



COMMUNITY SERVICES

Guideline for External Providers of Psychological Services to Community Services

September 2009

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**External Providers of Psychological Services
to
Community Services**

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1 Overview

Community Services psychologists provide a number of clinically related services including assessment, intervention, consultation/liaison and training.

Occasionally the agency may seek the services of an external psychologist because of their particular expertise or because Community Services or other public sector psychologists are not available.

The term *external psychologist* refers to a psychologist not employed in the public sector or within a Community Services funded NGO.

A register is maintained of external psychologists eligible for contract work with Community Services clients. The register is reviewed annually.

Inclusion on the register demonstrates that the external psychologist has met the strict selection requirements of Community Services. It does not, however, guarantee an offer of work by Community Services.

This document outlines the:

- Information required from psychologists wishing to be on the register
- Selection criteria
- Process for referral to an external psychologist
- Reporting requirements for external psychologists
- Fee structure for external psychologists.

2 Information Required for Placement on the Register

For placement on the register psychologists must:

- Provide an up to date Curriculum Vitae;
- Address the selection criteria;
- Provide contact information for two non- related referees who have known the applicant if possible, in a supervisory capacity, for at least two years and can confirm the applicant's professional appropriateness to provide psychological services to Community Services clients;
- Consent to background checks commonly undertaken for positions that involve working with children and young people;
- Indicate their capacity to provide the service at an appropriate venue;
- Agree to provide regular reports on client progress;
- Provide evidence that they hold a current and appropriate Public Liability Insurance Policy to the quantum of \$10,000,000 and a current and appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance Policy to the quantum of \$5,000,000.
- Acknowledge that the agreement is between Community Services and an individual (not a business entity or private practice) and may not be transferred between individuals; and
- Agree to accept the CS schedule of fees.

3 Selection Criteria

1 Registration as a Psychologist

Applicants must provide evidence of full current registration with the NSW Psychologists Registration Board.

2 Qualifications/Experience

Applicants must:

- Provide certified copies of their Masters or Clinical Doctorate degree and academic transcripts in a relevant area of psychology from a recognised university;
- or
- Provide evidence that they have delivered evidence based psychological services including assessment, clinical formulation and intervention in an area related to children and young people for at least five years.

3 Areas of Clinical Speciality

Applicants are required to describe and provide evidence of their areas of clinical speciality.

These must include:

- Providing psychological services to children and /or adolescents, their parents or their carers.

They may also include, but are not limited to:

- Providing psychological services within a child protection context;
- Providing services directed at attachment and attachment related issues in children, adolescents and their parents or carers;
- Providing services for complex and challenging clinical cases; or
- Providing services that revolve around the functional analysis of behaviour and its management and change.

4 Provision of High Quality Psychological Reports

Applicants are required to provide evidence of their capacity to produce high quality psychological reports that detail referral questions, assessment, clinical formulation, clinical intervention and clinical outcome.

Applicants are required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the Expert Witness Code of Conduct in the Supreme Court of NSW and ensure that any report prepared by them for Court conforms to the general standard of reports in those proceedings. A content outline for such reports together with the Expert Witness Code of Conduct in the Supreme Court of NSW is included as Appendix 5 in this document.

Applicants are invited to provide two recent and de-identified reports that they have written that demonstrate their ability and experience within a child protection or child and adolescent clinical psychological context;

or

Applicants may wish to produce a fictitious report in response to this criterion. If this option is chosen, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate an understanding of processes of referral, assessment, clinical formulation, clinical intervention and clinical outcome within the context of child protection or child and adolescent psychology.

5 Record of Professional Development Undertaken

Applicants are required to submit a record of professional development (including supervision) that they have undertaken or provided in the last 5 years.

6 Clinical practice issues with child protection populations.

Applicants are required to provide evidence that they understand the key themes and issues that are likely to arise in clinical work within the context of child protection. These themes may include but are not limited to:

- The assessment of and intervention for attachment related difficulties in children, young people and their parents or carers;
- Functional behavioural analysis;
- Behavioural intervention;
- Parenting capacity assessment and intervention;
- Assessment and treatment of drug and alcohol misuse particularly within the context of complex mental health presentations; and
- The role of informed consent with CS clients.

4 Selection Panel

Applications for inclusion on the approved external psychologists register will be considered by a panel comprising:

- Director, Psychological Services;
- Manager, Regional or Specialist Psychological Services;
- Regional Psychological Services Team Leader;
- Senior Public Sector Psychologist (not CS);
- NSW Psychologists Registration Board representative.

The panel may request further information from and/or interviews with psychologists being considered for inclusion on the external psychologist register.

5 Referrals

Referrals to external providers of psychological services will include specific referral questions, the complexity of the scope of the referral and the psychometric assessment measures that Community Services wishes to have completed at initial assessment, during intervention and at completion.

It will also detail the frequency with which reports are to be provided on the child or young person.

It is important that external providers of psychological services maintain regular communication with CS about children or young people they are working with, and address any questions or concerns they may have as they arise.

6 Informed Consent

Children and young people for whom the Minister maintains parental responsibility are in a unique position with respect to informed consent.

There may be no legal imperative for departmental psychologists or external providers of psychological services to gain the informed consent from children or young people in the care of the Minister.

It is, however, strongly recommended that in the interests of establishing productive and motivated relationships, all departmental clients should be fully informed about any assessment and/or intervention work that a psychologist may undertake with them. In addition, if the client is a minor, s/he should be fully informed about any assessment and/or intervention that a psychologist may undertake with them and their assent to participate in that work gained. If they are at an age where they can provide their own consent, they should be fully informed about the work that is planned and their consent to participate in that work should be gained.

Community Services has developed an Informed Consent Guideline to assist in this area.

7 Occupational Health and Safety Matters

External providers of psychological services to Community Services are generally required to undertake psychological assessment and intervention in their own professional rooms.

Services may, if necessary, be provided in the client/s home. For instance, it may be necessary to collect observational data from the home or care environment. External providers are reminded that their safety in such situations is their own responsibility and are encouraged to exercise care.

It is important that external providers of psychological services do not see CS clients in offices that are situated in their own homes. It is essential that this caveat is maintained to ensure practitioner safety.

External providers of psychological services are reminded that they are responsible for indemnifying themselves against any and all public liability.

If external providers of psychological services have any concern about their own safety, or if they have been threatened or intimidated in any way, they must discontinue assessment or intervention services with the client(s) in question.

In circumstances where external providers of psychological services have any concern about their own safety, they must report their concern to the Community Services office with which they have been dealing.

8 Use of Interpreters

Interpreting may be arranged to facilitate access to services for clients and their families/carers who speak a language other than English or for clients who are hearing impaired. Points to note in relation to interpreting include:

Where appropriate, clients who speak a language other than English may be referred to an external provider of psychological services with the relevant language.

External providers of psychological services who speak a language other than English or who are AUSLAN Interpreters, should inform Community Services.

If an interpreter is required, the external providers of psychological services should arrange for an interpreter to be available for the appointment via Language Services, Community Relations Commission.

If the interpreter is late for a session, or fails to present, or any other difficulties are experienced in relation to the interpreting provided, external providers of psychological services are encouraged to contact their instructing officer within Community Services.

9 Reporting by External Psychologists

Any psychological work that is undertaken with Community Services clients by external psychologists must be recorded and communicated to Community Services in the form of psychological reports.

Psychometric assessment must be undertaken at Initial Assessment, for Six Weekly Reports and at Discharge. This provides a psychometric baseline at intake allows progress to be tracked at six weekly intervals and contributes to the evaluation of treatment undertaken. Community Services has a list of preferred psychometric assessment measures that will be detailed within each Service Agreement.

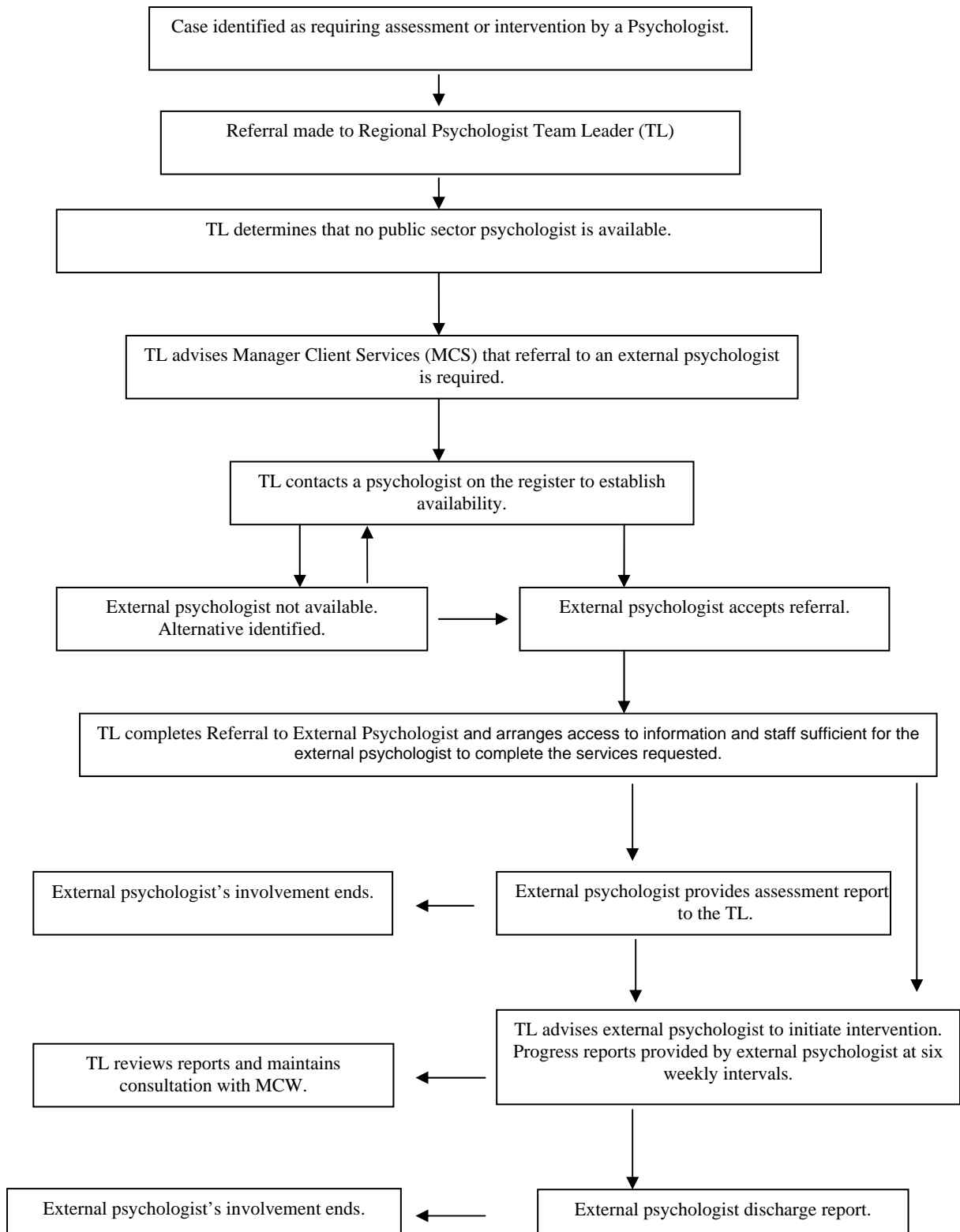
Community Services has developed formats for Initial Assessment Reports, Six Weekly Reports and Discharge Reports for use by external psychologists. These are included as Appendices.

Where psychological reports are to be written for Court, the report will be written in the format described in Appendix 5 of these Guidelines.

10 Fees

Community Services has developed a schedule of fees for external psychologists engaged in providing psychological services. This schedule is included as Appendix 6 of these Guidelines.

11 Referral Flowchart



12 Appendices

Appendix 1 Initial Assessment Report Form

Appendix 2 Complex Assessment Report Form

Appendix 3 Six Session Report Form

Appendix 4 Discharge Report Form

Appendix 5 Schedule of Fees

Appendix 6 Reports Written for Court

Appendix 7 Referral for External Psychological Services Form

Appendix 1

Initial Assessment Report

Name of External Psychologist: _____

Name of Client: _____ DOB: _____

Legal Status: _____

Residential Status: _____

Address: _____

Organisation/Carer Name: _____

Caseworker: _____ MCS: _____

CSC: _____

Please address the following areas and return this form to the address on the letterhead within 7 working days of Initial Assessment.

Initial Assessment (First Session) Date:

Referral Questions:

Informed Consent:

Mental Status Exam:

Presenting Problems:

Relevant History:

Psychometric Assessment Results:

Initial Formulation:

Diagnosis (if appropriate):

Treatment Plan:

Signature

Date:

Appendix 2

Complex Assessment Report

Name of External Psychologist: _____

Name of Client: _____ DOB: _____

Legal Status: _____

Residential Status: _____

Address: _____

Organisation/Carer Name: _____

Caseworker: _____ MCS: _____

CSC: _____

Please address the following areas and return this form to the address on the letterhead within 7 working days of Initial Assessment.

Initial Assessment (First Session) Date:

Subsequent assessment sessions Dates:

Referral Questions:

Informed Consent:

Mental Status Exam:

Presenting Problems:

Relevant History:

Psychometric Assessment Measures Utilised:

Psychometric Assessment Results:

Diagnosis (if appropriate):

Signature

Date:

Appendix 3

Six Sessions Report

Name of External Psychologist: _____

Name of Client: _____ DOB: _____

Legal Status: _____

Residential Status: _____

Address: _____

Organisation/Carer Name: _____

Caseworker: _____ MCS: _____

CSC: _____

Commencing Date: _____ Expected Completion Date: _____

Sessions # approved: _____ # attended: _____ # missed: _____

What were the referral questions?

Initial Assessment Date:

Informed Consent:

Presenting Problems:

Relevant History:

Psychometric Assessment Results:

Current Clinical Formulation:

Diagnosis (if appropriate):

Treatment Components to Date:

Six Sessions Report (cont)

Sessional Overview:

Session Date	Issues Raised	Strategies Used	Any Referrals
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Treatment Compliance/Response To Date:

Treatment Outcomes to Date:

Updated Treatment Plan:

Envisaged Treatment Compliance/Response (Next 6 Sessions):

Next Report Date:

Signature

Date:

Appendix 4

Discharge Report

Name of External Psychologist: _____

Name of Client: _____ **DOB:** _____

Legal Status: _____

Residential Status: _____

Address: _____

Organisation/Carer Name: _____

Caseworker: _____ **MCS:** _____

CSC: _____

Commencing Date: _____ **Completion Date:** _____

Sessions # approved: _____ **# attended:** _____ **# missed:** _____

What were the referral questions?

Initial Assessment Date:

Informed Consent:

Presenting Problems:

Relevant history:

Summary of all Psychometric Assessment Undertaken:

Clinical Formulation:

Diagnosis (if appropriate):

Treatment Components Utilised:

Discharge Report (cont)

Sessional Overview Since Last Six Weekly Report

Session Date	Issues Raised	Strategies used	Any referrals
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Treatment Compliance/Response:

Treatment Outcomes:

Client's Protective Factors/Strengths:

Current Challenges/Concerns:

Prognosis;

Signature

Date:

Appendix 5

Reports Written for Court and Expert Witness Code of Conduct

UNIFORM CIVIL PROCEDURE RULES 2005 - SCHEDULE 7

SCHEDULE 7 – Expert witness code of conduct

(Rule 31.23)

(cf SCR Schedule K)

1 Application of code

This code of conduct applies to any expert witness engaged or appointed:

- (a) to provide an expert's report for use as evidence in proceedings or proposed proceedings, or
- (b) to give opinion evidence in proceedings or proposed proceedings.

2 General duty to the court

- (1) An expert witness has an overriding duty to assist the court impartially on matters relevant to the expert witness's area of expertise.
- (2) An expert witness's paramount duty is to the court and not to any party to the proceedings (including the person retaining the expert witness).
- (3) An expert witness is not an advocate for a party.

3 Duty to comply with court's directions

An expert witness must abide by any direction of the court.

4 Duty to work co-operatively with other expert witnesses

An expert witness, when complying with any direction of the court to confer with another expert witness or to prepare a parties' expert's report with another expert witness in relation to any issue:

- (a) must exercise his or her independent, professional judgment in relation to that issue, and
- (b) must endeavour to reach agreement with the other expert witness on that issue, and
- (c) must not act on any instruction or request to withhold or avoid agreement with the other expert witness.

5 Experts' reports

(1) An expert's report must (in the body of the report or in an annexure to it) include the following:

- (a) the expert's qualifications as an expert on the issue the subject of the report,
- (b) the facts, and assumptions of fact, on which the opinions in the report are based (a letter of instructions may be annexed),
- (c) the expert's reasons for each opinion expressed,
- (d) if applicable, that a particular issue falls outside the expert's field of expertise,
- (e) any literature or other materials utilised in support of the opinions,
- (f) any examinations, tests or other investigations on which the expert has relied, including details of the qualifications of the person who carried them out,
- (g) in the case of a report that is lengthy or complex, a brief summary of the report (to be located at the beginning of the report).

(2) If an expert witness who prepares an expert's report believes that it may be incomplete or inaccurate without some qualification, the qualification must be stated in the report.

(3) If an expert witness considers that his or her opinion is not a concluded opinion because of insufficient research or insufficient data or for any other reason, this must be stated when the opinion is expressed.

(4) If an expert witness changes his or her opinion on a material matter after providing an expert's report to the party engaging him or her (or that party's legal representative), the expert witness must forthwith provide the engaging party (or that party's legal representative) with a supplementary report to that effect containing such of the information referred to in subclause (1) as is appropriate.

6 Experts' conference

(1) Without limiting [clause 3](#), an expert witness must abide by any direction of the court:

- (a) to confer with any other expert witness, or
- (b) to endeavour to reach agreement on any matters in issue, or
- (c) to prepare a joint report, specifying matters agreed and matters not agreed and reasons for any disagreement, or
- (d) to base any joint report on specified facts or assumptions of fact.

(2) An expert witness must exercise his or her independent, professional judgment in relation to such a conference and joint report, and must not act on any instruction or request to withhold or avoid agreement.

Appendix 6

Schedule of Fees

External psychologists providing psychological services to Community Services (CS) will be paid at a rate of \$150.00/hour. This rate will be reviewed annually.

External psychological service providers will invoice CS on the basis of 15 minute increments. For instance, assessment that took 85 minutes to complete will be invoiced at 6 x 15 minutes, 90 minutes, or \$225.00 not including GST.

There may be occasions when an alteration to the level of remuneration is necessary. Examples could include acquiring highly specialist services for remote areas of NSW. An agreement to pay above the fixed schedule of fees must be documented with an exchange of letters or an Agreement Variation rather than a new Service Agreement.

The Team Leader will approve the payment of fees. Payment may come from funds allocated to the child or young person's financial plan.

Appendix 7

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REFERRAL FOR EXTERNAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

This referral is made for a Community Services client to receive Psychological Services from a psychologist external to the public sector and listed on the Community Services' register of psychologists approved to provide external psychological services. If the referee is not listed on the Community Services' register of psychologists approved to provide external psychological services, the referral can not be completed.

Team Leader Details

The referral is made by: _____

Team Leader of: _____ Region

Contact Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Psychologist's Details

The referral is made to: _____

NSW Psychologists Registration Board number: _____

Practice Address: _____

Client Details

The referral is made on behalf of:

Client: _____ KiDS No: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____ School Year: _____

Address: _____

Gender: Female Male

Is the Client an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes No

Is the Client of other Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Background? Yes No

Please specify: _____

Language Spoken at Home: _____

Is an Interpreter Required? Yes No



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REFERRAL FOR EXTERNAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Clients Current Care Arrangements:

Client: _____

(Parental Care, Foster Care, OOHC, PRMin etc): _____

Current Address: _____

Referral Questions:

Services Requested:

Assessment: Yes No List: _____

Complex Assessment: Yes No List: _____

Intervention: Yes No List: _____

List of attachments provided with this referral: _____

Acceptance

If the External Psychologist accepts this referral, s/he must complete the following details, maintain the original copy for their records, and fax a copy of the original back to the Team Leader detailed above.

Psychologist Accepting this Referral:

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Team Leader's Acknowledgement of Receipt of Acceptance of Referral

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____