



PSP Case Plan Goal Reviews

Guidance for Communities and Justice and Funded Service Providers to support the completion of minimum period case plan goal reviews

Under the Permanency Support Program (PSP), Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and Funded Service Providers (FSPs) work together to identify, review and decide upon goals to secure a permanent home for every child or young person¹.

One of the fundamental aspects of PSP is the provision of additional resourcing to FSPs over a two year period, to undertake additional casework to achieve a permanency outcome for children within that two year time frame. Minimum case plan goal review periods support this objective.

Review of a child's case plan is to occur at least annually², with more frequent reviews required for children with a permanency case plan goal.

Evidence demonstrates a permanent, safe and loving home gives a child a better chance at leading an independent, successful life as an adult. These reviews will document progress made towards a child's case plan goal which will be important when approaching the end of the two year time-limited period.

What is a case plan goal review?

Case plan goal reviews involve DCJ and FSPs working together to conduct an assessment of the child's changing needs and case plan goals.

The frequency of reviews occur according to the child's case plan goal as outlined in the PSP Program Level Agreement (PLA). The minimum case plan goal review periods are:

Case Plan Goal	Minimum Review Period
Family Preservation	3 monthly
Restoration, Guardianship or Adoption	6 monthly
Long Term Care	12 monthly

Case plan goal reviews provide a valuable opportunity to jointly:

- check in on the progress of the child's case plan goal
- assess whether a change to the case plan goal is required

¹ The term 'child' has been used throughout this document and refers to both children and young people.

² Section 150, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*; Standard 14: Case Planning and Review; OCG guidelines for conducting a placement review.

- identify any areas in which additional support is required to achieve the child's goal
- ensure case plan goal reviews support culturally appropriate practice.

While case plan goal reviews are distinct from annual case plan reviews, the two are connected in that the case plan is critical in reviewing a child's case plan goal. Attendance by DCJ at annual case plan reviews for children managed by FSPs is not mandatory; however any change in a case plan goal requires DCJ approval.

How will the reviews be completed?

Case plan goal reviews will generally occur as a face to face meeting where Permanency Coordinators and key staff from the FSP jointly discuss the case planning or case management of children. Also:

- family preservation case plan goal reviews are to be conducted at the same time as the required risk assessment and as part of the Family Action Plan review. Where possible the Community Services Centre caseworker will be involved, and in some cases will jointly conduct the reviews with FSPs
- adoption case plan goal reviews are to be completed with the involvement of the relevant Regional Adoption Caseworker
- long term care case plan goal reviews may be conducted at the same time and alongside the child's annual case plan review regardless of the commencement date of their package
- in more complex matters, additional staff from either DCJ or the FSP may need to be part of the discussion i.e. Child and Family District Unit Manager Casework or Contract Manager.

What will the case plan goal review cover?

The following four key areas are to be considered when conducting a case plan goal review:

1. progress and evidence towards the child's case plan goal
2. challenges and strategies in place to progress the child's case plan goal, including the stepping down of services where appropriate
3. FSPs views on the likelihood that the goal will be achieved within the specified time frame and actions to address any concerns
4. appropriateness of the case plan goal and if the case plan goal needs to be changed.

Documenting the case plan goal review³

The four key areas considered in completing the review are to be clearly documented on ChildStory by the DCJ staff member completing the review. This should be recorded in the child's case as a Note, with the category of Consultation and the sub category of Permanency Support. Permanency Coordinators should refer to the *ChildStory Recording Tool* for more information.

³ [Standard 17](#) of the NSW Child Safe Standards provides further guidance around documentation and record keeping requirements.

A copy of the documented review is to be provided to the FSP. The Permanency Coordinator or DCJs' staff member completing the review must notify the Contract Manager that the review has been completed as per local district processes.

DCJ Districts will monitor and track reviews manually until updates can be made to ChildStory to reflect this process. Information about the reviews will be required to be provided centrally to the Child & Family Directorate within the Strategy, Policy and Commissioning Division.

What happens after the review is complete?

DCJ and FSPs will continue to work together to address any challenges identified during the review and progress agreed actions. Where a change in case plan goal is required, relevant steps outlined in the *Permanency Case Management Policy* should be followed. This includes updating ChildStory (refer to the relevant Knowledge Article in ChildStory or Partner).

It is expected that issues emerging on a broader scale will be referred to Contract Managers to support and mitigate any escalating challenges.

Resolving case plan goal disputes

DCJ and FSPs may experience occasional disagreements during the case plan goal review process. This can be expected as a normal part of participants working together collaboratively, having different perspectives and playing different but complementary roles.

Districts and FSPs address disputes by using existing conflict resolution procedures that aim to:

- resolve problems at a district level in the first instance and
- strengthen the capacity of the service system to achieve better outcomes for children, their parents and family/kin.

Achieving permanency within the two year period

Under the PSP, a number of children transitioned to time-limited case plan goal packages and these packages are due to cease from July 2020 and onwards. It is expected, as per the requirements of the PLA⁴, that permanency goals will be achieved during this time.

Where ongoing progress towards the case plan goal has *not* been made by FSPs, funding for the case plan goal may change to the long term care package funding. FSPs will be required to continue casework towards the agreed permanency goal and will be subject to the relevant review process aligned to the permanency goal.

In some circumstances, the case plan goal package can be extended beyond two years. This decision is delegated to the DCJ Executive District Director or Statewide Services Executive Director (for ITC). Applications from FSPs will be assessed by the relevant Permanency Coordinator and only be considered where:

- significant progress towards the case plan goal has been made
- the required case plan goal reviews have been completed by the FSP

⁴ Program Level Agreement, Schedule 3, section 4.2

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- extension of the restoration/guardianship/adoption package is required to put in place additional time-limited supports to assist the family to achieve the child's permanency goal
 - the case plan clearly identifies the supports and casework tasks required to achieve the child's goal including clear timeframes
 - evidence demonstrates factors delaying achievement of the child's case plan goal are beyond the FSPs control
 - the case plan goal remains in the child's best interests.

Extensions will only be granted if deemed necessary to assist in achieving the child's case plan goal⁵ and all of the above requirements are met and are evidenced by the FSP.

Following roll out of the case plan goal review process, further work will be undertaken on providing guidance around considerations on extensions.

Further information

FSPs may seek further information from Permanency Coordinators regarding case plan goal reviews. Any feedback or questions about this process or the PSP can be sent to permanency.support@facsnsw.gov.au

⁵ PSP Program Description (page 23).