

Minimum Qualification Strategy for Residential Care Workers in Victoria

May 2017

Minimum Qualification Strategy for Residential Care Workers in Victoria

Prepared by the Community Services Programs and Design Branch Out of Home Care Unit.

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Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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Introduction

The need for a stable and appropriately skilled residential care workforce has been raised in a number of inquiries into residential care, including both the Victorian Auditor General's Office report on *Residential Care Services for Children (2014)* and the Commission for Children and Young People report *As a Good Parent Would (2015)*.

On 13 April 2016, the Victorian Government released *Roadmap for Reform: Strong families, safe children*, outlining the direction of long term reform of Victoria's child and family services system, including child protection, family services, and out of home care. *Roadmap for Reform* commits to establishing mandatory qualifications for residential care workers and supporting upskilling of the existing workforce.

On 8 May 2016, the Minister for Families and Children and the Minister for Training and Skills announced \$8 million to upskill current residential care workers ahead of introduction of a minimum qualification by the end of 2017.

This Minimum Qualification Strategy has been developed to support community service organisations to meet the new minimum qualification requirements and ensure residential care workers have the necessary skills, qualifications and training to care for vulnerable children and young people in residential care.

Minimum qualification for residential care

From 1 January 2018 all residential care workers providing direct care in a residential care home funded or delivered by the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) are required to hold, or be undertaking, either:

- **Certificate IV in *Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)*, including a mandatory trauma unit of competency; or**
- **a recognised relevant qualification, plus completion of a short top up skills course.**

The minimum qualification requirement sets a benchmark to ensure all residential care workers have a common level of residential care specific skills and knowledge.

The minimum qualification applies to all workers (full time, part time or casual) who provide direct care to children and young people in residential care.

The provision of a short top up skills course for workers with a recognised relevant qualification, which covers trauma, working in residential care, and managing behaviour, ensures a baseline of core skills and knowledge for all residential care workers statewide.

Further details of the specific requirements are provided under *Minimum Qualification Requirements (Page 15)*.

The need for minimum qualifications

The aim of the Minimum Qualification Strategy is to ensure the development and maintenance of a consistently competent, professional, and stable residential care workforce. An evidence base, including feedback from children and young people, has informed a residential care capability framework that provides a foundation for the Minimum Qualification Strategy.

In order to build the capacity of the residential care workforce to provide high quality, responsive support to children and young people in residential out of home care, the department and community services organisations must ensure, amongst other issues, that Victoria has a stable and appropriately skilled workforce. To be regarded by other community service sectors as competent and knowledgeable professionals, training and qualifications in the specialty of residential out of home care is required to ensure workers have the skills to support young people in achieving better outcomes.

The residential care workforce is a diversely qualified workforce who hold a range of relevant qualifications. While, over 60% of residential care workers hold a relevant post-secondary qualification, up to 40% of residential care workers hold no relevant qualification creating a significant variability in the baseline level of skills of the workforce.

Supporting minimum qualifications

The Residential Care Workers Vocational Education and Training Initiative has been developed to support upskilling the residential care workforce. This initiative provides statewide training for workers who do not currently meet the minimum qualification requirements from 1 January 2018.

Consultation

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with community service organisations and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to develop and test the key elements of this strategy and to understand the training needs of community service organisations delivering residential care across Victoria.

Monitoring and review

Minimum qualification requirements will take effect from 1 January 2018. Community service organisations will be required to ensure staff working in their homes meet these requirements. Compliance will be monitored through existing performance and contract management processes.

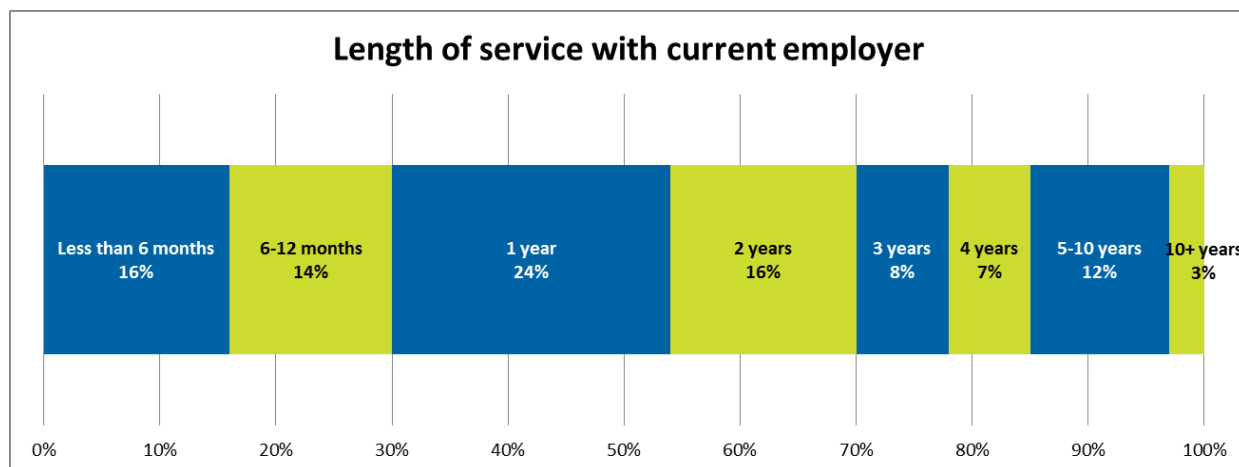
Characteristics of the residential care workforce

A census of the Victorian residential care workforce undertaken by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare in December 2014 provides a summary of the qualifications held by the workforce. Key findings are outlined below:

Length of service

There is a high instance of turnover in the Victorian residential care workforce, with over 50% of workers having less than 2 years tenure with their employing organisation.

Figure 1: Length of service with current employer



Source: Victorian Residential Care Workforce Census 2014-15.

Employment status

The Victorian residential care workforce is comprised of a full time and part time workforce supplemented by a casual pool of workers to provide flexibility to manage rostered staff arrangements based on the individual needs of children and young people in their care.

Table 1: Employment status of workforce

Employment status	Number	Percentage
Full time	352	22%
Part time	478	30%
Casual	767	48%
Total	1597	100%

Source: Victorian Residential Care Workforce Census 2014-15. Note: Workers employed by multiple organisations have been counted as multiple workers.

Qualifications held by the residential care workforce

Qualifications attained

Nearly 40 per cent of the residential care workforce holds the minimum Certificate IV qualification. Overall, approximately a third of workers hold a certificate as their highest relevant qualification, another third hold either a diploma, bachelor, or postgraduate degree, and the remaining third hold no relevant qualification.

Table 2: Workers who hold the minimum qualification

Qualification	Percentage
Certificate IV in Child, Family and Youth Intervention (Residential and out of home care); <i>Including superseded courses</i>	39%

Source: Victorian Residential Care Workforce Census 2014-15. Note: Workers may hold additional relevant qualifications at the same level or higher.

Table 3: Level of relevant qualifications held by residential care workers

Over 60% of residential care workers hold a relevant post-secondary qualification.

Qualification level	Percentage
Certificate <i>(including Certificate levels I – IV)</i>	32%
Diploma, bachelor and/or postgraduate degree	36%
No relevant qualifications	38%

Source: Victorian Residential Care Workforce Census 2014-15. Note: An individual worker may hold more than one level of qualification, or more than one of the same level of qualification.

Location of employment of workers without a relevant qualification

Ensuring workers without a relevant qualification are supported to undertake training in the Certificate IV in *Child, Youth and Family Intervention (residential and out of home care)* is a core focus of the Residential Care Workers VET Initiative.

Table 4: Workers without a qualification by area

Division	Percentage of division
North	42%
South	35%
East	20%
West	47%
Total	38%

Source: Victorian Residential Care Workforce Census 2014-15.

Residential care capability framework

To understand the training needs of the residential care workforce, the department commissioned a number of activities to build an evidence base of the personal attributes, capabilities and specialist knowledge required to deliver quality residential care. This includes feedback from children and young people with residential care experience.

The residential care capability framework has been developed using the *Community Sector Workforce Capability Framework Tool Kit (2013)*. In consultation with the sector and the Centre for Excellence in Children and Family Welfare, the following capabilities were identified as critical for providing residential care:

- **Personal attributes:** Resilient, supportive, culturally aware, collaborative, positive
- **Communication:** Interpersonal skills, verbal communication, written communication
- **Service delivery:** Reflective practice, diversity, client/member outcomes
- **Professionalism:** Problem solving, ethics
- **Leadership and teamwork:** Conflict management, team dynamics
- **Governance and compliance:** Legislation and compliance, OHS.

The capability framework was contextualised for the Victorian residential care environment, incorporating feedback from children and young people.

Personal attributes

Attribute	Description
Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovers from setbacks • Overcomes obstacles and impediments • Learns from reflecting on experience and identifies areas for self-development • Regulates emotions to respond to young people in a consistent, strengths-based manner, even in challenging situations.
Supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages young people to attain goals and achieve outcomes • Listens actively and inspires confidence by taking young people's concerns seriously • Builds trust through regular positive interactions with young people • Demonstrates empathy when confronted with adversity.
Culturally aware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects difference in all its forms • Demonstrates cultural sensitivity and adjusts personal style and communication in response to young people's differences • Values diversity as a strength and positively utilises diversity.
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with young people and other care providers to achieve common goals • Engages young people in shared decision making in an developmentally appropriate manner • Builds trust with young people in care.
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has faith in own abilities and the abilities of young people in care • Is optimistic • Remains calm and focused when faced with difficulty.

Capabilities

Stream	Capability	Description
Communication	Building relationships & interpersonal skills	Develops trust and appropriate relationships through positive, trauma-informed interactions with young people in care. Applies active listening to recognise and respond to the views of young people. Provides continuity by taking young people's concerns seriously and behaving in a consistent, fair, and reliable manner.
	Collaborating with families	Appropriately shares information, articulates clear and respectful messages, and contributes to group discussions between young people, families, and other care providers. Supports young people to maintain appropriate relationships, including with other siblings who may live separately.
	Problem solving and shared decision making	Supports young people to identify and resolve problems of their own, which may involve challenging or difficult conversations. Assists young people to raise complaints or concerns and respond to issues that matter to them. Promotes the voice of young people, sharing power and decision-making to plan and set goals in an age and developmentally appropriate way.
Supporting adolescent development	Monitoring child & adolescent development	Recognises normal and abnormal child and adolescent development (including growth, sexuality and attachment) to inform provision of age appropriate care and skill development. Understands and applies attachment theory to model and promote healthy relationships and respond to young people engaging in high risk sexual behaviours.
	Supporting education	Assists young people to achieve educational outcomes by supporting school activities such as homework, advocating for the young person at school, responding to school refusal, and exploring vocational options.
Skill building and supporting behaviour	Providing trauma-informed care	Recognises indicators of trauma in the behaviours of young people, assesses vulnerability stemming from past family violence, abuse, or neglect, and applies appropriate evidence-based interventions that promote healing and recovery. Supports healthy development through sensitive and responsive caring.
	Implementing behavioural management techniques	Aims to understand and address the function of problematic behaviours through the use of behaviour plans. Focus on understanding and reducing triggers for behaviour and teaches skills to support the physical, emotional, educational, social, and cultural needs of the young person based on their individual strengths.
	Encouraging positive behaviours and skill development	Supports young people to develop skills in emotional regulation, self and social awareness, problem solving, decision making and conflict resolution. Models and encourages positive behaviours and skills required to successfully transition to adulthood.
	Managing group dynamics & conflict resolution	Recognises differences of opinion and works toward the resolution of group conflict. Responds to aggression with de-escalation strategies to maintain a safe environment and promote development of self-regulation for young people.

Stream	Capability	Description
Skill building and supporting behaviour (cont.)	Crisis prevention and management	Establishes a safe environment, recognises early indicators of risk and behaviours that could lead to a crisis, and employs effective strategies compatible with the model of care to de-escalate the situation.
Safety, health and wellbeing	Cultural competence and ensuring cultural safety	Recognises the importance of cultural connection and creating a culturally safe and welcoming environment to enhance resilience for Aboriginal young people and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Demonstrates a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination.
	Promoting youth health and safety	Assists young people to achieve and maintain good physical and emotional health through routine health assessments (including dental checks, GP visits, and other screening as appropriate). Promotes physical and emotional safety, including sexual health, social-emotional wellbeing and cyber safety. Understands the dynamics of sexual abuse and implements strategies to minimise the risk of sexual exploitation. Knowledge of health service systems.
	Supporting mental health	Understands the impact of mental health conditions, how to work with young people with mental health concerns, and implementation of treatment plans. Knowledge of mental health service systems.
	Responding to substance abuse	Recognises signs of drug and alcohol abuse. Appropriately supports and responds to young people wanting to use, bringing drugs and alcohol into the residence, or being intoxicated. Knowledge of alcohol and other drug service systems.
Governance, compliance, and professionalism	Complying with ethics, legislation, policy & procedures	Observes professional boundaries and standards and assists others with ethical dilemmas, including duty of care, confidentiality and privacy. Maintains current knowledge of relevant legislation, policy, and regulatory requirements and ensures compliance in work practices (including <i>Child Safe Standards</i> and the <i>Program Requirements for Residential Care in Victoria</i>). Understands the broader child protection and youth justice service system, and the legal issues and rights of young people in care.
	Written documentation	Maintains accurate written records reflecting accurate information about the young person's health, education, daily experiences and critical incidents.
	Reflective practice	Applies organisational practice models, procedures and relevant legislation when working with young people.
	Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)	Identifies OHS risks and hazards, and ensures safety for self and others in the residential care home.

Knowledge Domains

Applicability	Areas of understanding
Model specific	Workers are required to maintain an understanding of the specific model of care adopted in the residential care home. This model underpins the trauma-informed strategies and interventions applied in the home.
Advanced training	<p>Advanced training may be required to support the individual needs of young people in care. These might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of young person's engagement with support services (e.g. health providers, educational supports) • Supporting a young person in the context of their mental health diagnosis • Understanding, assessing, and responding to young people with sexualised behaviours and at risk of sexual exploitation • Management of a young person's acute or chronic health condition/s • Supporting and empowering a young person with a disability (disability specific, e.g. autism).

Minimum qualification requirements

Meeting minimum qualification requirements for workers

The *Program requirements for Residential Care in Victoria* set out the expectations for community services organisations in the recruitment of residential care workers. The following sets out additional expectations to meet minimum qualification requirements from 1 January 2018.

The minimum qualification requirements for all residential care workers requires all workers providing direct care in a department operated or funded residential care home to:

- (a) Hold a *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)*, including an accredited trauma unit of competency;
or
- (b) Be undertaking a *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)*, and have completed the mandatory units of competency in the top up skills course outlined in this policy;
or
- (c) Hold, or be undertaking, a qualification recognised as relevant to residential care (See Appendix 2), and have completed the mandatory units of competency in the top up skills course outlined in this policy.

Additional information to support compliance with minimum qualification

Completion of mandatory units of competency

Prior to commencing work in residential care, unqualified workers need to have attended the face to face training for the mandatory units of competency as part of the *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)*.

The same requirement applies for workers with a recognised relevant or related qualification. A top up skills course (approximately 4-5 days of training) has been developed to provide training in the mandatory units of competency for these workers.

Ideally, training in mandatory units of competency would form part of an orientation for new workers, either as part of the *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)* or as top up training.

Completion of the mandatory units of competency requires workplace based learning (approximately a minimum of 72 hours). It is expected that workers will complete these units of competency (including the workplace based learning and assessment) within 6 weeks of commencement in residential care. Prior to completion of these units, workers should only undertake tasks commensurate with their skills, prior education or training, and previous work experience. Community service organisations are required to ensure allocated tasks are appropriate for workers who are working towards meeting minimum qualification requirements.

Completion of the *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)*

Workers who are enrolled in a *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)* are expected to complete the qualification within 12 months of course commencement. In extenuating circumstances (for example workers on extended leave), this timeframe can be extended. An individual learning plan must be in place that identifies the expected timeframe for completion based on the individual worker's needs.

Qualifications not on the list of recognised qualifications

The list of approved recognised qualifications (see appendix 2) is based on alignment with the capability framework for residential care. Workers who hold qualifications that are not on this list will be required to undertake the minimum qualification, or a relevant qualification in addition to the top up skills course. Workers can participate in a Skills Recognition process so that their previous training, and/or work experience can be considered for the purpose of gaining credits or exemptions for the qualification.

The minimum and relevant qualifications include all superseded versions as identified through the Department of Education and Training (See www.training.gov.au).

Trauma informed practice

Ensuring workers have sound knowledge and skills in trauma informed practice underpin the delivery of quality and safe residential care. The two trauma units complement each other to provide a strong understanding of trauma and its impact on children and young people.

Both trauma units are incorporated into the *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)* course delivered through TAFE. For all other workers, completion of both trauma units as part of the top up training is strongly encouraged.

At minimum all workers must have completed at least one accredited trauma unit (*CHCMHS007 - Work effectively in trauma informed care*)

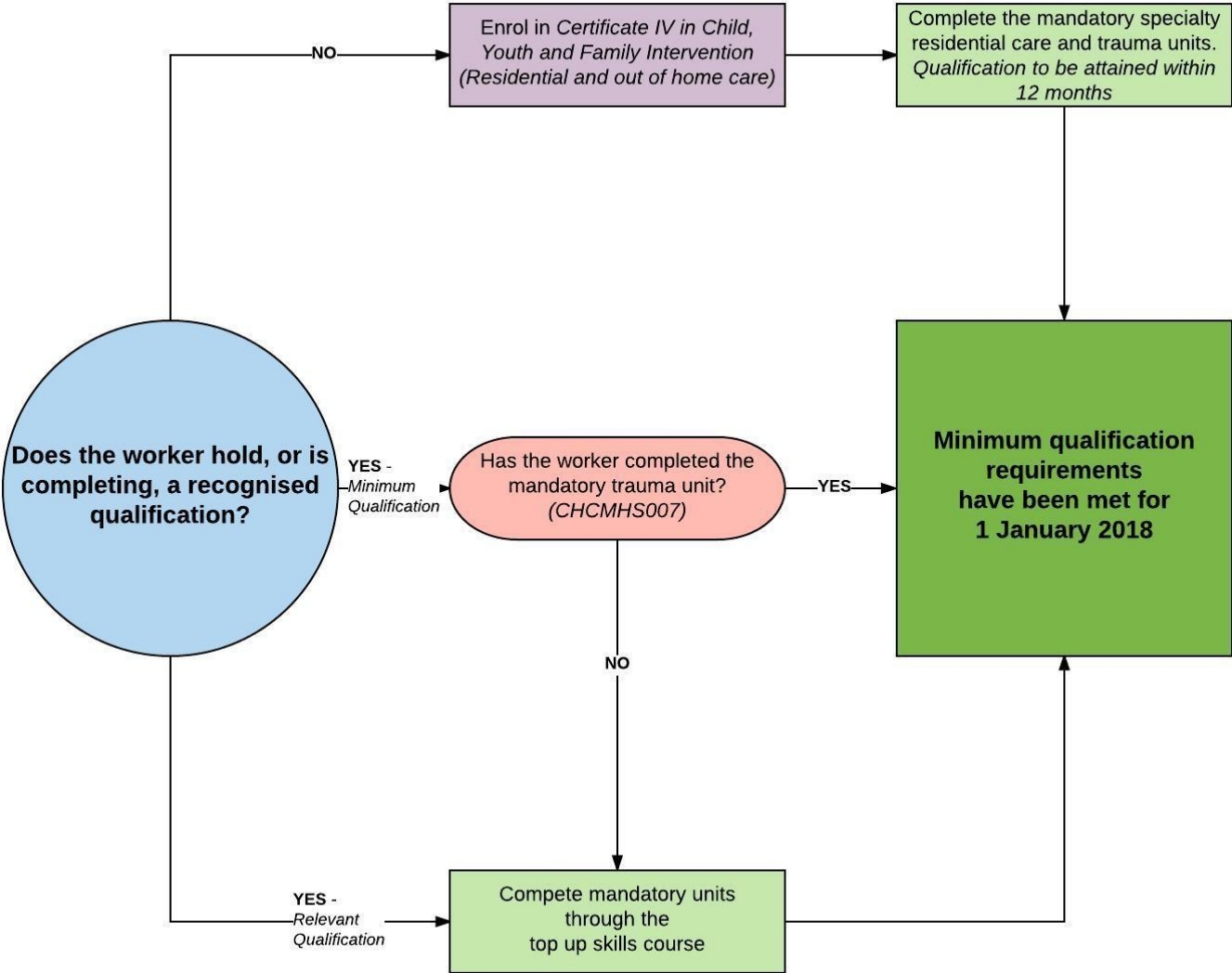
Mandatory units of competency (Top up skills course)

The residential care workforce holds a diverse range of qualifications that are relevant to working with vulnerable children and young people. As part of the Residential Care Workers Vocational Education and Training Initiative, a top up skills course is being delivered for workers who hold a recognised relevant qualification. The provision of a top up skills course, which covers trauma, working in residential care and managing behaviour, ensures a baseline of core skills and knowledge for all residential care workers across Victoria.

These units have been selected following mapping of the Certificate IV to the capability framework in consultation with industry training providers and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.

Trauma informed care units	CHCMHS007 – Work effectively in trauma informed care This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to practice and contribute to the continuous improvement of trauma informed care within a service.	Mandatory
	CHCPRT010 – Work with children and young people with complex trauma and attachment issues and needs This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to recognise indicators of trauma in children and young people of different ages and at different stages, and to identify their needs and those of their parents and carers.	Strongly encouraged
Residential specialty units	CHCPRT009 – Provide primary residential care This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to provide for the care and support of clients in residential care and assist their transition from primary/residential care.	Mandatory
	CHCCCS009 – Facilitate responsible behaviour This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to monitor individuals, respond to behaviours of concern, deal with conflict and support responsibility for behaviour management and change.	Mandatory

Flowchart of training requirements to meet minimum qualification requirements



Supporting transition to minimum qualification requirements

The following initiatives have been implemented to support workers and community service organisations to achieve minimum qualification requirements from 1 January 2018.

Skills First Initiative

Skills First, launched in January 2017, provides support for all Australians to receive subsidies to undertake training in Victoria. More information about this initiative can be found on:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/skillsfirst/Pages/default.aspx>

Through the Skills First Initiative, course costs for the completion of *the Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)* course and the top up skills course undertaken through the Residential Care VET Workers Initiative will be at no cost to the individual worker. This presents an opportunity for workers to gain a formal qualification that will support them in undertaking their role in residential care and provide a foundation for high skills training in the future.

A consortium of five Victorian TAFEs have been established to deliver training statewide. Training has been contextualised for the residential care workforce in Victoria.

Learning support packages

On 15 November 2016 the Minister for Children and Young People announced a further \$600,000 funding for learning support packages to support eligible workers and community service organisations to complete a Certificate IV in *Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)*.

Each learning support package includes \$1000 to organisations for each eligible worker, and \$500 paid directly to the individual worker. Packages address barriers to engaging in training. Organisational costs such as backfill, travel, and on the job supervision and contribution to learning support needs of workers who have not previously engaged in study can be supported with this funding.

It is expected up to 400 workers will benefit from a learning support package. Packages are administered through the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and more information can be found on:

<http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/news/2017/01/residential-care-workers-vocational-education-training-initiative>

Information for community service organisations

The introduction of a minimum qualification for residential care workforce in January 2018 will ensure any worker with direct care in residential care will have the appropriate skills to support children and young people in residential out of home care.

Community service organisations will need to facilitate training of staff to meet the minimum qualification requirements. Community service organisations are encouraged to liaise with the Centre for Excellence in Children and Family Welfare for assistance with supporting their current workers to meet the minimum qualification requirements.

More information about the initiative can be found on <http://www.cfecfw.asn.au/news/2017/01/residential-care-upskilling-initiative>

Transition plans

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare is working with community service organisations to develop transition plans that outline the specific training needs of each organisation to ensure their workforce meets the new minimum qualification requirements from 1 January 2018. These organisational-level plans provide the foundation for a statewide training calendar. The department will work with community service organisations to develop solutions that address additional barriers identified through transition planning.

Community service organisations are encouraged to complete transition plans as soon as possible to identify gaps in training availability for their workers. Training can be negotiated locally through the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare dependent on worker numbers.

Regional and remote areas and smaller organisations

It is recognised that access to training can be a major barrier to engagement in training. This barrier is particularly relevant for workers in regional and remote areas, or smaller organisations with limited casual staff, who may have previously been required to travel long distances to access training.

To address this issue, a consortium of five Victorian TAFEs has been established to deliver training statewide. Training has been contextualised to the residential care workforce in Victoria.

Community service organisations with specific needs due to access to training are encouraged to contact the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to discuss additional resources available to support workers to meet minimum qualification requirements.

Information for residential care workers

Workers with circumstances that present additional barriers to training may require individualised arrangements through a learning plan to meet the minimum qualification requirements.

Part time or casual workers rostered less than 12 hours per week

It is recognised that completion of the course requirements requires workplace based learning and assessment based on a minimum number of working hours per week.

The Certificate IV course has been developed with an emphasis on work place learning and can be achieved in 9 months if a worker works a minimum of 12 hours per week (or on average 24 hours a fortnight) in a residential care home.

Following completion of mandatory units of competency, workers rostered less than 12 hours per week may need to negotiate a longer period of time in which to complete the Certificate IV. The time frame for completion for the Certificate IV should be outlined in an individual learning plan based on the individual learner's needs.

All workers will have a six week period to enable completion of mandatory training units

Workers are encouraged to speak with their relevant community service organisation to develop an individualised learning plan when needed.

Workers on extended leave

Residential care workers may be on extended leave, such as maternity leave, long service leave, or workers compensation, during the transition to minimum relevant qualifications.

Where possible, workers on extended leave should be provided an opportunity to undertake mandatory training in top up skills course to meet minimum qualification requirements from 1 January 2018. From 1 January 2018 workers will be required to meet minimum qualification requirements following return to work. For workers who intend to complete the *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)* course through the Residential Care VET Workers Initiative, an individualised learning plan should be developed with the community service organisation.

Workers without citizenship or permanent visas

To be eligible for Skills First Initiative an individual is required to be:

- an Australian citizen,
- an Australian Permanent Resident (holder of a permanent visa), or
- a New Zealand citizen.

As part of the Government's commitment to upskill the current residential care workforce, workers who do not meet the Skills First eligibility criteria will have course costs covered through the Residential Care Workers VET Initiative. Where applicable, workers are required to advise the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to ensure course costs are fully covered prior to enrolment in TAFE.

Workers in regional and remote areas

It is recognised that access can be a major barrier for engagement in training for both workers and community service organisations. This barrier is particularly relevant for workers in regional and remote areas or for workers within a smaller community service organisation with limited casual staff to ensure continuity of care.

Workers who have concerns regarding access to training are encouraged to speak with their manager to identify additional supports that may be required to ensure they are able to meet minimum qualification requirements.

Prior training (including *With Care*)

Residential care workers currently have completed a broad range courses. These courses may have similar learning outcomes with the training delivered through the Residential Care Workers VET Initiative.

Upon enrolment in TAFE, workers can request to participate in a Skills Recognition process so that their previous training, and/or work experience can be considered for the purpose of gaining credits or exemptions for the qualification. The expectation is for workers to demonstrate that they meet the learning outcomes and competencies for mandatory training. For many workers, there may be benefit in completing all units of competency to ensure they have up to date and relevant accredited training.

To support the Skills Recognition process, the department will be undertaking a mapping exercise to look at the alignment of current training courses offered through Residential Care Learning and Development Strategy (including *With Care* training) and the Certificate IV units of competency. Information on this process will be made available through the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.

For the purposes of Therapeutic Residential Care training, From 1 July 2016, workers who have completed the following two (trauma) units CHCMHS007 and CHCPRT010 will be considered to have met the two day *With Care* foundation training requirements as outlined in the *Program requirements for the delivery of therapeutic residential care in Victoria*.

Workers with additional learning support needs

On enrolment through TAFE, workers will complete a Learning, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) assessment to identify if additional learning supports are required.

Workers will be contacted by TAFE regarding options available to support them where additional learning needs are identified. This may include the development of an individualised learning plan, including individual and in classroom support. For some workers it may be appropriate for them to undertake a bridging course to prepare them to be successful in their Certificate IV training.

Workers who have concerns regarding their learning are encouraged to speak with their manager to identify additional supports that may be required to support them to undertake the coursework and/or seek advice from a participating TAFE delivering the initiative. A list of TAFEs are available through the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.

Appendix 1

Evidence base

This Minimum Qualification Strategy forms part of the department's response to recent inquiries and within the context of broader community services reform.

This Minimum Qualification Strategy is informed from a number of independent commissioned reports to provide an evidence base, which underpins policy decisions and maintain the focus on improving outcomes and experiences of children and young people in residential care. The residential care sector and key stakeholders were consulted extensively throughout the development of this Minimum Qualification Strategy.

A summary of the key inputs are below:

Victorian Auditor-General's Office report

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) report on *Residential Care Services for Children (March 2014)* raised issues and recommendations in relation to the skills of the workforce to improve residential care workforce training. The report found staffing models were not providing sufficient quality and stability of care for children and young people in residential care.

Recommendation four of this report states 'that [the Department of Health and Human Services] ensures that residential care staff have the necessary skills, qualifications, training and support to work effectively with children and their families'.

A copy of the report can be found at:

http://www.audit.vic.gov.au/reports_and_publications/latest_reports/2013-14/20140326-residential-care.aspx

Commission for Children and Young People report

The Commission for Children and Young People report *...As a Good Parent Would... (August 2015)* raised issues and recommendations related to the skills of the workforce arising from the findings of an inquiry into the adequacy of the provision of residential care services to Victorian children and young people who have been subject to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation whilst residing in residential care.

The report included three findings and nine recommendations to improve the lives of children in residential care. The recommendations include immediate and medium term changes to the residential care system, as well as a number of specific actions to support changes to the residential care model, including "improve direct-care staff capability and support," and "improved consistency of staff".

The report also identified the inter-dependent nature of these recommendations.

To learn more about *...As a Good Parent Would...*, see

<http://ccyp.vic.gov.au/systemic-inquiries/goodparent/index.htm>

Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children

The Victorian Government's *Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children* (April 2016) focuses on prevention, early intervention, and creating services that are coordinated and work together to meet the needs of vulnerable families and children. Alongside a commitment to transform the residential care model, the need to build the capacity and capability of the child and family workforce is identified as a critical enabler to effect change.

As part of the first stage of transforming residential care, the Roadmap for Reform announced 'the Department of Health and Human Services will partner with the Department of Education and Training and organisations delivering residential care services to establish mandatory qualifications for residential care workers, and support upskilling of the existing workforce'. This announcement is supported by a commitment to '...also fund the provision of vocational qualifications for those residential care staff without relevant qualifications, to improve their ability to work effectively with children and their families.'

To learn more about *Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children*, visit:
<http://strongfamiliesafechildren.vic.gov.au/>

Competency and capability literature review

In response to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report into residential care, the University of Melbourne was engaged to undertake a literature review of *Competencies and Capabilities Required of the Residential Out-of-Home Care Workforce for Children and Young People* (October 2016). This review provided a summary of national and international evidence on the relationship between service quality and competencies in residential out-of-home care services, and formed a key evidence piece in developing the Residential Care Capability Framework.

Voices of Young People report

In response to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report into residential care, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare was engaged to capture the perspectives of young people on what skills, qualities and attributes a good residential care worker requires. The *Voices of Young People* (September 2016) report included a literature review and tested these findings with a group of young people with direct experience of residential care, and formed a key evidence piece in developing the Residential Care Capability Framework.

Appendix 2

Recognised qualifications

While there is a need to establish a consistent skillset for residential care, workers from diverse backgrounds bring knowledge and skills from other related disciplines that contribute to better outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

Based on alignment with the competencies outlined in the Residential Care Capability Framework, the Minimum Qualification Strategy recognises the following qualifications as relevant to meeting the complex needs of young people in residential care.

Category	Qualification	Training required
Minimum qualification	Certificate IV in <i>Child, Youth and Family Intervention (Residential and out of home care)</i> , including mandatory trauma unit of competency.	Meets minimum qualification requirements; no further training needed.
Relevant qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Degree qualification (Australian Qualification Framework Level 7) in the following fields of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Community Services – Youth Work – Social Work – Alcohol and Other Drugs – Community Development – Disability – Youth Justice – Mental Health – Behavioural Sciences (inc. Psychology and Psychiatry) – Education – Human Services – Nursing & Midwifery – Allied Health • Diploma in <i>Community Services</i> • Diploma in <i>Youth Work</i> • Diploma in <i>Mental Health</i> • Diploma in <i>Alcohol and Other Drugs</i> • Diploma in <i>Secure Services</i> • Diploma in <i>Child, Youth and Family Intervention</i> • Certificate IV in <i>Child, Youth and Family Intervention</i> • Certificate IV in <i>Disability</i> • Certificate IV in <i>Mental Health</i> • Certificate IV in <i>Youth Work</i> • Certificate IV in <i>Alcohol and Other Drugs</i> • Certificate IV in <i>Youth Justice</i> • Certificate IV in <i>Community Services</i> 	Undertake top up skills course to meet minimum qualification requirements

Category	Qualification	Training required
Related qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate IV in <i>Community Development</i> • Diploma in <i>Community Development</i> • Diploma in <i>Youth Justice</i> 	<p>Transition period <i>to 31 Dec 2017</i> Undertake top up skills course to meet minimum qualification</p> <p>Post-implementation <i>from 1 Jan 2018</i> Obtain either the minimum qualification, or a relevant qualification plus top up skills course</p>

While many qualifications support a number of skills relevant to the residential care workforce, there is significant variability in the units delivered within a single qualification (e.g. trauma may be an elective). To ensure a baseline of skills and knowledge, all workers who hold a relevant qualification are required to complete the top up training course. Workers with a relevant qualification may apply to participate in a Skills Recognition process so that their previous training, and/or work experience can be considered for the purpose of gaining credits or exemptions for the qualification.