



Child and Adolescent Forensic Service (CAFS)

Information for referrers

About the Child and Adolescent Forensic Service

The Child and Adolescent Forensic Service (CAFS) is a specialist mental health service for children and adolescents under 18 years who have:

- Serious mental health needs - a diagnosed serious mental illness or severe difficulties that exceed developmental norms and significantly affect daily functioning, and
- A history or risk of serious criminal offending, and
- Consented to a referral to the service.

Referrals will be accepted from the young person's existing care team such as Mental Health Services, Department of Justice, Department of Communities, Department of Education and others.

CAFS offers specialist assessment and advice (consultation and liaison) on forensic mental health needs and, in some cases, limited and targeted case management.

Where CAFS is not the primary case manager, it is expected that the referring agency will remain as the primary case manager of the young person during their involvement with CAFS to ensure consistent and coordinated support.

Our team

CAFS is part of the State Forensic Mental Health Service directorate and is a multidisciplinary health team including a consultant psychiatrist, clinical psychologists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists and social workers, with specialist expertise in child and adolescent forensic mental health.

CAFS includes psychosocial and cultural support services. These are delivered by Yirra Dandjoo, a partnership between Centrecare and the Waalitj Foundation. Yirra Dandjoo has mental health case workers, Aboriginal mental health case workers and youth mentors.

Our services

As a specialist statewide service, CAFS offers a tiered approach to service provision designed to provide flexible and responsive support based on the level of need.

This approach aims to build capability within referring and partner services while reserving case management and direct intervention for young people with the most complex and high-risk presentations.

Outreach appointments can be arranged where required and interventions can be offered via telehealth for young people living outside of the Perth metropolitan area.

Our services include:

Consultation and liaison

This service stream provides forensic risk assessment and a written report with advice and recommendations for forensic risk and mental health management. Forensic risk assessment may be conducted through case conferencing with relevant care providers, or direct face-to-face assessment with the young person and their caregiver/s.

Where required, up to 12 weeks of ongoing consultation liaison support can be provided to referring services to assist with the implementation of the recommendations.

Co-case management

Where a need for specialist intervention is identified through the Consultation and Liaison stream, CAFS may offer a time-limited period of co-case management, targeting specific forensic mental health needs using principles from a range of therapeutic models and frameworks. This may include a forensic risk assessment and risk mitigation report to the primary service, in addition to direct treatment for the young person and family.

CAFS will also co-case manage young people who are subject to an Order under the Criminal Law Mental Impairment Act (2023), providing support to the primary service involved and ensuring legislative compliance with reporting requirements.

Detention transition

This is a program for young people leaving youth detention after a long time in custody, providing time-limited (up to 12 weeks), semi-assertive, holistic care to support reintegration and transition into the community. This may include assistance accessing longer-term mental health services.

Psychosocial support

When there is an identified need for psychosocial support, Yirra Dandjoo may be engaged to address these needs, provided there is not an agency already offering this service.

Education and training

CAFS has a role in education, training and building capability within other services in how to manage and support young people with forensic mental health issues/needs.

If your service has a specific training query or need, please speak with the CAFS team leader to explore what can be offered for your team.

Making a referral

All referrals are to be completed on the referral form. We welcome phone calls to our triage officer to discuss if you are uncertain about making a referral. The young person and/or their parent or legal guardian must provide consent before a referral will be discussed and accepted.

Referral criteria

- Aged 10 to 17 years at the time of referral
- Significant mental health needs or diagnosis
- History of serious offending and/or engaging in behaviors that may lead to serious offending (eg: violence, sexual offending, arson, stalking, radicalisation and/or violent extremism)
- There is a likely link between mental health concerns and offending or risk of offending.

Referrals will not be accepted for the following:

Referral is **only** for

- Diagnosis or management of a neurodevelopmental disorder
- Substance use disorder
- Psychosocial support
- Young person is exclusively a risk to themselves
- Needs are better met by another service.

Our operating hours are 8.30am to 4.30pm. CAFS is not a crisis service, so for urgent assistance, please contact:

- **CAMHS Crisis Connect:** 1800 048 636
- **Crisis Care:** 1800 199 008
- **Police:** 000 or 131 444



Child and Adolescent Forensic Service

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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Website: See [State Forensic Mental Health Services](#) (click the Child and Adolescent Services dropdown) or scan the QR code.