

NSW Department of Community Services

Caseworker

WHO WILL I BE WORKING FOR?

The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and works to build stronger families and communities across a continuum of care. We provide child protection services, parenting support and early intervention, foster care, adoption services and help for communities affected by disaster through more than 85 Community Services Centres across NSW.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK WILL I BE DOING?

Caseworkers make up two thirds of the DoCS workforce and are frontline staff who work to keep children safe. They do this by helping families find solutions to problems whether they be social, psychological or emotional, and play an integral role in shaping new approaches to child and family support services in NSW.

A caseworker's job involves:

- **Gathering Information:** you will obtain and review information and follow up reports made to DoCS Helpline about children and young people at risk of harm
- **Interviewing people:** you will talk to children, parents, carers and other people to work out what issues may be going on with the child, young person and their family
- **Completing assessments:** you will work with families to assess risk factors and strengths of the child's situation. Assessments are used to work out what further action may be needed
- **Working with families:** you will create Case Plans that involve actions for positive changes for both the child and their family so that the family remains together or is reunited in the shortest possible time. You will also work out ways for children and young people to keep their cultural identity and family connections, where needed
- **Working with the community:** you will help build relationships with agencies who work with DoCS to support and strengthen families.

WHAT AREAS CAN I WORK IN?

Caseworkers have opportunities to move into a number of different areas, including:

- **Child protection** – assessing reports and providing assistance to families to reduce harm for the child or young person and if necessary take children's court action
- **Street teams**- reducing crime, risk taking and anti social behaviour by children and young people in areas such as Redfern, Cabramatta and Kings Cross
- **Joint Investigation Response Teams (JIRT)** – where professionals from DoCS and NSW Police undertake joint investigation of child protection matters, where serious physical or sexual assault of children is involved
- **Multicultural caseworker** – providing enhanced services to children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families and communities
- **Out-of-Home Care** – supporting children and carers where children are unable to live safely with their birth families
- **DoCS Helpline** – taking initial reports from people with concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, and assessing what further actions may need to be taken
- **Early Intervention** – assessing strengths and needs of families and assisting them access a range of appropriate services
- **Aboriginal caseworker** – consulting and advising on Aboriginal children who are at risk, and the placements of Aboriginal children and young people who are in out-of-home care.

continued

"You need good communication skills, but more importantly, you must have the passion for helping children young people and their families"

*Elaine Turner,
Senior Aboriginal Child Protection
Caseworker*

WHAT SORT OF SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE DO I NEED?

You should have skills in:

- analysing and solving problems
- planning and organising
- building relationships
- working with children and young adults.

Work experience could include:

- student placement/practicum experience in a community services/child and family work environment
- volunteer experience in a relevant field
- paid work experience in a relevant occupation such as working with young people or working with families.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED?

Caseworkers require a degree in social work, social science, welfare or a related discipline.

While the majority of DoCS new caseworkers are recent university graduates, the nature of the work means that maturity and life experience, (combined with a relevant degree) are also highly valued.

Degree qualifications for Aboriginal caseworkers are preferred but not essential.

WHAT ARE THE EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS?

Employment as a caseworker offers a variety of career prospects, training opportunities and excellent conditions including:

- salary range from *\$51,784 – \$71,546 with salary package up to \$78,951 p.a.
- four weeks annual leave
- fifteen days paid sick leave per year
- flexible working hours – 140 hours per month, which is an average of seven hours per day.

* effective from July 1 2007

WILL I GET ON-THE-JOB TRAINING?

Entry level training is provided to all caseworker employees at the commencement of work. As a new caseworker, you will have to complete the DoCS' Caseworker Development Course. You will also be given other support including:

- regular supervision
- weekly Practice Solution sessions where you learn about new policies or procedures, or find out about new research findings
- opportunities for group discussion to review aspects of case management
- a comprehensive learning and development program which allows you to access training in new skills or knowledge for your current job or for your planned next career steps in DoCS
- access to study time and financial support to undertake further job-related studies.

HOW DO I APPLY ?

DoCS regularly advertises for staff in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, on www.jobs.nsw.gov.au, (look under "C" for Community Services) and on www.seek.com.au

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about DoCS and career opportunities please visit our website www.community.nsw.gov.au

People from culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal backgrounds are encouraged to apply.