



## A GUIDE TO DoCS' SERVICES

how  
we help



NSW Department of  
Community Services



## HOW WE HELP

The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) is the leading community services organisation in NSW and the largest child protection agency in Australia.

This booklet explains the many ways we help.



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*Please note: The area code for all phone numbers in this booklet is 02 unless otherwise stated.*

If you would like to know more about DoCS' services in your area, please contact your nearest DoCS Community Services Centre (CSC). We have more than 80 CSCs throughout NSW, usually located in or near town centres or in suburban shopping centres. You will find their phone numbers on pages 14-15 of this booklet and in local telephone directories under the heading 'Community Services Department Of'.



## HELPING KEEP KIDS SAFE AND FAMILIES TOGETHER

Our most important job is keeping children safe, protecting them and their welfare.

Each year, thousands of children are reported to us by friends, family and professional people as being at risk of harm from abuse or neglect. We assess these reports and, if needed, investigate them and work with families to ensure children and young people are safe. We also work with other agencies, both government and non-government, to make sure children and families receive the support they need.

We work to prevent or resolve break-ups between young people and their parents. Unemployment, domestic violence, alcohol or drug dependence, mental or physical illness or difficulties with raising children are some of the issues which can cause problems within a family.



Through our prevention and early intervention programs, we work with families to try to find solutions to problems by talking directly to parents and children. If possible we like to involve brothers and sisters, grandparents or other members of the family. Our priority is to help families stay together.

If a young person cannot return home because it is unsafe, we can help arrange somewhere for them to stay – with a foster carer or in supervised accommodation such as a youth refuge.

If you think someone you know – even your own child – is at risk of harm in any way, please phone the DoCS Helpline.

Young people needing information and advice can contact the Kids Help Line and parents needing support can call the Parent Line.

Anyone experiencing domestic violence can phone DoCS' Domestic Violence Line.

These numbers can be dialled toll-free at any time, from anywhere in the State.

DoCS Helpline 132 111

TTY\* 9633 7698

Kids Help Line 1800 551 800

Parent Line (Centacare)  
1300 1300 52

Domestic Violence Line  
1800 656 463  
TTY\* 1800 671 442

*\* TTY is a facility that assists people with impaired hearing.*





## PROVIDING CARE FOR CHILDREN WHO CAN'T LIVE WITH THEIR FAMILIES

Out-of-home care is the main way we care for children who can't live with their families.

We provide this care with our community partners. These include agencies such as Centacare, Burnside, Anglicare and Barnardos.

Out-of-home care provides a safe, secure and comfortable family life for children who, for a variety of reasons, cannot live with their own parents. This care includes placements with other family members or extended family (in Aboriginal communities this is called 'kinship care'), foster care or residential care.



Our aim is to reunite children with their family wherever possible, so most out-of-home care is for a short time only. If this is not possible, we find a long-term family for the child or young person to grow up in.

We always need more foster carers. Foster carers play an extremely important role in supporting each foster child's relationship with their own family.

If you would like to become a foster carer, or would like more information about fostering, please call 1800 011 110.



## HELPING PEOPLE SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES FIND THEIR RECORDS

We help people who were in our care or adopted to find information and records.

Former wards of the state, or people who were under the parental responsibility of the Minister for Community Services, are entitled to see the Department's records about why they came into care and their time in care. This is a free service. Staff at your local DoCS Community Services Centre can get these records for you. If you live outside NSW please call our Freedom of Information Unit on 9716 2662.

People who were adopted and their birth relatives can obtain information about the adoption if they have an entitlement under the *Adoption Act 2000*. To find out if you are entitled to see this information contact the Adoption Information Unit on 9716 3002 or 1300 799 023.

Freedom of Information Unit  
9716 2662



# PROVIDING AND REGULATING ADOPTION SERVICES

We coordinate adoptions for NSW – for Australian and overseas born children, identifying suitable families for them to be placed with and providing support for those placements.

Adoptions are arranged by DoCS and by accredited adoption agencies such as Barnardos, Centacare and Anglicare. They are made legally binding by the Supreme Court of NSW.

DoCS arranges adoptions of children from overseas.

Detailed information is available on our website [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au) under adoptions.

Adoption Information Unit  
9716 3002  
or 1300 799 023





## BUILDING AND DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

We have a range of programs to build and strengthen communities.

**Families NSW** – a whole-of-government strategy to help parents and carers give their children a good start in life. DoCS funds a range of support services including volunteer home visiting and playgroups. NSW Health funds universal home visiting by early childhood nurses and the Department of Education and Training is involved in transition to school programs. Visit [www.families.nsw.gov.au](http://www.families.nsw.gov.au) for more information.

**Better Futures** – aims to keep young people aged 9-18 connected to education, their communities and families. It is a cross government strategy supporting healthy and safe transitions to adulthood.



**Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy** – provides a wide range of support programs for Aboriginal children and young people from birth to 18 years, and supports local community planning and initiatives.

**Community Builders** – an interactive website to help people share information about innovative community projects and what government support is available. Visit [www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au).

**Strengthening Communities** – delivers a range of innovative projects in the areas of Community Leadership and Engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility and Research, aimed at promoting stronger local communities.

**Area Assistance Scheme** – provides approximately \$10 million in grants each year to community organisations and councils for projects which strengthen communities and help to build a fair and equitable society.



## HELPING PEOPLE AFFECTED BY NATURAL AND OTHER DISASTERS

During emergencies such as bushfires, floods, major storms or earthquakes, we coordinate services with our community partners such as The Salvation Army, ADRA, Red Cross, Anglicare and St Vincent de Paul.

We provide immediate relief and assistance to help people get their lives back together as soon as possible. This can include food, clothing, accommodation and immediate financial assistance. We can also arrange longer term financial assistance to help make homes safe and habitable.

State Disaster Recovery Centre  
8855 5111 or  
freecall 1800 018 444



## OFFERING SUPPORT SERVICES TO ASSIST HOMELESS PEOPLE

Through the joint  
State/Commonwealth  
Supported  
Accommodation  
Assistance Program  
(SAAP), we run the  
largest program for  
homeless people  
in Australia.

SAAP supports people who  
are homeless or at risk of  
homelessness to get back on  
their feet. We offer a range  
of services through non-  
government agencies, including  
accommodation, to help people  
regain their independence.

There are over 400 community-  
based SAAP projects across  
NSW working to support young  
people, single men and women  
and families, as well as women  
and children escaping domestic  
violence.

Homeless Person's Information  
Centre 9265 9081 or  
freecall 1800 234 566

Youth Emergency  
Accommodation Line  
freecall 1800 424 830

Aboriginal Corporation for  
Homeless and Rehabilitation  
Community Services 9799 8446





## FUNDING AND REGULATING CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUCH AS PRESCHOOLS AND DAY CARE

We make sure a range of children's services is available to suit the needs of all families.

These include preschools, long day care, before and after school care, occasional care and vacation care.

In country areas we help to establish multi-purpose and mobile children's services.

We license children's services in NSW and set the standards by which all children's services must operate.

We also fund the Child and Family Info Line which can give you more information on children's services throughout NSW.

Visit our website [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au) for information about choosing a child care centre.

If you have questions about children's services in your area, you'll find contact numbers for DoCS regional offices on the next page.

Child Care and Family Info Line  
8594 4244 or  
freecall 1800 803 820



# CONTACT NUMBERS

## DoCS Regional Offices

**To report child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week phone DoCS Helpline 132 111**

### Head Office

Switchboard 9716 2222  
(8.30am – 5.00pm)

4-6 Cavill Avenue  
Ashfield 2131

Locked Bag 4028  
Ashfield NSW 2131

*Please note: The area code for all phone numbers in this booklet is 02 unless otherwise stated.*

### Metro Central Region

Redfern 8303 7600

### Metro South West Region

Bankstown 9781 5555

### Metro West Region

Blacktown/ 9830 1000

Baulkham Hills

Parramatta 9354 1800

Nepean 4722 7400

### Hunter & Central Coast Region

Central Coast 4336 2401

Hunter 4985 1666

### Northern Region

Ballina 6686 1999

Mid-North Coast 6563 7800

New England 6738 8100

### Southern Region

Illawarra 4222 8400

Queanbeyan 6229 7202

### Western Region

Central West 6361 6990

Orana Far West 6841 3250

Wagga Wagga 6937 9400

## DoCS Community Services Centres

Albury	6058 4900	Cooma	6450 2888
Armidale	6738 8200	Coonabarabran	6826 6000
Auburn	9335 4100	Coonamble	6827 1400
Ballina	6686 1999	Cootamundra	6942 1555
Bankstown	8713 7800	Cowra	6341 1855
Batemans Bay	4472 4678	Dareton	(03) 5019 8900
Bathurst	6333 0300	Deniliquin	(03) 5882 2500
Bega	6499 0500	Dubbo	6884 5877
Blacktown	9830 1000	Eastern Sydney	8303 7688
Bourke	6872 2188	Edgeworth	4958 0600
Bowral	4861 0700	Epping	9815 0700
Brewarrina	6839 2482	Fairfield	9205 6000
Broken Hill	(08) 8087 2844	Glen Innes	6732 4925
Burwood	8372 9000	Gosford	4336 2400
Campbelltown	4621 5600	Goulburn	4828 5500
Central Sydney	8303 7666	Griffith	6961 8500
Cessnock	4993 5000	Hawkesbury	4574 6666
Charlestown	4985 1500	Ingleburn	9765 6111
Chatswood	9406 9777	Inverell	6728 2700
Clarence Valley (Grafton)	6641 2400	Katoomba	4782 3066
Cobar	6836 1360	Kempsey	6562 1385
Coffs Harbour	6659 1555	Lakemba	9704 7100
Condobolin	6890 1100	Leeton	6953 9700
		Lismore	6623 4900



Lithgow	6351 4688	Tumut	6947 4100
Liverpool	8778 3300	Tweed Heads	(07) 5569 9330
Maitland	4939 4800	Ulladulla	4454 7744
Mayfield	4974 3700	Wagga Wagga	6937 9300
Moree	6750 7300	Walgett	6828 1409
Mount Druitt	8887 7400	Wilcannia	(08) 8091 5050
Mudgee	6372 5700	Wollongong	4222 8600
Muswellbrook	6543 2455	Wyong	4352 6500
Narrabri	6790 6000	Yass	6226 7300
Nowra	4424 5100		
Nyngan	6831 1000		
Orange	6361 6999		
Parkes	6862 1422		
Parramatta	9354 1888		
Penrith	4722 7300		
Port Macquarie	6580 3700		
Queanbeyan	6299 7200		
Raymond Terrace	4987 1022		
St George	9585 7222		
St Marys	9673 4777		
Shellharbour	4255 6666		
Sutherland	8536 1111		
Tamworth	6768 4600		
Taree	6591 2100		

*For current information  
about DoCS and our  
services, visit our website [www.  
community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)*



## DoCS Services

Adoption Information Unit

9716 3002  
1300 799 023

Domestic Violence Line

(24 hours) 1800 656 463

Helpline (24 hour child

protection service) 132 111

Foster Care Recruitment

1800 011 110

State Disaster Recovery Centre

(9am – 5pm) 8855 5111  
1800 018 444





## Other important contact numbers and websites

Aboriginal Corporation for  
Homeless and Rehabilitation  
Community Services 9799 8446

Alcohol and Drug Information  
Services (24 hours) 9361 8000  
1800 422 599

Child Care and Family Information  
8594 4244  
1800 803 820

Commission for Children and  
Young People 9286 7276  
[www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)

Department of Family and  
Community Services  
(Commonwealth) 1300 653 227

Homeless Person's Information  
Centre 9265 9081

Kids Help Line 1800 551 800

Lifeline (24 hours) 131 114

Office of the Children's Guardian  
8219 3600  
[www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

Parent Help Line  
(Tresillian) 9787 0855  
1800 637 357

Parent Line  
(24 hours) 1300 1300 52

Translating and  
Interpreting Service 131 450

Youth Emergency Accommodation  
Line (24 hours) 1800 424 830

[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au)

[www.youth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.parenting.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parenting.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.families.nsw.gov.au](http://www.families.nsw.gov.au)

[www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au](http://www.aboutdaterape.nsw.gov.au)

*24 hour emergency contact  
numbers are listed inside the front  
cover of all telephone directories.*

This brochure is available in:

Arabic: يتوافر هذا المنشور باللغة العربية

Chinese: 本資料小冊子備有中文版本。

Croatian: Ovu brošuru možete dobiti na hrvatskom.

Macedonian: Оваа брошура може да се добие на македонски јазик.

Turkish: Bu broşür Türkçe olarak mevcuttur.

Vietnamese: Tập hướng dẫn này có sẵn qua tiếng Việt.

To report a child or  
young person at risk  
of harm from abuse  
or neglect contact  
DoCS Helpline 132 111  
TTY 9633 7698

People featured in photographs in this  
brochure are models only.

NSW Department of Community Services  
4 - 6 Cavill Avenue  
Ashfield NSW 2131  
(02) 9716 2222  
[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

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