



# Families and Children Activity Newsletter

Issue 6 | December 2022



## What is in this issue?

This issue focuses on:

- [help for service providers developing program logics](#)
- [important information on the review point](#)
- [Evidence and Evaluation Support for service providers](#)
- [updates on the Data Exchange \(DEX\), including new sheets in DEX reports](#)
- [Activity Work Plans \(AWPs\), including a new AWP report template for CfC FP](#)
- [financial wellbeing programs and support for clients](#)
- [a word of thanks to service providers.](#)

The department encourages service providers to circulate this newsletter to their staff. If staff would like to receive the newsletter directly, they can send requests with their email addresses to [families@dss.gov.au](mailto:families@dss.gov.au).

The department is open to feedback on the frequency, format and content of the newsletter. If you have suggestions, please contact [families@dss.gov.au](mailto:families@dss.gov.au).



## Program logics

### Help with program logics

The department has begun finalising its assessments of draft program logics as per the [assessment checklist](#).

If your organisation has been asked to change and resubmit a program logic, and you would like help, you can [contact](#) the [Evidence, Evaluation and Support](#) (EES) team at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The EES team can:

- advise how to apply feedback from a program logic assessment
- review your organisation's logic model before you resubmit a program logic
- provide guidance on where to source evidence.



## Review point

### Important information on the review point

If your organisation has a five-year grant agreement that is subject to the review point, it is important to remember the following:

- **Your organisation *must* meet a set of requirements by the review point.** The requirements are described as assessment criteria in operational guidelines for each grant. Operational guidelines for each grant are available on the [FaC Activity webpage](#).
- **If you think your organisation will not meet one or more requirements,** please notify your Funding Arrangement Manager (FAM) as soon as possible.
- **If your organisation does not meet a requirement,** please provide a concise explanation in your next Activity Work Plan report.
- For further information on the review point, please read operational guidelines for your grant(s) on the [FaC Activity webpage](#) as well as your organisation's grant agreement and previous issues of the FaC Activity newsletter.



## Evidence and Evaluation Support (EES)

### Drop-in Q&A sessions with the EES team in 2023

- The [Evidence and Evaluation Support \(EES\)](#) team at AIFS are trialling online drop-in sessions for FaC Activity providers to ask quick questions about program planning, implementation and evaluation. Questions might include how to write a client survey, what tools are available to measure particular outcomes, or how to analyse large amounts of qualitative data.
- The next drop-in session will be held on 1 February 2023. The EES plans to hold sessions every second Wednesday from 2-3 PM (AEDT/AEST) on the following dates:
  - 1 and 15 February 2023
  - 1, 15 and 29 March 2023.
- Sessions can accommodate a maximum of 10 attendees and will operate on a first come, first served basis. If you join a session, you will be allocated a 5-minute time slot to ask your question.

### Can't attend a session?

- If you can't attend a Q&A session, or you need longer than five minutes, the EES team can also provide one-on-one assistance. [Email the team](#) to schedule a discussion or find out more.
- The department encourages providers to [subscribe to the AIFS newsletter](#) to keep up to date with resources available from AIFS. If you subscribe and click on the topics 'Program planning and evaluation' and 'Working with families, children and young people', you will receive newsletters with EES and CFCA content.



# Data Exchange

## Cyber Security

- The Data Exchange (DEX) team would like to remind service providers that everyone is at risk of data breaches. In line with the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC), the department recommends organisations implement a plan for all users and computers storing sensitive information. The ACSC has developed [some strategies to help organisations protect themselves against various cyber threats](#).
- If your organisation becomes aware of any security or privacy breaches, you must notify your FAM as soon as possible, even if you do not believe a breach impacts the DEX. For further information, please refer to section 10.6 of the [Data Exchange Protocols](#), which covers Data Exchange User Responsibilities.

## Reporting

- A friendly reminder that all service providers must enter DEX data for the current reporting period (1 July to 31 December 2022) into the DEX by 30 January 2023.
- The department strongly encourages providers to enter data as soon as possible to avoid any last minute issues that might occur when uploading data.
- If you need help, please contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk by sending an email to [dssdataexchange.helpdesk@dss.gov.au](mailto:dssdataexchange.helpdesk@dss.gov.au) or calling 1800 020 283 between 08.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

## DEX reports

- The department has introduced some changes to DEX reports over the past couple of months to improve consistency across reports and the user experience.
- Changes include additional filters, consistent labelling of tables, graphs and filters, and changes to some colour schemes in graphs.
- The department has also added four new sheets to the Service Footprint report and three new sheets to the Client Outcomes report as detailed below.

### Service Footprint report

1. *Outlet Listing* sheet - A list of outlets by name, state, statistical area, remoteness area and when the first and last sessions were conducted.
2. *Extended Demographics* sheet - Reported data on clients' highest level of education, employment status, NDIS eligibility status, and carer status.
3. *Ancestry and Migration* sheet – Reported data on clients' ancestry and migration visa status.
4. *Home Situation* sheet – Reported data on clients' homelessness status, household composition, annual income, and income source.

### Client Outcomes report

1. *Circumstance: Client Demographics* sheet – Reported demographics of clients with Circumstance SCORE data.
  2. *Goal: Client Demographics* sheet – Reported demographics of clients with Goal SCORE data.
  3. *Satisfaction: Client Demographics* sheet – Reported demographics of clients with Satisfaction SCORE data.
- For more information, please read the October and November DEX updates on the [notifications and updates](#) page of the DEX website.



## Data Exchange *continued*

### Consultation on the Data Exchange

- In 2023, the department intends to seek feedback from FaC Activity providers on their experiences using the Data Exchange, particularly those organisations that are new to measuring and reporting outcomes data.



## Activity Work Plans

### AWP report template and guidance for CfC FPs

- The department will publish a new AWP report template for Communities for Children Facilitating Partners in early 2023. Your FAM will notify your organisation when the new template is available on the DSS website.
- Facilitating Partners are required to use the new template when submitting their next AWP reports on 15 August 2023.

### The use of Activity Work Plans

- The department uses AWP's to monitor performance, inform future policy thinking, and allow providers to include qualitative information that they think the department needs to know, such as issues impacting their DEX data.
- The department would like to acknowledge and thank providers for the time and effort put into AWP's and AWP reports.



## Financial wellbeing programs & support

### Support for individuals experiencing financial difficulties

- Some of your clients might be experiencing personal and financial difficulties brought about by the rising cost of living.
- Please be aware that the department funds a number of financial wellbeing programs to help people experiencing financial difficulties. These programs might be of interest to your clients.
- **Appendix A** outlines the programs and how your organisation and clients can find local services.



## Thank you

The Family Policy team would like to thank all service providers and staff for their work in 2022.

We wish you, your families and friends a happy and safe festive season. We look forward to working together in 2023.

## Appendix A – Financial wellbeing programs and support

The Department of Social Services provides funding to community and local government organisations to deliver Commonwealth Financial Counselling services to help people in personal and financial difficulty to address their financial problems manage debt and make informed choices about their money in the future. Financial Capability workers deliver financial literacy education, information and coaching and maintain a strong focus on supporting consumers to change their behaviour and 'learn by doing'. This includes basic financial literacy education and support either individually or in group settings.

The Department funds the National Debt Helpline, which provides free, independent and confidential services from financial counsellors. This service can be accessed by calling 1800 007 007 or visiting [ndh.org.au](http://ndh.org.au). Individuals that require more assistance can be referred to face-to-face financial counselling support.

The Department also provides funding to Emergency Relief. ER is delivered by a mix of large and small community organisations across Australia. Financial and material assistance offered by ER providers may include food, clothing, vouchers, and contributions to utility bills. Food is the most common type of assistance provided to ER clients. ER services also provide budgeting assistance and referrals to other support services such as financial counsellors, mental health supports, and Specialist Homelessness Services.

The Food Relief program increases ER providers' access to food by:

- receiving donated foods from farmers, manufacturers, retailers or other food services, and redistributing this to ER providers or other distribution centres where food is needed;
- sourcing and transporting essential foods where food donations are insufficient; and/or
- leading the development of local partnerships between food redistribution suppliers to improve access and food distribution.

More information on the above services including how to access local providers is available at [DSS Grants Service Directory](#).

Individuals may also be eligible for the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), which is a community-based program that provides access to fair and safe loans of up to \$3,000, with no interest, fees or charges and a repayment period of up to two years. Loans can be used for the purchase of household items including whitegoods and furniture, car repairs and registration, medical and dental costs, laptops and computers, housing (rent and bond) and education costs.

More information about NILS, including nearest providers, can be found at <https://goodshep.org.au/services/loans-and-insurance/>.