



**Family &
Community Services**
Community Services

Getting It Together: Program Guidelines

Vulnerable Children & Families Branch

May 2014

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Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist service providers to understand the broad parameters of the Getting It Together (GIT) program within the framework of Community Services' contracting system.

1. Legislative framework

The primary legislation that underpins Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) provision of funding to non-government organisations through the GIT program is the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* and the *Community Welfare Act 1987* and the regulations associated with these acts. Other legislation that impacts on the management of its funded programs includes the *Public Finance & Audit Act 1983*, and the *Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

2. Policy directions and commitments

The GIT program contributes to a number of NSW Government policy directions and commitments as outlined in various plans.

NSW 2021 is the NSW Government's plan that guides policy and budget decisions. GIT services are funded as a means of achieving:-

- Goal 13 of the state plan - NSW 2021 – commits the State government to actions that “better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage”; and
- Goal 1 of the Community Services divisional plan for the period 2012 - 2015 is that “fewer children and young people are vulnerable to abuse and neglect”.

FACS Community Services Program Reform

Over the next two years, Community, Early Intervention and Intensive Programs will be undergoing reform with a focus on local need and outcome measurement. There will be many opportunities for your organisation to be a part of that reform process. Program reform will focus on how services delivered to children, young people and families can have a greater impact and reduce the incidence and prevalence of behaviours that put children and young people at risk.

Over the next two years, these program guidelines will be revised and will require you to address impacts and connections with NSW Government reforms including:

- NSW Child Protection reforms “Safe Home For Life”
- NSW Homelessness reforms including “Going Home Staying Home”
- FACS localisation, including the requirement to participate in district plans
- NSW Family and Domestic Violence reforms “It Stops Here”
- Development in other programs

These reforms may lead to changes occurring during the contractual period. In this case, the existing agreement may be renegotiated with services to reflect new policy and program requirements.

Cultural issues in the provision of FACS funded services

As a FACS funded organisation, you are responsible for ensuring that the services you provide are ‘culturally capable’. This means that your organisation takes account of cultural, linguistic and religious issues in the design and delivery of services so that services are appropriate to the characteristics and circumstances of children, young people and their families. Some practical aspects of culturally capability include:

- The employees of the service reflect the cultural diversity of the Service’s target population
- Your service has clear policies and strategies in place for working with families from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Employees are able to provide information to clients and to use resources that are linguistically and culturally appropriate.
- Training is provided for service staff in culturally reflective casework practices that are appropriate for refugee and migrant communities.
- Your staff have access to interpreter services where this is necessary to support a client.

Funded organisations will source interpreter services independent of FACS. They will also be required to report on their use of interpreter services through the annual FACS acquittal/accountability process.

3. Program description

GIT is an early intervention program designed to assist vulnerable young people aged between 12 and 25 years of age (priority is given to those under 18 years of age) with alcohol and/or drug problems. The goal of the program is to provide services and support to enable vulnerable young people to

transition to or resume self sufficient living, free of dependence on alcohol and/or drugs.

GIT delivers either brokerage or brokerage and case management services, including assessment, referral, case planning and casework to address the income, health, mental health, social support, housing, justice, education, employment and training needs of young service users. GIT-funded services also deliver training and workshops and participate in the development of local service networks.

GIT initially commenced in 1990 as a pilot involving five sites, funded through the then Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program (SAAP). These sites were identified using data on socioeconomic disadvantage, high youth population and high levels of alcohol and other drug use.

The GIT program and service model arose from the NSW Drug Summit held in May 1999, funded by the NSW Drug Budget until 30 June 2011. As a result of the second Drug Summit, a further seven sites were funded. With the discontinuation of the NSW Drug Budget in 2011, FACS extended fixed-term funding to the 15 GIT services for an additional three years until FY 2013/14. Out of the 15 GIT services there are five services that provide brokerage only and the other 10 services provide case management/brokerage.

4. Program scope and boundary

GIT services form part of FACS early intervention response to identified vulnerabilities affecting young people. They are a specialised response for young people who are unable or unwilling to access other services.

Case management in GIT broadly involves the caseworker:

- assessing the young person's strengths and needs
- working collaboratively with the client to develop goals and strategies to avoid and resolve crisis, using a case plan to document these goals
- coordinating and planning a mix of services to meet the young person's needs (including use of 'brokerage' funds to purchase services and/or items for clients where needed, to support the case plan)
- monitoring the effectiveness of the intervention provided.

Young people can access services that meet their needs for food/clothing, accommodation, therapeutic services and transport. They may also receive specialist services to deal with issues related to alcohol and other drugs use, mental health, disability, family/relationship support, housing, health and legal support.

5. Program results and outcomes

The broad goal of the GIT program is that young people who access GIT services transition to or resume self-sufficient living, free of dependence on drugs and/or alcohol.

GIT services work to achieve the following outcome for young people:

- Enable vulnerable young people transition to/or resume self sufficient living, free of dependence on alcohol and/or drugs.

Key program measures include:

- Number and percentage of young people who say they fully achieved their most important goal
- The percentage of young people who are connected with employment, education and training.

In addition other program benefits for clients may be:

- Young people receive personal support that results in self development, such as increased self esteem and improved life skills
- Young people are connected with employment, education and training
- Young people have access to specialist services
- Young people's immediate crises are resolved and they have access to safe temporary accommodation where required
- Young people recover from and avoid recurrence of crisis
- Links between young people, their families, friends and community are maintained or re-established, where appropriate
- The client group of the service reflects the demographic makeup of the young people in the area covered by the service specification.

6. Service group objectives

In FACS funded programs system, Getting It Together forms part of a group of programs known as the **Targeted Earlier Intervention for Vulnerable Children, Young People & Families** service group. The programs in this service group are all geared to meeting the needs of children, young people and families who have identified vulnerabilities. The shared, broad objective of these programs is to prevent the further escalation of issues that led to this vulnerability.

The table below illustrates where this program is located within the FACS funded programs continuum of services.

FACS Continuum of Service

Universal		Targeted					Statutory Intervention								
Prevention and Early Intervention							Child Protection			OOHC					
Community Builders	Families NSW	Aboriginal Child Youth & Family Strategy	Aboriginal Child & Family Centres	Integrated Domestic & Family Violence Services Program	Staying Home Leaving Violence	Child, Youth & Family Support	Getting it Together	Brighter Futures	Youth Hope	Strengthening Families	Statutory Child Protection Casework	Intensive Family Support/ Intensive Family Preservation	Intensive Family Based Services	OOHC Casework	OOHC Reform

7. Evidence base

The GIT service model resulted from the 1999 Drug Summit. In 2006, an external evaluation of the program confirmed the effectiveness of the GIT service model due to its flexibility and capacity to meet challenging client needs, including the needs of young people who are unable or unwilling to access other services”¹.

The flexibility of the GIT model means that it is less prescriptive than some other youth drug programs, and this has allowed service providers to develop tailored working models that suit the characteristics of the local service system. These characteristics include:

- Sensitivity to broad cultural considerations (e.g. work with Aboriginal clients needs to provide a soft entry point to services; and family involvement in casework)
- Responsiveness to shifts in local youth culture (e.g. which public spaces young people prefer to congregate in, how they prefer to access services)

¹ Rintoul D and Wilczynski A (2006) *Evaluation of the Getting It Together Scheme*, unpublished research report by Urbis Keys Young, commissioned by the NSW Department of Community Services

- Responsiveness to shifting drug use patterns (e.g. in the past there has been a strong focus on addressing heroin use in Cabramatta and petrol sniffing in Broken Hill)
- Capacity to identify and respond to gaps in the service system and/or the use that young drug users make of existing services.

The GIT casework model allows for:

- A tailored response to each young person's needs/circumstances;
- A response that addresses a range of needs, rather than being limited to just one issue (e.g. education, employment, housing)
- Young service users to progress at their own pace, rather than imposing arbitrary timeframes for service delivery (e.g. school term, periods of court-mandated supervision)
- Continuity of caseworker involvement with individual service users as priorities evolve (e.g. not moving from one worker to the next as housing ceases to be a problem and employment and education emerge as the next areas to address)
- Use of informal service-delivery settings as appropriate (e.g. at the park, café, at a young person's home)
- Friendly and casual contact, rather than the caseworker being an authority figure.

8. Target group

GIT services are targeted to vulnerable young people aged between 12 and 25 years (priority is given to those under 18 years of age) with alcohol and/or drug problems that impact on their capacity to live self-sufficient lives.

9. Service types/activities funded

Of the 15 GIT services, there are five services that provide brokerage only and the other 10 services provide case management and brokerage.

One of the key service activities for GIT projects is case management. This is the mechanism that provides service users with access to a range of services either through referral or through direct service provision, based on assessment of need and support planning.

GIT case management is associated with the following activities:

Service Activity Components	Service Description
Assessment & case planning	Assessment & case planning is provided to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the client's strengths, risks and needs; • plan and co-ordinate a mix of services to meet the client's needs; • monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the services being delivered to the young person
Client focused case work	Activities to implement the case plans of individual clients, including support, information/advice, advocacy, recreation and the use of brokerage to purchase goods and/or services for clients
Training	Training and/or workshops provided to enable service users to acquire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • life skills • financial management/budgeting • resume writing, applying for jobs, interview techniques etc
Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to promote the service to the client group and develop trusting relationships with existing and prospective clients • Referrals are made to relevant agencies where project cannot provide the services required • Collaborative service provision relationships with local services making and accepting referrals • Participation in relevant local networks • Participation in local strategies to address issues impacting on service clients

10. Performance measures and service results

GIT service providers enter into a contract with FACS to achieve certain outcomes/results for clients. The extent to which these outcomes are achieved will be monitored using the following performance measures:

Service Results	Performance Measures
The client group of the service reflects the demographic makeup of the young people in the area covered by the contract	The range of individual young people provided with support reflects the demographic make-up of the young people in the area
Individual young peoples' immediate crises are resolved using brokerage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individual young people assisted to purchase necessary items or services in line with the case plan, such as food, clothing, medical, educational, accommodation costs, therapeutic services and transport • Average amount of brokerage dollars used per individual young person per year

Service Results	Performance Measures
Individual young people's immediate crises are resolved using the resources of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individual young people provided with immediate assistance on entry, such as meals, shower and laundry, access to medical/health support • Number of individual young people provided with assistance to obtain/maintain accommodation
Young people recover from and avoid recurrence of crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and percentage of individual young people assisted who agreed to a case plan • Number of individual young people provided with follow up support after exiting the project, where needed • Percentage of young people who say they fully achieved their most important goal
Young people are connected with employment, education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individual young people provided with assistance to obtain/maintain: employment and/or training; access to education; government allowance • Number of individual young people connected with employment after being provided with support by the project • Number of individual young people connected with education after being provided with support by the project
Young people have access to specialist services	<p>Number of individual young people provided with access to specialist services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological services • Specialist counselling • Psychiatric services • Pregnancy support • Family planning and support • Assistance with immigration and interpreter services • Drug and/or alcohol support/intervention • Physical disability support • Intellectual disability support • Support with culturally specific issues • Health and medical services • Legal issues/court support • Incest/sexual assault support • Domestic/family violence support • Family/relationship support • Assistance with problem gambling
Young people receive personal support that results in self development, such as increased self esteem and improved life skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and percentage of individual young people provided with advocacy/liaison where needed eg. with Centrelink, Education • Number of recreational activities provided to connect young people with each other and with mentors and leaders • Number of living skills workshops and/or personal development groups provided to assist young people in personal development and planning for the future • Number of young people who have achieved personal development as a result of being involved with the GIT project

Service Results	Performance Measures
Links between young people, their families, friends and community are maintained or re-established, where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individual young people provided with family/relationship support where needed, such as family mediation, intensive family support or a family restoration plan • Number of individual young people assisted to reconnect with family, friends and their community through support groups, recreational activities or by links with local clubs or schools

11. Data collection strategies

NGOs funded through GIT are required to report to FACS on the work they do with clients. This routine annual reporting covers aggregated data on the activities that GIT service providers undertake with service users, as well as the activities provided by other organisations that are arranged as part of a case plan.

A singular reporting tool (both electronic and paper-based) is made available to assist service providers to comply with this reporting requirement. Reporting generally covers the period of the standard Australian financial year (ie. 1 July to 30 June).

The information that is reported to FACS will be used for four purposes:

- To assess each service's effectiveness in delivering the outcomes specified in the contract
- To measure the service's contribution to GIT program objectives, FACS goals and the goals of the NSW State Plan: NSW 2021
- As part of the program's evaluation
- To provide feedback to service providers on their performance.

12. Partnership framework

GIT services have well-established relationships with other services that also work with this target group, including youth accommodation services, family relationship/conflict services, drug and alcohol services, youth counselling services, schools, health services, culture-specific services and youth-oriented community services.

Other partnerships

FACS enters into agreements with other government agencies to facilitate collaboration within the service system. An example of this is the 2013 Memorandum of Understanding between Family and Community Services and the Department of Attorney General and Justice regarding the regulation

of minimum standards for men's domestic violence behaviour change programs.

Under this agreement, when providing referrals to domestic violence behaviour change programs, FACS funded Service Providers will only refer domestic violence perpetrators to behaviour change programs that meet the [minimum standards](http://www.domesticviolence.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/domesticviolence/minimum_standards_mdvbcp.html). A list of approved providers can be found at http://www.domesticviolence.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/domesticviolence/minimum_standards_mdvbcp.html