



Quality Assurance Framework for New South Wales

Executive Summary QAF

Version 1.0, November 2020 Edition



Contents

- Executive Summary 3
 - Why the QAF? 3
 - What is the QAF? 3
 - The QAF Domains 3
 - Why measure wellbeing? 4
 - Benefits of the QAF 5
 - Child and young person is viewed holistically 5
 - Regularly updated reliable information sources 5
 - Consistency across the sector both DCJ and NGO agencies 5
 - Helping with case planning – identifying areas of need 5
 - Assessing our impacts 5
 - Supporting case planning under the Permanency Support Program 5
 - Links to standards to support the accreditation process 5
 - For more information 7
 - Acknowledgements: 8
- Glossary of Terms 9

Executive Summary

The NSW Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) collects key information on how a child or young person who have final orders with Parental Responsibility to the Minister, is going in out-of-home care (OOHC), to ensure we give every child in care the best possible experience. Regular information comes from children, carers, Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ), Education and health in order to support this.

The Child Overview is a child centred tool providing individual level information about children under Parental Responsibility to the Minister (PRM). Each individual child will have a Child Overview completed for them. Information contained within the Child Overview captures the domains of safety, permanency and wellbeing to inform casework.

The aim of the Child Overview is to provide a single point of information for caseworkers to create a picture of how a child or young person is faring. This will allow for information to be tracked across time and used to help identify how a child's outcomes can be improved.

Why the QAF?

Consensus internationally is that practitioners need to know how individual children are faring so we can improve their outcomes. Moving away from reliance on anecdotal evidence towards the use of evidence-based decision making. Data is everywhere but we don't often turn it into information that caseworkers can use in case planning.

This aligns with accreditation and the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) who look for evidence of good outcomes in OOHC as a result of agency casework.

What is the QAF?

The QAF enables each provider to map its own pathway to achieving outcomes; one that responds to the particular needs of the children they care for.



The QAF Domains

Information for each child or young person is organised around the following three domains:

Safety (Blue)

Permanency Belonging and stability (Red)

Wellbeing (Green) further broken down into wellbeing sub-domains:

- Health and Development
- Cultural and Spiritual Identity
- Emotional and Psychological wellbeing
- Educational Potential
- Social Functioning



Why measure wellbeing?

Wellbeing is fundamental to experiencing quality of life. Wellbeing is considered the bedrock for stability and a key influence on positive outcomes for children.

Many children and young people who enter OOHG have lower levels of wellbeing than the general population. These children and young people are more likely to develop social, emotional, behavioural and mental health problems, and these problems can be inter-related.

The image below shows each QAF Domain and the outcomes we are aiming to achieve:

QAF Domain

Aim of the Domain



Safety Domain

Children and young people have the opportunity and support needed to ensure that they are physically and psychologically safe and free from maltreatment.



Permanency Domain

Children and young people have permanency and stability in their living situations, and the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved.

Wellbeing Domain – has a number of components



Educational potential

Children and young people have the opportunity and support needed to maximise their intellectual ability and functioning and to achieve educational success to their fullest potential.



Good health and development

Children and young people have the opportunity and support needed to maximise their physical health, strength, and functioning.



Emotional, psychological wellbeing

Children and young people have the opportunity and support needed to manage their mental health and wellness.



Social functioning

Children and young people have the opportunity and support needed to cultivate a strong and resilient self-identity, supportive and nurturing relationships and feel hopeful about life and future.



Cultural and spiritual identity

Children and young people have the opportunity, encouragement and support needed to engage with, and develop, their own cultural, ethnic, and spiritual identity.



Benefits of the QAF

Child and young person is viewed holistically

Traditionally the child protection system was focused on child safety. It is broadly recognised that this is not enough to form long lasting relationships and a positive sense of self we carry through life.

The QAF includes information around Safety, Permanency as well as Wellbeing which encompasses individual's physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual connections.

The information is not only used to assess current needs but to assess emerging issues and can be used track the child or young person's progress over time.

Regularly updated reliable information sources

The QAF collects information from a range of reliable tools and sources, including:

- children and young people via the Child and Young Person Questionnaire
- carers via the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) via ChildStory
- Department of Education via Child Information Warehouse (CIW)
- Health via the Health Referral Pathway

Consistency across the sector both DCJ and NGO agencies

All agencies will have one source of reliable information which travels with the child or young person while in OOHC to different agencies and placements. This will enable agencies to gain reliable historical information to build a picture of the child and young person's life in OOHC.

Helping with case planning – identifying areas of need

Quarterly Child Overviews give up-to-date information to caseworkers to assist with decision making in activities such as case planning, reviews, transfers and financial planning.

Assessing our impacts

Quarterly Child Overview's help caseworkers assess how decisions and activities have impacted on children and young people in OOHC

Supporting case planning under the Permanency Support Program

As of 1 October 2017, the [Permanency Support Program](#) requires that permanency planning is embedded in each child or young person's case plan, with a goal for achieving permanency, in most cases, within two years.

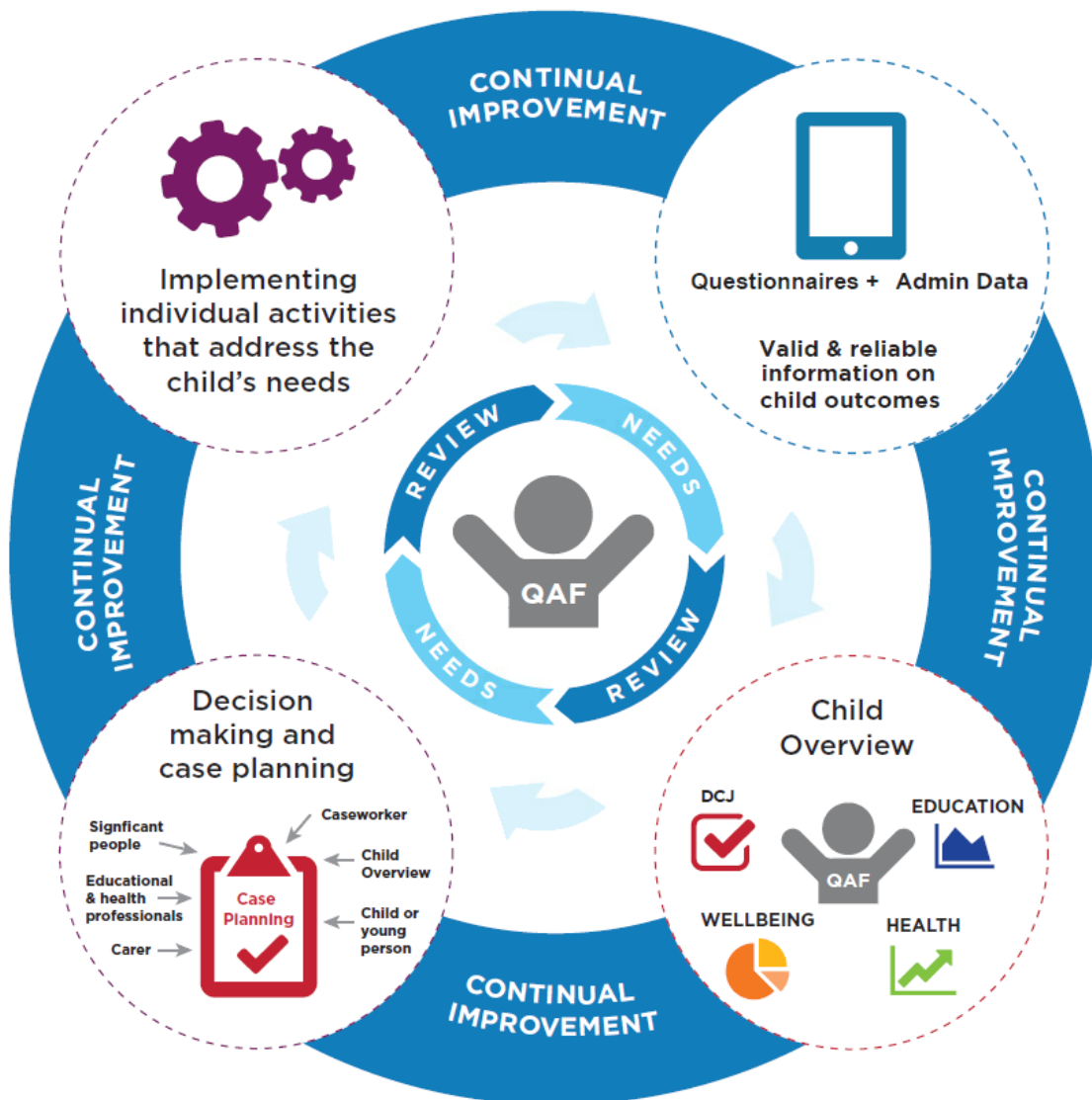
The QAF can give practitioners the reliable and comprehensive information they need to set and review case plans, and ensure they're on track to meeting goals to keep children safe at home, or find a loving home for life with extended family or kin, foster care or through guardianship or open adoption.

Links to standards to support the accreditation process

The QAF demonstrates good practice and provides evidence which will support the accreditation process.

QAF Continual Improvement Process

The QAF is a cycle of collecting outcomes information for each child or young person, reviewing and using this to inform and improve casework activities.



How is the QAF information collected?

Information on each of the domain areas are collected from:

- The child/young person –CYP Questionnaire, via Viewpoint an online app
- The carer – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire via Viewpoint an online app
- Administrative data from DCJ - ChildStory
- Administrative data from other agencies such as Education



How you use the QAF

The information in the Child Overview and results from the questionnaires can be integrated into casework practice in many ways. Below are examples taken from a DCJ Implementation site, as a part of implementation, agencies can tailor the use to their needs?

MONTHLY	3 MONTHLY	6 MONTHLY	ANNUALLY	5 YEARS	ONGOING
<p>Home visits discussions, documentation & follow up</p> <p>Work Load Planning</p> <p>Include QAF tasks</p>	<p>Read Child Overviews distributed and uploaded on Child Story every 3 months April, July, October & January</p> <p>3 monthly Behaviour Support Plan reviews</p> <p>3 monthly Case Plan reviews</p> <p>s163 information to parents</p>	<p>Strengths & Difficulties Ques completed by carer each 6mths</p> <p>Child & Young Person Ques completed by CYP each 6mths</p> <p>Questionnaires also completed following any placement change</p> <p>Review Results and add identified needs to casework tasks</p>	<p>New Case Plans – Child Overview informs: Strengths & Needs Case plan tasks Have Your Say – My Plan</p> <p>Cultural Plan</p> <p>Leaving Care & After Care Plans (LCAC)</p> <p>Financials Case plan & Cultural plan Special needs assessments Care+1 & Care+2 LCAC Financials</p> <p>Development of New Behaviour Support Plans</p> <p>Carer reviews - SDQ informs carer views, training needs, recommendations and/or additional placements. CYPQ informs CYP views within a carer review Review Child Overviews within the past 12 months and between QAF years</p> <p>Education plans</p>	<p>5 Year Carer Reviews Carer views CYP views Training needs Recommendations</p> <p>Review QAF's overtime</p>	<p>Group Supervision</p> <p>Rationale for Decision Making</p> <p>Case plan progress notes</p> <p>ROSH assessments</p> <p>Life Story Work</p> <p>Outsourcing support work - Submissions for funding</p> <p>Education meetings</p> <p>NDIS meetings and reviews</p> <p>Referrals –Health, Counselling, Therapeutic Support, Head Space, NDIS</p> <p>Aboriginal Consultations</p> <p>Placement requests – CFDU, CIF's Part B, CAT assessments</p> <p>Case transfers to other CSC's and/or NGO's</p>



For more information on the QAF go to www.FACS.nsw.gov.au/QAF

Acknowledgements:

In 2014-15, DCJ commissioned the Parenting Research Centre (PRC), in partnership with the University of Melbourne, to develop a robust Quality Assurance Framework.

The Cultural and Spiritual Identity Domains was developed by DCJ for the QAF, alongside numerous stakeholders including Aboriginal agencies and communities. A special acknowledgement needs to go to Burrun Dalai Aboriginal Corporation for leading the development of the Aboriginal Cultural Connections Questionnaire. DCJ are delighted that Burrun Dalai hold the Intellectual Property for the questionnaire and DCJ are able to use this for the QAF across the sector.

We would like to acknowledge and thank DoE for their contribution to the QAF though sharing data on key areas relating to a child and young Person's Educational outcomes.



Glossary of Terms

Viewpoint Coordinator	An Agency member who coordinates the implementation of the QAF Questionnaires and Viewpoint
ACCQ	Aboriginal Cultural Connections Questionnaire designed to measure a child or young person's understanding of their cultural connection and key cultural knowledge biannually:
ChildStory ID	The ChildStory ID is the unique ChildStory identifier for each child/young person
ChildStory	ChildStory is an information technology system that has replaced the KIDs system.
CFDU	Child and Family District Unit
Cultural and Spiritual Identity Domain (CSID)	A CSID covers outcomes, definitions, indicators and measures to give children and young people the opportunity and support to engage, and develop, their cultural, and spiritual identity
DCJ	Department of Communities and Justice
FACS	Refers to the former Department of Family and Community Services NSW. Prior to being renamed as the Department of Communities and Justice NSW (DCJ) on 1 July 2019.
Keep Them Safe	'Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing' is the NSW Government's five-year (2009-14) action plan to re-shape the way family and community services are delivered in NSW to improve the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children and young people.
Login ID	The Login ID is the unique identifier for each child/young person used to access Viewpoint.
Multi Ethnic Identity Measure	Multi Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) is an internationally used valid and reliable tool designed as a general measure to assess ethnic identity across diverse groups of young people aged 12-17 years. The MEIM comprises of two key factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration/search: Efforts to learn about one's group and participation in cultural practices • Commitment/affiliation: A positive affirmation of one's own group
Parenting Research Centre (PRC)	The PRC is an intermediary organisation contracted to support the implementation of a QAF trial in three agencies
Permanency Support Program (PSP)	Changes to the child protection system that shifted from a placement-based service system to a child-and family-centred service system that focuses on individual needs and helping families to change
PRM	Parental Responsibility to the Minister
QAF	The Quality Assurance Framework collects key information on how a child is going in OOHC, to ensure we give every child in care the best possible experience. Regular information comes from children, Carers, DCJ, education and health in order to support this
QAF Project Team	The team in DCJ that support the development and implementation of the QAF and are contacted on QAF@facs.nsw.gov.au
Child and Young Person's Questionnaire	A series of questions asked of children and young people 7 to 17 years about their safety, permanency and cultural and spiritual identity
Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)	The QAF is an organised framework focussing on outcomes for children and young people in Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) across three overarching goals – safety, permanency and wellbeing.
QAF Domains	Information on each child and young person in OOHC is organised around the following three overarching domains Safety , Permanency – Belonging and stability, Wellbeing broken into the following sub-domains;
Quality Assurance Framework Indicators	Key sets of data collected under the three domains of a) Safety, b) Permanency and c) Wellbeing.
Safe Home for Life	NSW Government legislation including The Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2014, changes the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, and to a lesser extent the Adoption Act 2000 and the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)	The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire aimed at 2-17 year olds. Please refer to http://www.sdqinfo.com/d0.html , for further information on the questionnaire
The Child Overview	The Child Overview is a document which incorporates information relating to children and young people in Out-Of-Home-Care across the three domains of safety, permanency and wellbeing. It contains data on the QAF indicators and is provided to caseworkers on an ongoing quarterly basis as a PDF file.
Viewpoint	Viewpoint is a child-friendly communication tool to help children and young people share their views, wishes and feelings. The Viewpoint system is audio enabled if low levels of literacy are a concern.
Viewpoint Helpdesk	Viewpoint support on helpdesk@vptorg.com