**Implementation of the Framework to reduce criminalisation of young people in residential care**

Residential care reporting template

**Purpose**

To inform residential care services providers of a new reporting template to be used in residential care homes across Victoria to support implementation of the *Framework to reduce criminalisation of young in residential care* (the Framework). The first two weeks of implementation will be to support consistency and usability and enable feedback on the template, ahead of full implementation, planned from 2 October 2023.

**What is the Framework?**

The Framework, launched in 2020, is a multi-agency approach across government, the sector and key stakeholders to reduce the unnecessary and inappropriate contact of young people in residential care with the criminal justice system.

As a result of the trauma they have experienced, young people in residential care are at increased risk of being criminalised and coming into contact with police and the criminal justice system than their same age peers. For Aboriginal young people there is the additional risk and impact of discrimination, intergenerational trauma and disconnection from culture that adds to criminalisation and over-representation within the justice system.

In March 2023, an 18-month action plan was endorsed to support implementation of the objectives of the Framework. The Framework commits to monitoring of the impacts of implementation and a planned review at completion of the action plan in 2024.

Further information on the Framework is available at: <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/download/framework-to-reduce-criminalisation-of-young-people-in-residential-care/>

**What does the template do?**

The template was designed to capture a number of data indicators that are relevant to the oversight and monitoring of police call outs into residential care homes and contact with police in the community. These include:

* Number of police call outs into residential care homes/police contact
* The reason for the call out/ police contact
* Compliance with the decision-making guide for residential care workers
* Behaviour support planning for young people with a history of contact with police.
* Advising young people of their right to make a complaint in relation to any concerns following police contact.

Information from the template will also be used to further analyse the outcomes of young people’s contact, through Victoria Police, and to inform localised action planning through new local multi-agency partnerships being established across DFFH areas/divisions to support this work.

The template **does not record** all circumstances of contact with police, such as contact in relation to the wellbeing of a young person, where the young person is a victim or witness to an incident (unless the young person’s behaviour is in question), or to report a young person as absent from home.  In these circumstances, contact with police is in line with existing organisational policy.

The template **records** circumstances where:

* **police are called by residential care staff** in response to a behaviour of concern of a young person, such as a crisis incident in the home, or to assist in the management of behaviour/s of the young person.
* **police call or attend the home** in relation to a young person’s actions or behaviours, such as where they are questioned in relation to a suspected crime or incident in the community.
* **a young person advises staff of contact with police** while in the community, in relation to their behaviour or involvement in an incident.

The template has been developed in consultation with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (CFECFW) and trialled in 9 residential care homes across the state.

**Why do we need a new reporting template?**

Currently, there is no single system that captures instances of police engagement with young people in a systematic or interrogable way.  Where possible the template aims to enable relevant information to be extracted from other reporting systems, such as the DFFH Client Incident Management System, where an incident has been recorded.

The template will be in place for the period of implementation of the action plan which enables opportunity to refine relevant data needed during the implementation period and to inform centralised reporting processes in the longer term.

The template recognises the pivotal role of residential care staff in providing an evidence base to drive cultural and practice change to better understand and reduce the criminalisation of young people in residential care.

**Details of implementation**

To support implementation, all residential care homes across Victoria are requested to begin using the template for a **two-week period.** This will commence week beginning 18 September 2023 to support consistent use of the template statewide and refinement before a full roll out from 16 October 2023. For this period, we request data entry to have oversight through a house supervisor or equivalent position within your organisation.

Data will need to be collated at an area level for each organisation and submitted [theframework@dffh.vic.gov.au.](mailto:theframework@dffh.vic.gov.au)

Supporting resources with more detailed information are available including A guide to reporting flowchart for residential care workers and Frequently asked questions (FAQ) <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Frequently-asked-questions_Provider-Reporting-Template.docx>. The reporting template also includes a feedback tab for feedback and/or provide suggested improvements.

Regular, drop-in sessions will be available through the two-week implementation period to provide support as needed. Alternatively, questions in relation to completion of the template can be directed to [theframework@dffh.vic.gov.au](mailto:theframework@dffh.vic.gov.au)

Feedback on the template should be provided to the DFFH project team by 6 October 2023 Key dates and activities to support you through implementation are outlined below.

**Key dates and activities**

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| **Milestone/Activity** | **Date** |
| Two-week implementation period | Week beginning 18 September to 29 September 2023 |
| Virtual drop-in support sessions for all residential care staff (30 minutes) at 1pm | Wednesday 13th September |
| Friday 15th, Monday 18th, Wednesday 20th, Friday 22nd, Monday 25th, Wednesday 27th |
| Completed templates and collated feedback returned to the department | By 6 October 2023  For further details on submitting completing completed data, see FAQ. |
| Meeting with providers to provide feedback/ reflection | 12 October 2023 |
| Release of updated template for statewide implementation | 16 October 2023 |

**More information/additional resources**

Information about the Framework and supporting resources for residential care workers is available on the CFECFW resource hub at <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/download/framework-to-reduce-criminalisation-of-young-people-in-residential-care/>. This includes training for residential care workers on the decision-making guide for contacting police, A guide to reporting flowchart for residential care workers <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/A-guide-to-reporting-flowchart-for-residential-care-workers_-final.docx>and FAQ <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Frequently-asked-questions_Provider-Reporting-Template.docx>.

These resources will be regularly updated over the coming month to include the Monitoring and Implementation Plan and Minimum Expectations Guide to support localised governance arrangements.