



Position Description

Position title	Advocacy and Support Advisor
Location	Collingwood and flexible work arrangements
Salary	SCHADS Award Level 5 Pay Point 1 – <i>Advisor</i> Pay Point 2 – <i>Senior Advisor</i> *Salary packaging is available
Reports to	Service Delivery & Quality Lead
Created Date / Initials	25 th May 2020 / LM

Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCA Families)

Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCA Families), the trading name of Post Placement Support Service (Vic) Inc., is a not-for-profit carer representative body of the permanent care (including kinship care) and adoption community in Victoria. We provide helpline, flexi funding, peer support, education and advocacy services. We take a child-centred and family-focussed approach to supporting strong and sustainable permanent care and adoptive families.

PCA Families is governed by an elected Board, comprising members with relevant personal and professional expertise.

Our Purpose

Every child deserves a family that loves and supports them. Trauma, grief, loss and attachment are issues all permanent care and adoptive families face. Our families are committed to helping their children thrive and so are we.

As the 'go to' organisation for the community, PCA Families delivers peer support, therapeutic programs and advocacy, all informed by strong lived experience and research.

Position Summary

The purpose of the position is to provide information, support, advocacy and referral services to Victorian permanent carers, adoptive parents, kinship carers and foster carers transitioning to permanent care. This is a state-wide service and primarily a phone-based role. The Advocacy

and Support Advisor role works in a strengths-based, culturally competent and trauma-informed manner whilst maintaining a child-centred, family-focused approach and ensuring that the wellbeing, safety and best interests of children and young people remains paramount. The role requires the ability to adopt a holistic approach when working with families to ensure the needs of children and young people are met. Services are provided on a short-term basis and families that are identified as requiring longer term support are assisted to access services that can meet those needs.

The role is also responsible for supporting families to access flexible funding, including undertaking assessments against the guidelines set by the funding body and administrative requirements. Flexible funding has an emphasis on prioritising support to Aboriginal families, families at risk of placement breakdown and families where there are outstanding safety risks.

Travel to attend meetings with clients and agencies may be required, along with some evening work.

Key Responsibilities

Helpline Services

- Provide information, reassurance, advocacy and referral pathways to parents/carers in a timely, professional and empathic manner via phone and/or telehealth.
- Provide information to families about out-of-home care, permanent care and adoption and guidance on navigating the relevant systems.
- Support families in their understanding of child development, trauma, attachment and to develop positive parenting skills.
- Provide emotional support to parents/carers experiencing issues that impact on family functioning and dynamics, including mental health, drug and alcohol issues, family violence and financial instability.
- Assist families to improve their relationships and communication, including in the context of contact with the child's family of origin, using a child-centred, family-focussed and trauma-informed approach.
- Advocate for the needs of children, young people and families in promoting access to services and resources.
- Support referrals to appropriate services tailored to individual needs, including universal, secondary, community and peer support services.
- Proactive outreach to members/clients by phone, as required.

Flexi Funding Services – Intake, Assessment and Frontend Processing

- Provide assistance to parents/carers lodging flexi funding applications, including providing additional support to vulnerable client groups.
- Ensure that all new referrals are assessed, prioritised and processed in a timely manner.
- Utilise relevant guidelines to conduct assessments of new flexible funding applications including direct engagement with parents/carers and, with consent, other relevant professionals.
- Facilitate approval processes in line with PCA Families' delegations policy and flexi funding program and practice procedures.
- Consult with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation on the Permanent Care Alliance regarding applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to ensure culturally competent decision-making.

Program and Organisational Requirements

- Record and maintain client related case notes and documentation on customer relationship management systems (CRMs) in a timely and accurate manner.
- Participate in regular supervision, reflective practice and annual performance reviews.
- Actively participate in team meetings, forums and professional development.
- Identify and report risk issues affecting children, families and/or the organisation to line manager in a timely manner, and if unavailable the CEO, in a timely manner, and work collaboratively to mitigate those risks in accordance with agency policies and procedures..
- Ensure all funding, legal and statutory requirements are met including those related to serious incidents, reportable conduct, and mandatory child safety reporting and case practice requirements.
- Actively participate in policy, procedure and program development, including contributing to program innovation, developing relevant material and collecting data and statistics as required.
- Provide input to organisation-wide activities related to external communications, membership engagement, advocacy and fundraising/business development.
- Support planning and/or delivery of caregiver and professional training services and/or internal peer support groups, as required.
- Undertake other portfolio and project responsibilities, as required

Personal accountability

- Comply with PCA Families' values, code of conduct, policies and procedures and relevant government legislation and standards where relevant.
- Foster and facilitate effective and collaborative internal and external stakeholder relationships in line with PCA Families' values and expected professional standards of behaviour.
- Share relevant information to third parties with the informed consent of the family/members in accordance with relevant privacy legislation, policies and procedures.
- Model professional and ethical conduct in all interactions and decision-making.
- Ensure the safety, protection and wellbeing of children and young people who may come into association with PCA Families is always paramount.
- Actively participate in initiatives to maintain, build upon and promote a positive and collaborative workplace.
- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and the health and safety of others.
- Promote a positive safety culture and promptly respond to and report health and safety hazards, incidents and near misses to line management.
- Attend mandatory training sessions (i.e. equal employment opportunity, health and safety) and mandatory training specific to position.
- Ensure appropriate use of resources.

Senior Advocacy and Support Advisor – Additional responsibilities

- Provide assistance to the Service Delivery and Quality Lead related to demand management.
- Support management of the day-to-day budget of the flexible funding program.
- Provide assistance in the development, implementation and review of operational initiatives.
- Hold portfolio responsibility for supporting Helpline clients experiencing complex, recurrent issues to support placement preservation and facilitate supported referrals into other services.
- Work with the Service Delivery and Quality Lead, and the Member Engagement and Office Manager in relation to membership engagement initiatives.
- Provide back up support to the Permanent Care Alliance.

Key Selection Criteria

Qualifications

- Bachelor level Social Work, Psychology or Social Science degree or equivalent (required).

Experience

- Demonstrated experience in the child and family welfare field. This experience will be in Child Protection, Out of Home Care, Permanent Care, Adoption, Family Services and/or other services working with vulnerable families and children (essential).
- General counselling experience, including ability to demonstrate trauma-informed practice skills and engage supportively and appropriately with families who are distressed, in crisis or experiencing loss/grief (essential). (*Telephone based counselling experience desirable*).
- Lived experience of permanent care, adoption or out of home care (desirable)

Skills

- Comprehensive assessment skills with a capacity to develop a wraparound service response for families.
- Sound understanding of child development, family dynamics, and trauma, grief and loss and attachment theories as they relate to children/young people and families in permanent care and adoption.
- Excellent interpersonal, written and oral communication skills.
- Sound understanding of permanent care and adoption issues as they relate to children, young people, their parents/carers and their family-of-origin, including a working understanding of relevant legislation and regulations.
- Problem-solving skills alongside clients, internal and external stakeholders.
- Highly developed time management, organisational and administrative skills.

- Ability to work both independently and to collaborate with a team.

Attributes

<i>Integrity</i>	Trustworthy, honest and ethical. Treats others with respect, including maintaining confidentiality and privacy.
<i>Growth mindset</i>	Resilient with a positive 'can do' attitude. Has a love of learning and views challenges as opportunities.
<i>Consumer-centric</i>	Ability and genuine desire to make clients and members the central focus of every decision. Ability to engage with patience and warmth in an empathic, compassionate and sensitive manner, even in a crisis situation.
<i>Team player</i>	Builds a sense of cohesive 'team' within the workplace and actively supports the development of shared team objectives, while also effectively working independently.
<i>Responsible and organised</i>	Personally accountable for own behaviour consistent with the organisation's values, policies and procedures. Responds to situations in the workplace in a mature manner. Shows self-direction and self-initiative.
<i>Reflective</i>	Possesses the ability to show self-awareness and self-regulation, including utilising self-care strategies both personally and professionally. Understand personal triggers and remains objective.
<i>Innovative</i>	Ability to respond with flexibility and creativity to opportunities and issues as they arise. Capacity to balance the competing demands of work within an environment of change and evolution.

Additional Information

PCA Families is a family friendly workplace offering flexible working arrangements. Employment conditions will draw from those detailed in the *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010*.

Child safety: PCA Families is a Child Safe organisation with zero tolerance of child abuse.

Salary packaging is available to all ongoing and maximum-term staff, in line with ATO provision for Public Benevolent Institutions.

Professional development and training opportunities are offered to staff, members and **study leave** may also be available in certain circumstances.

Lived experience: We are the member representative organisation of the permanent care and adoptive community in Victoria. We strongly encourage applicants with lived experience.

Equal opportunity: PCA Families is an equal opportunity employer.

Cultural competency: People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage are strongly encouraged to apply for the position. As an inclusive organisation, PCA Families is striving to become culturally competent and all staff are expected to undergo regular cultural competence training as part of their professional development plans.

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S): All employees are required to carry out their duties in a manner that does not adversely affect their own health and safety and that of others, including reporting all incidents and injuries, as well as co-operating with any measures introduced in the workplace to improve OH&S.

Pre-existing injury: The person appointed to this position will be required to disclose any pre-existing injuries or disease that might be affected by employment in this position. This will assist PCA Families in providing a safe work environment for new staff.

Probation: All positions are subject to a six month probationary period.

Pre-employment screening:

Employment is also subject to the successful applicant:

- Holding a current Working with Children Check Card;
- Passing a current Police Check (including providing 100 points of ID).
- Passing an international police check (if applicant has resided overseas for 12+ months in the last 10 years).