Bight CC, Leeann Lee-Ack-Cheltenham CC, Tracy Van Vloten- Hallam CLC, Trudy Pritchard- Dingley Village NLC, Maddie Race- Phoenix Park NH, Meagan Henry- Aspendale Gardens CS, Sam Neeman- Langwarrin CC, Carmela Walker- Sandybeach Centre, Naomi Goldman- Caulfield South CH, Fiona Dannock- Lyrebird CC, Meredith McKenzie- Belvedere CC, Kate Maddern- Hampton Park CH, Antonia Halleran-Lavelle- Neighbourhood Houses Gippsland, Marie Marzonilla- Wellsprings for Women, Greg Hilton- Sorrento CC, Frankston City Council- Fiona Cann, Sally Khur- Castlefield CC.

**Introduction and acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

There has been lots of changes to childcare requirements over the last few years. In May 2020 Children’s Services have service approvals rather than licensing approvals according to the National Law brought in at that time. Where there was a number of different types of licenses in the past, now there are only two types. There have been changes to the roles and their names and to programming requirements etc.

Child protection laws have been in place for several years, and it is mandated for children’s services Staff to report any potential child abuse situations they believe to be occurring. It is important for childcare staff (and other NH staff) to understand what constitutes abuse and how to recognise this. Training is available for staff and is essential for all childcare staff to complete as a part of the new rules. Failing to report can put children’s lives at risk and result in prosecution if a child is injured and the staff did nothing to report this possibility. There is precedent for prosecution happening in Victoria. If staff are unsure if it is abuse or not, they can seek advice from the “orange door” or child protection. Training was thought to be better if face to face but can also be completed online. It was also mentioned to be aware of cultural differences.

For NHs that aren’t childcare providers or have children attending outside of their childcare area it was considered that they should report any possible instances of child abuse that they witness or have reasonable belief has happened. You are entitled to intervene if a parent/adult is disciplining a child in an unreasonable manner.

[Family violence support and extra help for children and families (orangedoor.vic.gov.au)](https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au/)

[Child protection contacts - DFFH Services](https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts)

**Incident reporting** has been part of the requirements for a while but the specifics around reporting and handling complaints need to be reviewed and adjusted in policies.

**Staff ratio changes**- It was brought up those changes to the ratios for under three years old has resulted in difficulty maintaining viability and this affects how many children the service can support. Increased funding would be very welcome to help offset this financial issue.

**Qualification requirements**- 50% of staff must hold or be working towards a qualification. This must be evidenced in the staff records.

A scenario was shared around child minding at a NH where parents are in the building but not the room with the children for 1 hr to 90 minutes. DET advised that if there are 4 or more children, that fees are charged should really have a service approval application to perform this service. Best to check if there are any exemptions as the definition around childcare is very clear and this includes the need for ratios to be adhered to. DET will follow up with this NH.

**Medical Conditions Policies and procedures** must be kept up to date. There are now 11 Standards. One staff person present, at least, must have all the required qualifications, First Aid, Asthma and anaphylaxis up to date. This was stated to be a time-consuming process but there are professional development sessions and resources available to assist with this. Policies and procedures can be adapted. There are also risk assessments and some policies and checklist available. Links to these will be attached to these notes.

**Changes to outside physical environments** -Most childcare services have outside spaces that meet these requirements. With some exceptions being gyms. Temporary waivers to this requirement may be possible.

**Excursions must have risk assessments completed**; Incursions can have these as well although it isn’t mandatory. Procedures and policies should cover for this.

**Child safe standards**

Changes include there are now more standards to be complied with. Some changes include making your childcare and NH safe/welcoming for indigenous children, continuous improvement, online child safety and managing complaints are part of the changes.

Current policies may well cover these requirements, but some review should be done to ensure the Standards are incorporated. The audit tool from the Commission of children and young people will assist NHs to check their compliance is on point. Staff need to be aware of the new policies and requirements as they are required to implement them.

Expectations are clear that staff should have completed the training or are planning to do this.

Between July 1st and 1st of January there is a provisional period for organisations to get their compliance in order. It was though t likely that the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division would become an integrated regulator with the current compliance arm of the government. During this provisional period, they are in an educational capacity to support organisations to improve their compliance. After this time the QARD will have increased powers to intervene to protect children and ensure the Childcare standards are regulated effectively.

[Short-guide-to-the-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf (ccyp.vic.gov.au)](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/Short-guide-to-the-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf)

[A-guide-for-creating-a-Child-Safe-Organisation-190422.pdf](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cwendy%5COneDrive%20-%20CHSR%5CDesktop%5CA-guide-for-creating-a-Child-Safe-Organisation-190422.pdf)

[CCYP | Resources and support for the Child Safe Standards](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/)