



Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS)

Agenda: POCLS Advisory Group Meeting

Date 11 February 2025 10.00am – 12.00pm (12.30pm if extra time needed)

Location Level 9, Meeting rooms N.22 & S23 Parramatta Square, Parramatta; or Teams

Chair Michael Tidball, Secretary DCJ

Invitees

- POCLS Advisory Group members or their nominees from DCJ, DoE, Ministry of Health, NGOs, ACCOs.
- POCLS Aboriginal Governance Panel, chaired by AbSec
- POCLS Scientific Working Group

See page 3 for a list of invitees.

Agenda Items

1.	General business	10:00-10.15am
	1.1 Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country	Chair – Michael Tidball, DCJ Secretary DCJ (5 mins)
	1.2 Opening remarks	Dr Jess Stewart, DCJ Executive Director (5 mins) AbSec CEO, John Leha (5 mins)
2.	Study Update	10:15-10.30am
	2.1 Overview 2.2 Achievements in 2024	Dr Jess Stewart, DCJ Executive Director
3.	Aboriginal-led and partnered research projects	10.30-10.50am
	3.1 Spotlight: POCLS research project on cultural health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See pages 5-6 for a list of the 10 Aboriginal-led and partnered research projects. 	Ted Fields, Director of Uraah Innovations and Cultural Services, and Research Officer University of NSW (10 mins)
	3.2 Q&A	John Leha (10 minutes lead the Q&A)

Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS)

4.	POCLS evidence to inform the OOHC System Reform	10.50-11.50am
	<p>4.1 Overview of the OOHC Strategy, reform directions.</p> <p>4.2 POCLS insights for policy and practice - what will make a difference to children's developmental outcomes and their experiences in OOHC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See page 4 for a list of papers in the Special Issue <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical health and development - Professor Melissa O'Donnell 2. Mental health – Professor Raghu Lingam 3. Education and the impact of engagement in schooling - Dr Miriam McLean and Dr Michelle Townsend 4. Carer support - Professor Rebecca Mitchell 5. Placement stability Dr Fred Wulczyn and Dr Nafisa Asif 	<p>Paul O'Reilly Deputy Secretary (10 mins)</p> <p>Authors of the POCLS papers published in the Special Issue of Child Abuse & Neglect (10 mins each)</p>
5.	Discussion and next steps	11:50-12 noon
	<p>5.1 Q&A with the researchers.</p> <p>5.2 Prioritising suggested and new topics for future analyses.</p>	Dr Jessica Stewart (10 mins)
6.	Close or take extra time for Q&A	12–12.30pm
	<p>6.1 Other business arising.</p> <p>6.2 Q&A with members and academic researchers.</p>	Jessica Stewart

Meeting invitees

Advisory Group members

- Anne Campbell, Deputy Secretary, Strategy Policy & Commissioning, DCJ
- Lauren Dean, A/Deputy Secretary, Protection & Permanency, DCJ
- Paul O'Reilly, Deputy Secretary, Transformation, DCJ
- Dr Jessica Stewart, Executive Director, FACSIAR, DCJ
- Stuart Malcher, Executive Director, Child & Family, System Reform Division, DCJ
- Matthew Jones, Director Reform Unit, Strategy Policy & Commissioning, DCJ
- Kelly Walker, Manager, Out-of-Home-Care Reform, DCJ
- Briony Foster, HCEA Executive Lead, System Reform Division, DCJ
- Rebecca Hinchey, Manager, Out-of-Home-Care Program Management, DCJ
- Rebecca Magoffin, Manager, Strategy Policy and Commissioning
- Melissa Pearce, Manager, Leaving & Aftercare, DCJ
- Elaine Thompson, A/Executive Director, Office of the Senior Practitioner, DCJ
- Lisa Pederson, A/ Director, Practice Quality, Office of the Senior Practitioner, DCJ
- Dr Cath Esposito, Clinical Issues, Office of the Senior Practitioner, DCJ
- Lisa Charet, Executive Director, Community Services Statewide Services, Northern CPPYJ, DCJ
- Nicola Jeffers, Executive District Director, MNC NNSW & NE Districts, Northern CPPYJ, DCJ
- Paul Garrahy, A/Executive District Director, South Western Sydney District
- Jacqueline Richardson, Casework Manager WSNBM Adolescent Team, Northern CPPYJ, DCJ
- Victoria Perry, Manager, Research and Information, Youth Justice, DCJ
- Dr Bronwyn Bate, A/Manager, Social Housing Insights, Homes NSW
- Joe Sumegi, Director, Campaigns, Strategy & Events, DCJ

Advisory Group members

(cont)

- Associate Professor Elisabeth Murphy, Director, Child Youth & Family. Ministry of Health
- Trisha Ladogna, Director, Behaviour and Student Participation, Department of Education
- Steve Kinmond, Children's Guardian, NSW, Office of the Children's Guardian
- Larrissa Johnson, Director, Out-of-Home Care Office of the Children's Guardian
- Maree Walk, CEO, ACWA
- Imogen Edeson, CEO, CREATE
- Renee Carter, CEO, My Forever Family NSW
- Catherine Liddel, CEO, SNAICC
- Richard Weston, CEO, Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation, Broken Hill

Aboriginal Governance Panel

- John Leha, CEO, AbSec
- Mr Mervyn Taylor, Ngadhi Family Services
- Mr Mathew Kenny, Ngunya Jarjum Aboriginal Corporation
- Ms Lisa Wellington, Waminda Aboriginal Corporation
- A/Prof Paul Gray, UTS Jumbunna
- Nellie Pollard Wharton, University of NSW
- Annaliese Gielingh, A/Director, Policy and Advocacy AbSec
- Eamon Brodie, Project Officer, AbSec

Scientific Working Group

- Professor Judy Cashmore University of Sydney
- Professor Ilan Katz University of NSW
- Dr Fred Wulczyn University of Chicago
- Professor Michael Tarren-Sweeney, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
- Professor Melissa Green, University of NSW
- Professor Melissa O'Donnell, University of South Australia
- Professor Dan McAullay, Kurungkurl Katitjin, Edith Cowan University
- A/Professor BJ Newton University of NSW
- Dr Michelle Townsend, University of Wollongong

FACSIAR

- Merran Bulter, Statistical Analysis, Data Governance and Research
- Marina Paxman, Manager, Project
- Joanna Hopkins, Manager, Data
- Caroline Anderson, Manager Research & Knowledge Translation
- Dr Christie Robertson, Manager Strategy & Evidence
- Albert Zhou, Senior Analyst
- Dr Nafisa Asif, Senior Analyst
- Jen Lau, Senior Analyst
- Dr Diana Borinski, Senior Analyst
- Dr Proshanta Dey, Analyst
- Toulou Kypreos, Research Assistant



Appendix

Journal of Child Abuse & Neglect

Articles from the Special Issue on Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study: A study of children in care in NSW Australia; Edited by Dr. Judy Cashmore and Dr. Jennifer Fraser are available on ScienceDirect via the following link:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/child-abuse-and-neglect/vol/149/suppl/C>

1. Pathways of Care: A longitudinal study of children in care in Australia: Introductory article for special issue on Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study. Judith Cashmore, Fred Wulczyn, Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS Team)
2. Restoration from out-of-home care for Aboriginal children: Evidence from the pathways of care longitudinal study and experiences of parents and children. B.J. Newton, Ilan Katz, Paul Gray, Solange Frost, ... Jennifer Stephensen
3. Influence of placement stability on developmental outcomes of children and young people. Nafisa Asif, Courtney Breen, Robert Wells
4. Developmental trajectories of socio-emotional outcomes of children and young people in out-of-home care – Insights from data of Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS). Nan Hu, Yalemzewod Assefa Gelaw, Ilan Katz, Elizabeth Fernandez, ... Raghu Lingam
5. Contact with mothers for children in out-of-home-care: Group-based trajectory modelling from the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS). Aino Suomi, Nina Lucas, Dave Pasalich, Morag McArthur
6. Positive reading achievement outcomes in children who experience out-of-home care: Characteristics and predictors. Miriam J. Maclean, Fernando Lima, Melissa O'Donnell
7. Trajectories for children and young people who experience out of home care: Examining the influences of pre-care characteristics on later wellbeing and placement stability. Catherine Wade
8. Infants entering out-of-home care: Health, developmental needs and service provision. Fernando Lima, Stephanie Taplin, Miriam Maclean, Melissa O'Donnell
9. Outcomes for children with disability in out-of-home care: Evidence from the Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study in Australia. Zhiming Che, Massimiliano Tani, Ilan Katz.
10. Exploring the impact of child and placement characteristics, carer resources, perceptions and life stressors on caregiving and well-being. Tayhla Ryder, Yvonne Zurynski, Rebecca Mitchell.

POCLS commissioned Aboriginal led or partnered analysis projects due for completion by June 2025

Title	Lead	Summary
1 Supporting the mental health of Aboriginal children in care and leaving care	Professor Sandy Eades, University of Melbourne	The aim of this research is to determine the factors that support the mental health of Aboriginal children in care and leaving care through investigation of: 1) the characteristics of Aboriginal children's care experiences that are associated with good mental health outcomes, including for those young people who have left care; and 2) Aboriginal children's utilisation of mental health plans and medication and whether their use is associated with the mental health of children who have been in care and leaving care.
2 Configuring an Indigenous data ecosystem for Aboriginal children in OOHC in NSW. Social and cultural factors that influence Aboriginal outcomes guided by Indigenous Data Sovereignty	Professor Marcia Langton, University of Melbourne	The aim of this research is to investigate how OOHC care services and policy can be supported to become more responsive to Aboriginal children through the ways we create and interpret data. The aim is to develop a <i>broader framework</i> for considering what the POCLS data set can tell us about the experiences of Aboriginal children who have entered OOHC and their developmental outcomes over time, especially as these experiences and outcomes relate to complex social, economic and cultural factors. Further, the project will generate insights into the way data is created and interpreted in relation to Aboriginal children in OOHC, identifying any limitations and ways this might be developed.
3 Describing primary health care utilisation and medication uptake amongst Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC	Associate Professor Natalie Strobel, Edith Cowan University	The aim of this project is to provide descriptive information regarding the use of health care services (non-tertiary) and medication use for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in OOHC.
4 Developing profiles to support the restoration of	Associate Professor Natalie Strobel, Edith Cowan University	The aim of this project is to provide profiles that can be used to target programs to children, families and caregivers to support restoration of children to their families.

Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS)

Title	Lead	Summary
Aboriginal children to their families		
5 Exploring the cultural health and care gap among Aboriginal children and young people in the OOHC system	Elder Ted Fields, University of New South Wales	The aim of this project is to use a strengths-based approach in order to: 1) Identify key factors related to improved cultural health and care for children and young people in the OOHC system; 2) Identify key challenges to cultural health and care for children and young people in the OOHC system.
6 Improve understandings of the factors influencing the neurodevelopmental trajectory and poor outcomes of Aboriginal children and young people who have entered OOHC	Dr Emily Hindmarsh, Bimiirr Darrundaygu Psychology and Research Centre, Coffs Harbour NSW	The aim of this research is to develop a better understanding of the factors influencing poor neurodevelopmental outcomes of Aboriginal children who have entered OOHC by investigating individual, caregiver, and community factors that influence neurodevelopmental profiles of Aboriginal children who have entered OOHC. This research further aims to determine whether, or not, the neurodevelopmental trajectory of Aboriginal children who have entered OOHC differs from other children who have entered out-of-home-care.
7 Cultural continuity and stability for Aboriginal children and young people	Dr Wendy Hermeston, University of Melbourne	This research aims to examine the extent to which children remain connected to their extended Aboriginal families and Aboriginal communities, culture and Country when in OOHC and when exiting care - if not restored - when permanently placed on guardianship or other kind of orders. The research will provide data with respect to comparative cultural permanency of placements in OOHC and different types of final orders. It will seek to inform how the type of order might contribute to the kind of cultural continuity, or lack thereof, post-final orders.
8 Understanding the potential impact of carers on the experiences and care outcomes of Aboriginal children in OOHC	Associate Professor BJ Newton, University of New South Wales	This research seeks to explore and understand: 1) How the care contexts and characteristics of carers for Aboriginal children in the POCLS are associated with children's cultural identity, connections, wellbeing and placement outcomes; 2) How carers are supporting Aboriginal children to connect/remain connected to their Aboriginal family and culture; and 3) What we can learn about the implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principles from POCLS.

Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study (POCLS)

Title	Lead	Summary
9 Exploring how parental and family characteristics influences child protection reporting and removal, and OOHC experiences for Aboriginal children under two years of age	Associate Professor BJ Newton, University of New South Wales	The aim is to explore how parental and family characteristics have an influence on child protection reporting, subsequent removal, and OOHC characteristics for Aboriginal children who come into care under 2 years. To understand the influence that Aboriginality as a family characteristic may have, the research will also compare the reporting, removal rates, and OOHC characteristics of Aboriginal children under 2 years of age to non-Aboriginal children in the same age cohort.
10 Exploring the experiences of Aboriginal girls that go missing from OOHC then have contact with the criminal justice system	Dr Philippa Evans, University of New South Wales	The aim is to explore the experiences of Aboriginal girls who go missing, and how their experience compares with Aboriginal girls who do not go missing from OOHC from a culturally sensitive perspective, looking for individuals' resilience and strength stories in a system that typically renders them powerless. This project complements the larger Australian Research Council project on NSW youth who go missing or run away from OOHC.