

## What is the role of NSW Health workers in the NSW child protection system?

All NSW Health workers must promote the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. This must occur in collaboration with interagency and non-government organisation (NGO) partners. The continuum of NSW Health services across primary, secondary and tertiary care offers many opportunities to identify children and young people at risk. These services can assist vulnerable parents and carers to access appropriate support to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children.

NSW health workers are at the frontline of the public health system. Health workers are uniquely placed to identify and respond to risk factors for child abuse and neglect to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. Where a child or young person is at risk of significant harm NSW Health workers must respond. This includes making a report to the NSW Child Protection Helpline.

## What are your responsibilities?

### Identify

- Be alert to signs of possible child abuse, neglect, family violence and prenatal harm.
- Consider adult health issues that may affect parenting capacity.

### Consult

- Discuss your concerns with your colleagues or manager.
- Use the online NSW [Mandatory Reporter Guide \(MRG\)](#) to inform initial decision making.
- Contact the [NSW Health Child Wellbeing Unit](#) for background information to help determine the level of risk and in planning next steps. Call 1300 480 420.

### Respond

- Do not stop providing health services and working with the family where concerns exist.
- Contact other professionals working with the child, young person or family in line with information sharing requirements. These are detailed in Section 6 of [PD2013\\_007 Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health](#).
- Report what you suspect is risk of significant harm to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111.
- Contact the [NSW Health Child Wellbeing Unit](#) on 1300 480 420 to respond before risks are significant, including for referral options.

## Legislation

### Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

- Collaborate with interagency and NGO partners and comply with information exchange provisions to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. This includes taking reasonable steps to coordinate the provision of services with other agencies.
- Meet requirements for mandatory reporting of children and reporting of young people at suspected Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH). This includes classes/groups of children or young people.
- Report unborn children where it is suspected they may be at ROSH after their birth.
- Continue to provide health care to children, young people and their families after making a report. The report can be made to Community Services or to the NSW Health Child Wellbeing Unit.
- Respond to Community Services' and Children's Court requests to provide health services.
- Respond to Community Services and Police Force requests to provide medical examinations and treatment.
- Assist in Children's Court proceedings when required.

### Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998/Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

- Meet requirements for Working with Children Checks.

### Ombudsman Act 1974

- Maintain systems to prevent 'reportable conduct' by health workers and for reporting and responding to alleged reportable conduct involving NSW Health employees.

## Child wellbeing and child protection resources

<a href="#">PD2013_007 Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health</a>	<p>Policy Directive Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policies and Procedures for NSW Health</p>
<p><a href="#">NSW Health Child Wellbeing Unit</a> <b>1300 480 420</b> After hours leave a message or use After Hours Contact Form</p>	<p>The CWU can assist you to respond to the needs of vulnerable children, young people, pregnant women and families. Call for support and assistance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine level of risk</li> <li>• plan next steps</li> <li>• respond before risks are significant</li> <li>• determine referral options</li> <li>• report a child or young person you suspect to be at risk of significant harm (ROSH).</li> </ul>
<p>Community Services Child Protection Helpline <b>132 111</b> (24 hours/7 days)</p>	<p>Call to report child or young person you suspect to be at risk of significant harm.</p>
<p><a href="#">Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG)</a></p>	<p>Consult the MRG for guidance on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• decision making about level of risk</li> <li>• what initial action to take</li> <li>• whether or not a child protection report is required.</li> </ul>
<p>Tertiary Child Protection Service in your Child Health Network</p>	<p>Call for clinical advice (24 hours/7 days), if not available locally, for responding to any form of child abuse or neglect. See below.</p>
<p>Greater Eastern and Southern Child Health Network</p>	<p>Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network Randwick Campus Child Protection Unit 02 9382 1412 or 02 9382 1111 (after hours).</p>
<p>Western Child Health Network</p>	<p>Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network Children’s Westmead Campus Child Protection Unit 02 9845 0000. Ask for the Intake Worker for Child Protection.</p>
<p>Northern Child Health Network</p>	<p>John Hunter Children’s Hospital, Newcastle 02 4921 3000. Ask for the paediatrician on call for child protection.</p>
<p>LHD Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Staff. Refer to your LHD intranet site or call the <a href="#">NSW Health Child Wellbeing Unit</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Wellbeing Coordinators</li> <li>• Child protection and/or violence prevention coordinators</li> <li>• Child protection trainers</li> <li>• Information exchange central contact points/consultants</li> <li>• Out of Home Care health coordinators</li> <li>• Child Protection Counselling Services</li> <li>• Sexual Assault Services</li> <li>• New Street Services</li> <li>• Under 10s Sexualised Behaviour Program.</li> </ul>
<p><a href="#">Family Referral Services</a> (FRS)</p>	<p>Contact FRS to refer vulnerable children, young people and families for information, assessment and referral to local support services.</p>
<p>NSW Health <a href="#">Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV)</a></p>	<p>Contact ECAV for Statewide mainstream and specialist training, consultation and resource development for NSW Health and interagency workers.</p>