

Carer Reference Groups

About Carer Reference Groups

Carer Reference Groups (CRG) are a way for carers to be represented and participate in the Permanency Support Program (PSP) care system in NSW and better reflect the changes that have taken place in service delivery, with more than 50 agencies now delivering out-of-home care across the state.

Expressions of interest in joining the CRG are welcome!

We need diverse carers to apply. Please ensure you read and complete the following:

- Expression of Interest application form
- Terms of Reference

Tip: Don't forget you need your caseworker or agency as a reference.

What are Carer Reference Groups?

The CRG is a model that supports carer participation and engagement in the permanency support program (PSP) system in NSW.

CRGs help ensure carers of children and young people in the PSP have a voice in the current system where non-government organisations (NGOs) are now largely responsible for working with carers across NSW.

CRGs provide a way for carers and carer representatives to work with NGOs and the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ formerly known as FACS).

CRGs are like an 'advisory group' where different carers, carer representatives, agency, DCJ staff and My Forever Family NSW staff can come together.

Are you right for the role? Do you...

- Have an interest in improving out-of-home care and/or the 'carer experience'?
- Have an interest in shining a light on 'what works' in supporting carers and guardians?
- Have a constructive approach to working with others to solve issues?
- Value the importance of carers contributing to a stronger system?
- Are you active in the carer community and like to help other carers?
- Have a sound understanding of some of the challenges carers face?
- Have an interest in carer training, support and participation?
- Like to promote becoming a carer in the broader community?

My Forever Family NSW

enquiries@myforeverfamily.org.au | 1300 782 975 | PO Box 595 Dulwich Hill, NSW 2203 | myforeverfamily.org.au

My Forever Family NSW is a program operated by ADOPT CHANGE LIMITED and funded by NSW Government Family and Community Services
Adopt Change ABN: 28133921614

Who can apply?

- Authorised foster, relative or kinship carer, guardians and adoptive parents from out-of-home care (OOHC) with either a NSW agency or DCJ
- Representative from carer organisations, or carer groups
- Representatives (staff) from PSP care agencies (such as PSP case workers or carer support)
- Foster carers who may also be seeking to adopt the child in their care.

To apply please complete the application form.

What will Carer Reference Groups do?

The CRG provides a collaborative and interagency setting for carers, agencies and DCJ to work together.

The CRGs role includes:

- Providing feedback, advice and recommendations to DCJ and other PSP forums where appropriate
- Participating in consultations and providing feedback on topics or issues to help inform decisions that impact on carers, children and young people in care
- Identifying and resolving issues and promoting best practice in areas like carer support and training
- Providing oversight of Carer Support Groups, a mentor program, and the volunteer network.

How do Carer Reference Groups work?

CRGs are made up of carers, carer representatives and staff from DCJ, NGOs and My Forever Family NSW.

There are ten CRGs across NSW. Each CRG meets at least four times a year and membership is voluntary (unpaid).

My Forever Family NSW supports local groups and advocates on behalf of the CRGs to PSP providers, DCJ, and the OCG.

Each meeting is chaired by an NGO, agency or DCJ representative. Responsibilities are shared and rotated. More detail can be found in the Terms of Reference.

If you have any questions about this application, please email the My Forever Family NSW enquiries team at enquiries@myforeverfamily.org.au

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How do I apply?

Please complete the Expression of Interest (EOI) application form.

Selection will be based on demonstrated interest in carer support, training and retention, advocacy and sharing 'best practice' in carer support. The application is an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, skills, passion, and ability to fulfil the role.

Instructions

1. Complete the application form.
2. Ensure you have provided all referee details (including manager or caseworker approval)
3. Send completed application:

BY EMAIL: enquiries@myforeverfamily.org.au

BY MAIL: My Forever Family NSW
PO Box 595
Dulwich Hill NSW 2203

How will I know if my application for membership was accepted?

We will notify all applicants by email, in writing or by contacting you directly to let you know if your application was successful. Please note CRG membership is limited - if you are unsuccessful you may wish to nominate again in the future.

Information provided in the application will be used by My Forever Family NSW for the purpose of appointing CRG members only.

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Application Form

Carer Reference Group

SECTION 1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Title Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms:

Name:

Organisation (you work for or are a carer with):

Address:

Postal Address (if different):

Telephone: Email:

Mobile:

NSW Region:

Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Neither

Are you from a culturally or linguistically diverse background?

Yes No Details:

Please tick your position:

Authorised carer with an NGO PSP agency

Authorised carer with DCJ

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- Guardian
- Representative from a carer group or organisation
- Employee of a PSP/ NGO
- Adoptive parent with children and young people formerly from OOHC

SECTION 2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SKILLS

Note: You may attach one additional page to further address the following questions

Briefly describe what you think are some important issues for carers in NSW.

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Please outline the reasons why you would like to join a CRG.

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For Carers Only: Please describe the type of care you provide (e.g. short-term, emergency, part-time, long-term) and the skills, knowledge and experience you can bring to the CRG

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For NGO staff only: Please describe your role/position and outline the skills, knowledge and experience you could bring to the CRG.

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SECTION 3. REFEREES

Please provide the name and contact details of two referees. At least one referee must be a caseworker/casework manager from your agency or manager (if you are an employee).

Referee 1:

Name:

Agency:

Relationship to applicant:

Telephone: Email:

Referee 2:

Name:

Agency:

Relationship to applicant:

Telephone: Email:

SECTION 4. STATEMENT/AGREEMENT

In expressing my interest in becoming a member of the Carer Reference Group

- I understand that being part of this group will require members to attend and contribute positively to quarterly meetings, forums and other activities as required.
- I understand that training sessions may be provided to assist the development and work of the group and note that I am willing to participate in these or similar activities.

Signed: Date:

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NSW Carer Reference Groups

Where are CRGs located?

There are ten CRGs across NSW:

- Metro Central (Sydney North, East, South, West, and Nepean Blue Mountains)
- Hunter & Central Coast
- Northern (Ballina)
- Southern
- Illawarra Shoalhaven
- Western NSW (Dubbo, Bathurst, Orange areas)
- Murrumbidgee (Albury, Wagga areas)
- Far West NSW (Broken Hill)
- New England (Armidale)

Becoming a member

Expressions of interest (EOI) in joining a CRG are welcome. Each CRG comprises of 12-20 members and meets each quarter (sometimes 6 times per year). The CRG is chaired by an agency representative. Members generally serve terms of 18 months (guide only).

Working together

CRGs offer the opportunity for better collaboration - with carers, carer representatives and staff from accredited NGO agencies. With DCJ and My Forever Family NSW, CRGs help inform, improve, and influence the carer experience, looking at local and broader issues and topics. CRGs are a collaborative setting for strengthening this experience.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT WAS UPDATED 1 JULY 2021

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