



Peer Support Worker INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

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ABOUT FISH: Family Inclusion Strategies in the Hunter Inc. (FISH) is a small organisation that formed in 2014. Our mission is to achieve better outcomes for children and young people in child protection and out-of-home-care systems. To achieve this we advocate, support, and amplify the voices of parents and family who have come to the attention of DCJ and whose children were removed or may be at risk of being removed. Parents involved in these systems are often excluded from decisions about their children, have limited time with their children while they are in care, and their voices are often not heard. No matter where a child lives, it is critical for them to have relationships with their parents and other family when safe to do so.

Our organisation is managed by a committee which is comprised of parents with lived experience of child protection and out-of-home care as well as child protection practitioners. We currently receive limited funding and our committee is entirely volunteer. Peer support workers undertake a combination of paid and volunteer work (e.g., 4-hours phone support=2 hrs paid, 2 hrs voluntary).

OUR PEER SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY SERVICE:

We currently offer court support, phone support, and group support (morning teas, information sessions, workshops) and will expand to meeting and family time support. [more info](#)

SELECTION PROCESS:

We can help you through the selection process and answer any questions you have along the way.

We encourage parents from all cultural communities to apply.

 We are very interested in recruiting some Aboriginal peer support workers. Aboriginal children and young people are taken from families and communities at higher rates than other children and they are not always supported by Aboriginal agencies and workers during care. Peer support workers who can provide culturally safe support for parents, family and community is critical.

There are four steps in the selection process. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- we want to make sure we get the best possible people to support parents and families; and
- this work can raise lots of emotions and revisit traumatic experiences. We want to make sure applicants can think that through with support before making a final decision.

Information session/discussion	Either in a group or one-on-one. Peer support workers will talk about the role and some of their experiences, and we will talk about requirements of the job and answer questions about the selection process.
Interview & Written application	<p>We will make a time for you to chat with a peer support worker and the service manager to talk about how you might be a good peer support worker.</p> <p>We can help you complete the application form. We will use the application form as a guide and can complete some or all of it during the interview. You also have the option of completing the application form by yourself, before or after this interview.</p> <p>The essential and desirable criteria in the application form are linked to the Position Description (attached). To be selected, you must meet all of the essential criteria.</p>
Observation	Before a final decision is made by you or us, you will have a chance to see support in-action and get a feel for where you might work. If you meet the essential criteria you will be asked to observe one session of peer support at court with parents and family. After the observation we chat about what you saw and how you think you might go in the role.

FINAL DECISIONS ABOUT APPLICANTS WILL BE MADE AFTER INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS.

You can submit an application anytime

Questions/enquiries: Lou Johnston, FISH Peer Support & Advocacy
M: 0416 013 823 | E: contact@finclusionh.org

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Peer Support Worker

Supervisor: Project Worker or
Nominated FISH Committee member (if no project worker)



Purpose of Role: To provide peer support and advocacy as a parent with lived experience for parents and families involved in the child protection and out-of-home care systems. Peer support and advocacy includes court support, phone support, information resources, peer support groups, and other activities that may be developed as part of program and strategic planning.

Employment status: Casual – combination of paid and volunteer hours

Starting pay rate: SCHADS, Social and Community Services Employee, L2 PP1

1. Reporting Structure

The Project Worker will provide support and supervision for the Parent Partner.

The Project Worker role may be short term. In the event there is no Project Worker, the Peer Support Worker will report to and be supervised by a nominated FISH committee member.

2. Key Responsibilities

1. Provide brief information, emotional support, and advocacy to parents and family at court, via phone, at peer support groups, and other locations as determined.
2. Promote FISH and its services, activities, and programs to parents, families, and government and non-government providers in relevant sectors, including child protection, child and family, and permanency support programs, such as, out-of-home care and family preservation.
3. Build and sustain professional relationships with stakeholders including the Broadmeadow Children's Court, legal services, non-government organisations and NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).
4. Collect data to assist in administration and evaluation of peer support and advocacy.
5. Write brief confidential notes on interactions with parents and family in line with approved guidelines.
6. Assist in the review of practices and resources for parents and families to assist them to navigate the care and protection system, including the legal system and legal processes.
7. Engage in regular supervision – individual and group with other peer support workers – and teamwork meetings and other activities.
8. Follow directions from the Project Worker and nominated FISH Committee members.
9. Professionally represent FISH and our services at all times through professional conduct, dress and in all communications in line with relevant FISH policies, including the Code of Conduct and those related to social media, confidentiality, and conflicts of interest.

Important: During court support, with the lawyer's consent, Peer Support Workers may be present and provide emotional support at times when parents talk to their lawyers. The Peer Support Worker cannot participate in conversations or any interactions between parents, family members, and lawyers unless invited by both the parent and the lawyer, or speak or communicate in anyway on behalf of parents or family members to either the lawyer or the Court, unless invited to by the lawyer or the Court. Peer Support Workers will be required to sign a commitment to adhere to this requirement when they are appointed and to participate in training and supervision to support how they work in the role.

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3. Selection Criteria

(criteria for job application)

Essential

1. Previous lived experience of child removal and placement in out-of-home care (as a parent or close family member) along with personal change that led to improved safety and wellbeing for children.
2. Confidence to empathically share own learning and life change, within professional boundaries, with families who are experiencing removal of children into care or are at high risk of child removal.
3. Knowledge (based on lived experience) of the child protection and out-of-home care system in NSW, including an understanding of the law and a willingness and capacity to learn.
4. Ability to work in partnership with agencies and workers in the interests of children and young people.
5. Ability to be well organised and manage time and tasks.
6. Good verbal communication skills and ability to work well with people.
7. Ability to read and write including reading written instructions and completing forms.

Probity checks will be implemented. It is expected that the issues that contributed to past child protection involvement have been resolved for 12 months or more and there is no ongoing involvement with NSW DCJ in relation to child protection concerns. Applicants will need to give permission for this to be verified directly with NSW DCJ and potentially with other agencies.

Desirable

1. Certificate or Diploma level qualification in Community Services or related
2. Employment or volunteer work with a community organisation
3. Lived experience that includes a restoration/reunification process or sustaining a quality parenting relationship with children remaining in care
4. Awareness of resources available in the community that may help families with a child in care

For other information about FISH and its services see:

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