



# PRACTICE GUIDE

## Case notes

---

Case notes provide a chronological record of the delivery of child protection services to children, their families and carers. A case note is a summary of interactions practitioners have with a child, their family, a significant person and other professionals, providing a contextual summary of a single interaction or activity per case note.

Accurate case notes provide relevant information for future use and ensure the availability of information, especially if case management responsibility changes. For future readers (including staff or the child themselves), well written case notes add meaning to the child and family's case history as they build a collection of records about the child's experience, departmental decision-making and professional assessments over time.

Case notes are recorded in Unify. Each case in Unify has a *case details* tab to record case notes. For assistance in recording a case note in Unify, use the *online guided learning* function.

### Information to record

Case notes contribute to the personal history of the child. It is essential that information recorded in case notes is:

- **complete** - all relevant information is recorded, including attached documents which relate to the information recorded in the case note
- **current** - the case note is recorded in a timely manner and information is up-to-date
- **respectful** - the case note is written in a manner that respects and upholds the dignity of the child, family and carer, and reflects the Framework for Practice
- **meaningful** - other people who read the case note can understand the context of the case note and the rationale for any decisions made.

### Case note participants

Add a person as a relevant party in the case note if the information being recorded relates specifically to that person. When a person is added into a Unify case, they can be added as a relevant party in a case note. The case note can be viewed via each relevant party's *Person 360 record* within the *case details* tab. This allows Child Safety staff to view all case notes referring to a specific person from a single location in Unify.

### Choosing a case note type

One or more case note types are chosen for each case note that is recorded in Unify. It is important to choose the most relevant case note type when completing a case note to ensure that case notes can easily be retrieved.

The following table lists the case note types available in Unify and describes when to apply them. Save any supporting documents relating to the case note content in the case note.

Category	Information to be recorded
Absent/missing	Use this case note type to record information about a child or young person who is frequently absent or missing from their care arrangement, including actions taken to locate the child, patterns of behaviour and implementation of safety plans.
Adverse outcome	Use this case note type to record information about actions taken in response to the death of a child, Redress, serious injury, sexual abuse of a child in care, or significant detriment caused by the action or inaction of Child Safety.
Audio/video recording of staff	When an interview or discussion with a Child Safety staff member is audio or video recorded, including information provided about confidentiality.
Care arrangement intake	Information relating to the quality of care provided to a child or about harm to a child in care, for action by the relevant CSSC. Ensure the person providing the information is identified as the notifier, so they are afforded protection in line with the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> , section 186A.
Care arrangement support	Support provided to a child's care arrangement including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>actions taken to implement support identified in the placement agreement</li> <li>contact with a carer for support</li> <li>proactive responses to emerging issues.</li> </ul>
Case discussion/consultation	Significant discussions or case consultations, inclusive of information about the outcome of the discussion/consultation, a decision (if a decision was made) and the reasons for the decision. Consultations with Specialist practice (Practice Advice and Support and specialist services clinicians).
Case planning	Information about the planning or development of a child's case plan, feedback from services or the child's safety and support network to inform a review of a child's case plan. Capture information about a parent's testing schedule for substance use. Record a manager's decision to extend an intervention with parental agreement beyond 12 months.
Case transfer	Information about a case transfer between CSSCs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communication between CSSCs regarding the transfer</li> <li>the date paper files and other relevant information are transferred</li> <li>a copy of the Case transfer summary document.</li> </ul>
Childrens Court – child protection	Document activities relating to child protection court proceedings, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when a copy of an order was given to a respondent</li> <li>attempts to serve a respondent</li> <li>providing a child or parent with information about how to access legal advice from, for example, a direct representative for</li> </ul>

	<p>children, Legal Aid or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussions with a party about a child protection proceeding</li> <li>• court dates, times and adjournments if advised verbally and details have not been updated in Unify.</li> </ul>
Child permanency review	For use by Adoption and Permanency Care Services to record discussions and actions taken as part of a Child Permanency Review referral and process.
Collaborative Family Decision Making	For use by convenors to record discussions, decisions and actions taken to prepare for a Family Group Meeting and the development of a case plan.
Communication plan/strategies	<p>Information about communication plans relating to a parent or child, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategies that have been put into place to manage identified challenges impacting on communication</li> <li>• a communication plan between a parent/young person and Child Safety</li> <li>• meetings to develop or review a communication plan.</li> </ul>
Complaint	<p>Details of complaints and the processes of complaints made and responded to by the service centre in day-to-day case management. As per the complaints policy, record as much information as possible to demonstrate that the complaint has been appropriately dealt with, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the name of the complainant</li> <li>• details of the complaint</li> <li>• how the complaint was managed</li> <li>• who managed the complaint</li> <li>• any follow-up processes to occur.</li> </ul>
Contact with child	<p>Summary of an outcome of a visit to a child that does not meet the requirements of a face-to-face contact in the Child Safety Practice Manual.</p> <p>Also record attempts to visit a child that are unsuccessful, phone calls, emails or other contact with the child.</p>
Contact with guardian	Summary and outcome of contact with a child's guardian, including a long-term guardian or a permanent guardian.
Contact with parent	<p>Summary and outcome regarding a visit or attempted visit with a parent, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visits to parents in line with face-to-face contact requirements whose children are not residing in the home</li> <li>• visits to a child and family subject to an in-home case where the child was not home at the time, but discussions were held with parents</li> <li>• phone calls, emails or other contact (or attempts to have contact) with a parent.</li> </ul>

Decision/consent – child in care	<p>Use this case note type to record decisions or consent relating to a child in the custody or guardianship of the chief executive (other than matters where there is a <i>consent</i> record in Unify).</p> <p>Where a decision was made or consent was given by a delegated officer, ensure the case note includes who made the decision, who was consulted (including their views) and details of how the decision was communicated.</p> <p>If written consent was required, attach the written/signed consent in the case note.</p>
Delegated authority decision	<p>Record any action associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delegating decision-making authority to the CEO of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation (ATSICCO) and attach DG endorsement and CEO acceptance letters</li> <li>a decision being executed by the delegated CEO</li> <li>a decision made by Child Safety when delegations to a CEO are in place</li> <li>delegations to a CEO are ending</li> <li>a decision made outside business hours, for example safety and support planning, family time arrangements, CSAHSC contact, ATSICCO after-hours contact.</li> </ul>
Engagement tool	<p>Record use of an engagement tool and attached the completed engagement tool in the case note, for example collaborative assessment and planning framework.</p>
Family time	<p>Information about a child’s time with parents, siblings, family members and other persons of significance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>details of the arrangements</li> <li>the child’s views and wishes</li> <li>observations made or support provided</li> <li>decisions to refuse, restrict or impose conditions</li> <li>review of arrangements.</li> </ul>
Financial matters	<p>Information relating to financial interactions or claims, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>child related costs</li> <li>support packages</li> <li>fortnightly caring allowance</li> <li>a child’s bank account.</li> </ul>
First attempt at resolution	<p>Record actions taken to resolve a person’s initial expression of dissatisfaction.</p>
Housing/accommodation support	<p>Record information about options for housing or accommodation support discussed with a parent or young person, and actions taken to assist with housing and accommodation support needs.</p>
Information received from QPS	<p>Information sought and received from the QPS, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>occurrence reports</li> <li>criminal or domestic violence history.</li> </ul> <p>Attach or reference the information received from the QPS.</p>

Interstate information	<p>Use this case note type to record access to Connect for Safety. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the initial reason for accessing Connect for Safety</li> <li>the date and details of each person searched</li> <li>whether the person who was searched provided their consent</li> <li>whether a likely match was identified</li> <li>how the information accessed helps undertake a particular purpose or function under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i></li> <li>whether an information request was subsequently submitted to Data Management Services.</li> </ul>
Interstate/inter-country matter	<p>Record inter-jurisdictional requests or actions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information about case work relating to a child who is residing in Queensland, where case work support is provided</li> <li>requests for interstate assistance (either by Queensland to another jurisdiction, or by another jurisdiction to Queensland) and correspondence relating to the request.</li> </ul>
Kin finding	Information about actions taken to identify kin connections for a child.
My Home	For use by Adoption and Permanency Care Services and CSSC staff to record referral of a child to the My Home program and post placement information.
Offer support/referral	<p>Referrals offered or completed for the child or parent, including contact with the agency to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whether the services provided would meet the child's or family's identified needs</li> <li>whether the child or family would be eligible for the service</li> <li>availability for services and timeframes for engagement</li> <li>the cost of the service and any other resources required to complete the work with the child or family</li> <li>the child and family's views about the offer of support.</li> </ul>
OI concerns received	<p>Concerns received about a child subject to ongoing intervention that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>do not meet the threshold for a notification and</li> <li>do not relate to the quality of care being provided.</li> </ul> <p>Include details about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the rationale for the concerns not reaching the threshold for a notification</li> <li>any consultations held</li> <li>the person providing the information being a notifier, so they are afforded protection in line with the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>, section 186A.</li> </ul>
Other	For other, general case notes that do not fit other specific categories.
Other legal jurisdiction	<p>Information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an application to QCAT, including an application to appoint a guardian for a child leaving care</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• court matters in other jurisdictions, including the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, criminal proceedings or domestic violence proceedings</li> <li>• a child's residency/citizenship status, including application to the Department of Home Affairs.</li> </ul>
Prescribed home visit	Details of a visit to a child (in care) or a child and their parents (for in-home cases), that meets the requirements of minimum face-to-face contact.
Record of practice panel	Information relating to planning for and conducting practice panels, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a summary of invitations</li> <li>• agendas</li> <li>• discussion / minutes</li> <li>• follow up actions.</li> </ul>
Review of outcome	Information about the review of a notification or child concern report, that has led to a decision to downgrade. Information about the review of an investigation and assessment outcome.
Risk/lethality assessment	Record information about risk posed by domestic and family violence, including information about the use of the common risk assessment framework, perpetrator mapping or High Risk Team information.
Safety and support network meeting	Record a meeting with a child's care team, safety and support network or stakeholders, including participants and outcomes.
Support service case – young person	Details of support provided to a young person who has transitioned to adulthood and agreed to a support service case.
Victim of crime	Information about a child, young person or parent who is or may be a victim of crime, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information provided to a family</li> <li>• consent provided</li> <li>• applications</li> <li>• eligibility processes.</li> </ul>
Youth Justice	Record information about interface with the youth justice system, including information about participation in youth justice processes (such as court or non-compliance meetings) or contact with the court liaison officer or senior child safety officer (youth justice).

## When to complete a consent record

Some consent decisions are documented in a *consent* record, rather than a *Decision/consent* case note type. Use a *consent* record to document consent to the following:

- initial drug screening test
- ongoing testing schedule
- childhood immunisation
- psychotropic medication

- intervention with parental agreement
- a support service case.

Save signed copies of consent documents in the *consent* record.

## Version history

Content owner	Office of the Chief Practitioner
Published on	January 2022
Last reviewed	April 2025