



GREATER
BRISBANE

Family Law Pathways Network

Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

September 2018

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Family Law Pathways Network (FLPN) supports the broader Family Law community to:

- work collaboratively,
- maintain strong working relationships, and
- develop appropriate referral mechanisms,

to enable families to access the services they need as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

The Funding Agreement

The funding agreement for the Greater Brisbane FLPN states that the objective of the networks is to foster strong links with locally based providers who operate as part of, or alongside, the family law system, to enhance collaborating and improve overall assistance to separated and separating families.

The Greater Brisbane FLPN covers the broader Brisbane metropolitan area, including Logan and Ipswich. There are separate FLPNs for the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba.

This is to be done by:

- Promoting Awareness of Services, and
- Conducting cross-sectoral training.

Principles

Having regard to the purpose and objectives, the Greater Brisbane FLPN will work within the following principles:

- Access and Inclusion;
- Diversity;
- Respect;
- Justice;
- Collaboration;
- Growth and improvement; and
- Wellbeing of families.

Auspice Agency

The Funding Agreement for Family Law Pathways Network Greater Brisbane is between the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and Relationship Australia Queensland (RAQ). The Project Officer is appointed by Relationships Australia Queensland.

Composition of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is to have a minimum of six members, five of which must be independent of the auspice agency.

The following stakeholders are deemed to be key family law service providers or key entry points for separating and separated family members.

Subject to availability, the Greater Brisbane FLPN will be managed by a Steering Committee comprised of one representative from some or all of the following:

- Legal Aid;
- Solicitors in Private Practice;
- Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners;
- Parenting Programs;
- Counsellors;
- Mental Health Services;
- Primary Health Services;
- Drug and Alcohol Services;
- Family Relationship Centres;
- Mediators;
- Centrelink;
- Child Support;
- Department of Child Safety;
- Federal and State Government;
- Disability Services;
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Services;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services;
- Community Legal Centres;
- Domestic and Family Violence Support Services; and
- Other services providing support to separating families and children.

Where there is no member for one or more of the above services, all members of the Steering Committee, and in particular the Project Officer, will work towards consulting with those services separately to establish and maintain links. The Project Officer will provide relevant reports to the Steering Committee to ensure that the FLPN is inclusive of and accessible to all family services within the Greater Brisbane FLPN so that the needs and requirements of the broader community are met.

A list of the current members is listed in Annexure A and will be updated whenever there is a change to the Steering Committee membership.

Attendance and proxies

When unable to attend, the individual member may appoint a proxy from their organisation to attend the Steering Committee meeting on their behalf.

Role of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will:

- Steer and drive the activities of the network in order to meet the objectives under the funding agreement;
- Work with the auspice agency to develop and agree on the Strategic Work Plan at the beginning of each financial year to progress the objectives of the FLPN;
- Work with the Project Officer and auspice agency to manage the work plan throughout the year;
- Approve the final report required to be provided to the Attorney General's Department at the end of the activity period under the funding agreement;
- Meet regularly to progress the Strategic Plan.

Agenda

Meetings will be informed by an agenda and reports that are distributed to Steering Committee members at least 5 days prior to a meeting.

Members are to provide proposed agenda items no later than 7 days prior to a regular meeting.

Quorum

A quorum will be achieved by attendance of half the Steering Committee members plus one. Attendance by proxy, telephone or video link shall be acceptable for the purpose of having a quorum.

Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chair will ensure that the Steering Committee Meetings are conducted in accordance with meeting principles including:

- Remaining impartial and facilitating consensus where possible;
- Welcoming, introducing and orientating new members;
- Ensuring there is a quorum;
- Keeping to timelines;
- Prioritising and adhering to the agenda;
- Encouraging and facilitating participation in discussion;
- Following correct procedure for decision making;
- Summarising discussion and making sure decisions are recorded properly;
- Demonstrating good leadership, fairness and respect; and
- Chairing all regular meetings.

A Deputy Chair will be appointed to support the Chair in carrying out the above and to carry out the role of the Chair when the Chair is absent.

Secretary

The Project Officer for the Family Law Pathways Network shall have the role of Secretary for the Steering Committee and shall take minutes of the meeting.

When taking the minutes, the Secretary will record the recommendations of each agenda item and read this back to the members as each item is completed.

Minutes will be distributed to the Steering Committee within 7 days of the meeting. Committee Members may, within 7 days of receiving the minutes, propose amendments to the Minutes.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

Members of the Steering Committee will conduct themselves in accordance with the Principles of the Greater Brisbane FLPN and:

- Adhere to proper meeting procedure;
- Be informed on key issues;
- Contribute to and support the work of the Steering Committee;
- Be prepared for meetings;
- Participate in discussion; and
- Be open to and respectful of other opinions.

Decision-making

Consensus will be sought where possible. Where a decision cannot be reached by consensus, as determined by the Chair, a majority vote shall be sought.

Resignation

Any member who resigns from the Steering Committee will notify the Chair in writing. Where possible, the member will appoint another member from their organisation and will provide the Chair with the name and contact details of the proposed new member.

Working Groups and Sub-Committees

The Committee may set up working groups or sub-committees from time to time. These may be comprised of Steering Committee Members and other members of the FLPN network. These working groups may be set up to assist the steering committee with carrying out its business, including:

- Coordination a specific event;
- Communication and marketing; and
- Information technology – websites, apps, social media.

Work plan, budget and reporting

The Steering Committee is to agree on an annual work plan and associated budget for the FLPN.

The Steering Committee will support the Project Officer and auspice agency to meet the reporting requirements of the Attorney-General's Department under the funding agreement.

Membership of the FLPN

Membership of the FLPN is open to all service providers and organisations working with families engaged with the family law system. Application for membership can be made by providing contact details to the FLPN Project Officer or by completing an Application Form.

Activities of the FLPN

The Steering Committee is to identify, develop and drive activities of the FLPN in order to meet the objective of fostering links amongst family law service providers.

Activities may include some of the following:

Promoting awareness of services

- Newsletters which are circulated to the whole network;
- Develop a directory of local services;
- Service referral cards or other referral tools;
- Meetings between network members to discuss appropriate referral mechanisms;
- Provide opportunities for cross-sectoral networking – e.g. informal seminars;
- Encourage information sharing;
- Access the latest information about services offered by other network practitioners;
- Develop inter-agency professional processes and practices;
- Newsletters which are circulated to the whole network;
- A court based kiosk to assist litigants accessing support services and information;

- A mobile app with a searchable directory of programs and services that are available to families experiencing separation;
- Provide information as to Waitlists for services;
- Gain an understanding of programs, services, aims and approaches;
- Meet other service providers and develop professional contacts; and/or
- Discussion groups or visits to member organisations by other members.

Providing Cross-sectoral training

- Events that are relevant to the development of family law service system professionals and practitioners working in legal and human service fields;
- Conduct multi-disciplinary training and professional development that is relevant and responsive to the identified learning needs and priorities of local practitioners and professionals;
- Events that are inclusive or engage the interests of Indigenous and CALD services, family violence and child protection agencies, mental health and drug and alcohol services;
- Offer specific opportunities for cross-sectoral networking;
- Encourage information sharing;
- Hear expert opinions on the latest research and developments in family law;
- Learn about the latest collaborative projects and news in family law;
- Share information on how family lawyers and post separation service practitioners work, including the challenges faced in practices;
- Take part in professional development and training activities;
- An Annual Main Event (e.g. Pathways Information Expo – PIE);
- Travelling roadshows and conferences; and/or
- Cross-Sector Training and Workshops throughout the Greater Brisbane region.

Annexure A - Steering Committee Members

Member Organisation	Representative(s)
Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women	Tina Foti (Senior Team Leader, Court Services, Legal Services and Corporate Services)
Family Law Practitioners Association	Kate Buckley (Barrister)
Legal Aid Queensland	Toni Bell (Acting Director Family Law), Julie Broadhurst (Senior Mental Health Clinician)
Women's Legal Service	Rachel Neil (Principal Solicitor)
Relationships Australia Queensland	Brett Smith (Team Leader), Susan Iddon (Regional Manager), Joanna Lezanski (Manager Legal Requests & Complaints)
Family Law Pathways Network/RAQ	Jane Aitken (Project Officer)
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Service	Jennifer Ekanayake (Head of Family Law Division)
Family Court of Australia	Erylin Rees (Regional Coordinator), Jeffrey Perry (Acting Senior Family Consultant), Bianca Steele (Child Dispute Services)
Centacare	Matthew Horsfall (Area Manager – Brisbane Region – Centacare Family & Relationship Services)
UnitingCare Qld	Joanne Trentin (Practice & Quality Manager, Practice Improvement and Development (Child & Family Group))
Brisbane Domestic Violence Service	Belinda Cox (Communities & Partnerships Program Manager)
Harrington Family Lawyers	Stephen Page (Partner)
Caxton Legal Service	Colette Botts (Family Law Solicitor)