

21 June 2022

Mr Craig Layton
Executive Director, Child & Family
Strategy, Policy & Commissioning
NSW Department of Communities and Justice
Via Email: permanency.support@facs.nsw.gov.au
craig.layton@facs.nsw.gov.au

Dear Craig

Barnardos Australia (Barnardos) strongly acknowledges recent opportunities provided by NSW Communities and Justice (DCJ) for NSW Permanency Support Program (PSP) Funded Service Providers (FSPs) to engage in discussions concerning the forthcoming next phase of the PSP reform. As a major provider of the full suite of PSP service delivery we remain committed to the NSW Premier's Priorities for vulnerable children, and to providing planned and desired permanency outcomes for vulnerable NSW children. As a result of the engagement opportunities and discussions over this most recent period there are significant shifts in the original position put forward by DCJ on certain elements of proposed new PSP contracts, and we thank you most sincerely for this. Specifically noting:

- Retention and rolling forward of unspent funds on a year to year basis in new five year contracts
- Delaying removal of the Placement Capacity Payment (PCP) until July 2023, and
- Extension of current contracts for a three month period to allow for further discussion and consultation between DCJ and providers on new contract Terms

At the 9 June DCJ/FSP briefing it was advised that case coordination activities undertaken in relation to children and young people will fall within contract volume under the new arrangements, and this is also a very important and welcome change.

Barnardos is most appreciative that DCJ has agreed to work with FSPs to redesign the current partnership framework, in order to better support collaboration and co-design activities. As you are aware, CEOs from five major PSP providers (collectively caring for approximately one third of NSW children in foster care) are currently working together on ideas for proposing a suitable process by which to develop the partnership model, with the intention to return to DCJ in the near future to share and discuss perspectives. Whilst this is of course a broader piece of work which will need to incorporate the views of the entire NGO sector and which will require further time, this group is keen to assist DCJs thinking in this important area.

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In addition to the many positive developments, Barnardos is also however concerned that at the time of the 9 June DCJ briefing and the updates to PSP Recommissioning Q&As in May, FSPs are still learning of new proposals for additional modification under proposed new funding agreements. Further it is noted that there are several areas of change to current contract Terms that are yet to be fully clarified by DCJ. **Please find Barnardos' summary of these areas attached** with this letter, which we look forward to discussing further as part of the recommissioning process.

Barnardos remains concerned to ensure that full transparency and clarity is provided by DCJ for the proposed Terms of new PSP contracts, and associated impact not just on FSPs but on intended outcomes for children as a result of the overall PSP service delivery environment. We continue to work closely with ACWA and sector colleagues to ensure that our individual and shared perspectives are clearly articulated to your Department, and more broadly to NSW government. We look forward to FSP feedback supporting further considerations towards mutually satisfactory resolutions to issues of continuing concern, prior to discussions for finalisation of agreements prior to 30 September.

For further information and discussion of specific issues raised by Barnardos in the attached, please contact myself dcheers@barnardos.org.au or Penny Hood, Executive Leader Children and Families phood@barnardos.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Deirdre Cheers
Chief Executive Officer
Barnardos Australia