



Family &  
Community Services  
Community Services

# FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH EAST NSW

**Responses to complex cases in  
child protection and wellbeing.  
KTS conference November 2011**

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- Family Case Management sits firmly in a paradigm where
    - child protection is a shared responsibility that begins with parents, families and communities
    - the non-government sector is a partner in service provision with government agencies
    - service provision for Aboriginal families and communities is a priority
    - there are multiple entry points for children and families needing support and assistance

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- Family Case Management is only one service strategy developed through the implementation of the Wood Special Commission recommendations
  - CWUs
  - FRS
  - PACT
  - Chapter 16a

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- ROSH
  - SF (BF)
  - SDM (SARA)
  - IFS/IFP
  - Permanency Planning

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Family Case Management in South East  
NSW was piloted in

Bega Valley

Goulburn

Queanbeyan

The purpose in establishing the pilot was to facilitate an integrated case management approach to 'frequently encountered' families between both government agencies and NGO

# Project Design

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- A project facilitator (grade 9/10)
- Establishment of a Local Management Group in each location
- Each LMG is chaired by a senior Regional Manager
- LMG membership includes both government and non-government agencies
- Oversight is provided by the regional KTS Senior Officers Group and the Regional Managers Network (RMN)

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Families in the pilot included at least 1 child or young person at risk of significant harm, and were likely to be repeatedly seen by government and NGO agencies.

Involvement in the program is by consent, and focuses on families who have received a previous government agency or NGO response with limited results. Importantly, all family members receive case management as required, not just children and young people.

# The Evaluation - Findings

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- Ongoing participation in LMGs has varied. Agencies need to review the skills and decision making delegations of staff who participate.
- The processes used to identify families were time consuming with a focus on collecting information.
- The project appears to be well targeted. However, one of the challenges in defining the most appropriate families to target is how risk thresholds are factored in when the main eligibility criteria is use of multiple services.



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- The structural components of the model were successful but directly linked to:
    - A strong and shared policy mandate
    - Effective coordination
    - Authority within the management group for decision making 'outside normal boundaries'
    - The active involvement of front line staff
  - Improvements are needed to
    - Identification of families
    - Case plan development
    - Brokerage

# Conclusions

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- There has been better coordination and information sharing between agencies.
- NGOs have been very significant in the project, managing almost half of the FCM families.
- The KTS information sharing provisions have facilitated more coordinated and integrated service planning for families.
- FCM provides a model that offers potential for joint working as core business, at both an individual family level and a community or place based level.

# The Evaluation - Recommendations

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- Continue FCM at existing sites
- Reduce LMGs involvement in case planning with support for front line staff
- Provide training in case planning and management/information sharing
- Maintain the Coordinator role as a key component
- Develop a more systemic approach to identifying families such as through CWUs/FRS
- Maintain brokerage funding (although at reduced levels)

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- Select an outcomes based planning and assessment tool
  - Take a structured and considered approach to further implementation

# FCM – The Future

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- Responsibility for pilot projects transferred from DPC to FACS
- FACS given mandate to bring together into one policy framework all Integrated Case Management projects including Anti Social Behaviour projects now called Supporting Families/Supporting Children
- FACS currently running Complex Case Panels for those families/individuals where at a local level service support solutions are not apparent.

# The Lessons

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- Locally facilitated processes work better for both clients and agencies
- All agencies require clear escalation processes to solve problems but these must support local initiatives
- Homelessness or risk of homelessness is a major factor in supporting families

# Best Practice FCM

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- Family participation
- Team based
- Natural and community based supports
- Individualised
- Strengths based
- Outcomes based

