Child Protection Duty Lawyer Services Manual

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Contents

[1 Purpose of this manual 1](#_Toc121491834)

[2 Overview of child protection duty lawyer services 1](#_Toc121491835)

[2.1 Definitions 1](#_Toc121491836)

[3 Intake and Triage 1](#_Toc121491837)

[3.1 Intake process 1](#_Toc121491838)

[3.2 Information to be gathered 2](#_Toc121491839)

[3.3 Determination of eligibility and extent of service 2](#_Toc121491840)

[3.4 Conflict check 3](#_Toc121491841)

[4 Referral of people to child protection duty lawyers 3](#_Toc121491842)

[4.1 General approach to referral of people to a duty lawyer 3](#_Toc121491843)

[4.2 Referrals for a person eligible for legal advice only 4](#_Toc121491844)

[4.3 A person who has previously been assisted by a child protection lawyer 4](#_Toc121491845)

[4.4 Children and young people 4](#_Toc121491846)

[4.5 Other considerations when referring children and young people 5](#_Toc121491847)

[4.6 First Nations clients 5](#_Toc121491848)

[4.7 People in custody, hospital or a psychiatric facility 6](#_Toc121491849)

[4.8 Second duty lawyer service 6](#_Toc121491850)

[5 Expectations of practitioners 7](#_Toc121491851)

[5.1 Professional responsibilities and requirements 7](#_Toc121491852)

[5.2 Attendance at court 7](#_Toc121491853)

[5.3 Accepting duty lawyer referrals 7](#_Toc121491854)

[5.4 Meeting with clients 7](#_Toc121491855)

[5.5 Use of interpreters 8](#_Toc121491856)

[5.6 Capacity assessments 8](#_Toc121491857)

[5.7 Where a party has multiple applications 9](#_Toc121491858)

[5.8 Delivery of duty lawyer services 9](#_Toc121491859)

[5.9 Second duty lawyer service 9](#_Toc121491860)

[5.10 Private practitioner invoicing 9](#_Toc121491861)

[6 Child Protection Private Practitioner Short Service Schemes 10](#_Toc121491862)

[6.1 Overview 10](#_Toc121491863)

[6.2 Rostered and non-rostered schemes 10](#_Toc121491864)

[6.3 Out of area services 10](#_Toc121491865)

[6.4 Joining a scheme 10](#_Toc121491866)

[6.5 Extended leave from a scheme 10](#_Toc121491867)

[6.6 Departure from a scheme 11](#_Toc121491868)

[6.7 Scheme membership where a firm dissolves 11](#_Toc121491869)

[7 Annexures 12](#_Toc121491870)

[7.1 Annexure 1: VLA office contact details for child protection referrals 12](#_Toc121491871)

[7.2 Annexure 2: Protection Application Information Form 13](#_Toc121491872)

[7.3 Annexure 3: Summary Information Form (Form B) 13](#_Toc121491873)

# Purpose of this manual

This manual sets out processes for the management and delivery of VLA-funded duty lawyer services to people involved in child protection proceedings in the Family Division of the Children’s Court of Victoria, in both metropolitan and regional areas.[[1]](#footnote-2) This includes processes for intake and referral of parties, and expectations of lawyers delivering duty lawyer services.

The processes in this manual are to be applied throughout Victoria, to provide consistency and transparency, and help people to get the assistance they need in a timely manner.

The intended audience for this manual is lawyers delivering child protection duty lawyer services and VLA administrative staff but it may be of use to other people or organisations involved with child protection legal matters.

This manual should be read in conjunction with the VLA state-wide [Child Protection Duty Lawyer Guidelines](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/duty-lawyers-family-division-childrens-court-child-protection-matters#guidelines) (Guidelines) that apply across Victoria, available at <https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/duty-lawyers-family-division-childrens-court-child-protection-matters#guidelines>.

# Overview of child protection duty lawyer services

Child protection matters are heard in Children’s Courts at venues across Victoria. VLA offices manage the referral of all children, young people and families, and other relevant people involved in child protection applications, to duty lawyers (see Annexure 1 for List of Court locations and associated VLA offices).

## Definitions

The term *duty lawyer services* refers to free legal assistance provided on the day of a court hearing to a party who has not made prior arrangement for legal representation. The assistance may include legal information, legal advice and/or in-court advocacy depending on the party type and the hearing type. The eligibility criteria for duty lawyer services are set out in the Guidelines.

The term *duty lawyer scheme* is used in this manual to refer to the governance and operational processes that support the provision of duty lawyer assistance at each court location. This is also known as Private Practitioner Short Service Scheme or PPSSS. More information about PPSSS is at Section 6.

*Child protection duty lawyers* are VLA staff lawyers, Community Legal Centre lawyers at specific centres funded to deliver child protection legal services, Aboriginal legal services, and private practitioners who are approved members of a PPSSS (see page 10 regarding PPSSS membership).

*Triage officer* refers to a VLA staff member who is responsible for intake and referral of parties to legal assistance.

# Intake and Triage

## Intake process

The intake process starts with:

a) the provision of information by DFFH (or an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation authorised under section 18 of the CYF Act) to VLA by providing a copy of the Protection Application, any relevant report/s, affidavits of service for all parties and the Protection Application Information Form.[[2]](#footnote-3) For protection applications or breaches of any orders by emergency care, this also includes a Summary Information Form (Form B) or,

b) a person attending at Court seeking the assistance of a duty lawyer, or

c) a person contacting VLA seeking the assistance of a lawyer after being served with a child protection application.

A person who has not yet been served with information about the proceedings or service has not taken effect will generally not be offered a duty lawyer service, unless the person seeks assistance from VLA directly.

A list of VLA offices, contact details and the courts for which they manage the intake and referral process is provided at Annexure 1.

## Information to be gathered

The VLA triage officer needs the following information to determine the type of service each party is eligible for and to undertake a conflict check in accordance with VLA’s Conflict of Interest Policy:

* Name and date of birth of all parties and family members with direct involvement in the matter
* Whether any family members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
* Relevant details about the whereabouts of parties, for example whether they are in custody, hospital or if they are deceased or unknown.
* Type of protection application
* Type of hearing and date
* Information about which parties have been served

This information should be provided by DFFH via the Protection Application Information Form and/or Form B. Information about which parties have been served should be confirmed by affidavits of service.

If any of this information is unclear, incomplete or has not been provided by DFFH in the Protection Application Information Form or the Form B, the VLA triage officer must request this information from the DFFH representative.

VLA triage officers should not read Child Protection reports or the summary of allegation information on a Form B to ascertain this information.

## Determination of eligibility and extent of service

The VLA triage officer will apply the Service Matrix in the [Guidelines](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/duty-lawyers-family-division-childrens-court-child-protection-matters#guidelines) to determine whether a person is eligible for a duty lawyer service.

For the purposes of determining eligibility, child sibling includes half siblings, and parent includes step-parents and de facto partners of parents when involved in proceedings.

The VLA triage officer then determines the type of service which an eligible person is entitled to receive:

* Legal information
* Legal advice
* In court advocacy

A definition of each service type is set out at clause 4.6 of the Guidelines.

## Conflict check

Once the type of service to be provided is determined, the triage officer will undertake a conflict check as required by the VLA Conflicts of Interest policy.

The outcome of the conflict check will be recorded by the VLA triage officer who will then proceed to refer the eligible person to a child protection duty lawyer**.**

# Referral of people to child protection duty lawyers

Once the VLA triage officer has determined the type of service to be provided and completed a conflict check, as required, all parties who appear or request assistance should be referred to an available duty lawyer. Duty lawyer referrals will most often be made on the day of a hearing, however, at times a referral may be made ahead of the hearing day if VLA receives early notification of an eligible party and is provided with the required information (set out in Section 3). Funding will only be provided for duty lawyer services delivered on the hearing day, not in advance.[[3]](#footnote-4)

The referral approach adopted by VLA and set out in this manual is designed to support continuity of representation wherever possible, client preference, access to culturally safe service delivery for First Nations clients, and fair allocation of referrals between practitioners.

Different referral pathways may apply depending on the circumstances of a person.

## General approach to referral of people to a duty lawyer

The following steps apply when a triage officer is referring a person to a lawyer (subject to **4.3**):

* Where a rostered duty lawyer scheme operates, a person will be offered a referral to one of the rostered lawyers. Attempts will be made to provide an equal number of referrals, taking into consideration availability, workload and cost effectiveness. Factors such as the wishes of the person being referred, parties’ previous legal representation (if applicable), and the capacity of a lawyer to accept the referral will impact on the total number of referrals to each lawyer.
* Where a non-rostered scheme operates, the VLA triage officer will offer people a referral to lawyers who participate in the duty lawyer scheme in that region and are available. Attempts will be made to provide an equal number of referrals but will vary due to the reasons set out above.
* Where no duty lawyers in the local scheme are available, VLA will offer a referral to an out of area lawyer who is a member of the contingency pool for that region.
* Referral offers and confirmation will be made via VLA’s HALO referral platform.
* Children who are eligible for legal assistance will be prioritised ahead of adult parties when making duty lawyer referrals.
* The VLA triage officer will advise the DFFH legal representative and the Court registry of the name of the duty lawyer referred for each party.[[4]](#footnote-5)
* Each duty lawyer will be given by the VLA triage officer: a confirmation of referral,[[5]](#footnote-6) the contact details of the person referred to the lawyer and their whereabouts if relevant (ie if in custody or hospital), a copy of the Form B (if an application by emergency care) and any other available reports and documents. VLA is not responsible for the service of reports by DFFH, but if received by DFFH, these will also be provided to the relevant duty lawyers.

## Referrals for a person eligible for legal advice only

Clients eligible for legal advice only based on the Guidelines will be referred to a lawyer who will provide this service either at the court or by phone/online.

A person may receive up to one (1) hour of legal advice, for which practitioners will be paid at the same hourly rate that applies to child protection duty lawyer services involving in-court advocacy.

When calculating the amount to be claimed, the duration of service is to be rounded to the nearest 15 minutes.

## A person who has previously been assisted by a child protection lawyer

People involved in the child protection system may have previously been assisted by a section 29A child protection panel lawyer. In order to facilitate continuity of representation, the person will first be offered the option of a referral to their previous lawyer.

Where a party wishes to have their previous lawyer (lawyer A) act for them, but lawyer A (or another approved duty lawyer from their firm) is unable to appear as duty lawyer for that previous client, the VLA triage officer will advise lawyer A which lawyers are rostered (if applicable) and lawyer A can nominate the duty lawyer they think is the best fit for the client.

VLA will refer to the nominated duty lawyer (lawyer B) and inform them that the client is a previous client of lawyer A. With client consent, lawyer A and lawyer B can confer about the matter.

Lawyer B will invoice VLA as per the normal process for the duty lawyer service (see Section 5.10).

If the person is eligible for ongoing assistance pursuant to a grant of legal assistance, they may choose to return to their previous lawyer or continue with the new lawyer for ongoing assistance after that first day. In the former situation, the new lawyer must refer the person to their previous lawyer and provide the necessary information to the previous lawyer.

## Children and young people

Wherever possible, children and young people will be offered a referral to lawyers from VLA or firms that are on both the section 29A child protection panel and section 29A youth crime panel.

This will give children who subsequently need assistance with a criminal law matter a greater likelihood of the option to remain with the same lawyer.[[6]](#footnote-7)

Where no duty lawyer is rostered (or available, in the case of a non-rostered scheme) from a firm on both panels, the child will be offered a referral to a duty lawyer in accordance with the general process set out at 4.1.

**Example:**

A 12-year-old and their mother appear at the Melbourne Children’s Court for a protection application by emergency care. They are both assessed as eligible for an in-court advocacy duty lawyer service. VLA is unable to appear for either party, so the triage officer takes steps to refer the child and the mother to private practitioner lawyers on the roster. The first rostered panel lawyer is employed by a firm that is not on the youth crime panel. The second rostered lawyer is employed by a firm that is on the youth crime panel. The triage officer refers the child to the second rostered lawyer and refers the parent to the first rostered lawyer.

## Other considerations when referring children and young people

Siblings will usually be offered a referral to the same lawyer. Siblings may be referred to separate lawyers where there is a real or potential conflict of interest that would prevent the lawyer from carrying out their duties for each child.

This assessment should be made by the duty lawyer who is referred the sibling group. VLA triage staff should not read Child Protection reports or the summary of allegation information on a Form B Where there are multiple siblings over the age of 10 years, the duty lawyer will need to consider any indicators that the children have competing interests or wishes that mean the children need to have separate legal representation. Such indicators include:

* information provided by Child Protection about the protective concerns and/or the children’s needs or wishes suggest conflict
* the siblings do not have both parents in common
* the applications have been made on different grounds or there are substantially different facts relating to different siblings
* the applications involve allegations of conflict or abuse between the children
* the applications have been made on the same ground but relate to actual harm for one or more siblings and likelihood for others
* the children have been placed in different care settings.

Where the lawyer assesses they cannot represent all siblings, the lawyer should advise the triage officer so that VLA can make referrals to other lawyers.

Where allegations are made that a child has been the subject of sexual abuse, the child will be referred to a lawyer of the same gender where possible.

## First Nations clients

VLA has entered Memoranda of Understanding with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) and the Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service (Djirra).[[7]](#footnote-8)

First Nations peoplewill be given the first choice of a referral to an Aboriginal Legal Service, where a duty lawyer practitioner is available to assist.

The VLA triage officer will ask parties if they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander if the information contained in a Protection Application Information Form, the Form B or any other relevant document is incomplete.

Where the person meets the eligibility criteria for more than one Aboriginal Legal Service the person will be asked if they have a preference for one of the services. If the person does not have a preference the referral will be made to the first Aboriginal legal service that responds indicating that it is able to assist the person.

Where an Aboriginal Legal Service can take on a client but is unavailable to provide a duty lawyer service on the day, the Aboriginal Legal Service may arrange for an agent to appear. VLA will inform the Aboriginal Legal Service of available duty lawyers to enable them to arrange an agent.

If the Aboriginal Legal Service cannot arrange an agent, the VLA triage officer will offer the person a referral to a duty lawyer. In this situation, the client may choose to engage the Aboriginal Legal Service for ongoing assistance or, if they are eligible for a grant of legal assistance, continue instructing their existing lawyer.

## People in custody, hospital or a psychiatric facility

People in custody, detention, hospital or a psychiatric facility who are party to child protection proceedings will be referred to duty lawyers to assist them to participate in proceedings.

The Protection Application Information Form and Form B (if applicable) should indicate when a person is in custody or hospital.

Where a duty lawyer is referred a party who is in one of these settings, the duty lawyer should contact the facility to arrange to speak to the person. If the lawyer is unable to speak with the person,[[8]](#footnote-9) the duty lawyer must notify VLA as soon as possible and VLA will withdraw the referral and inform the court.

See section 5.6 below for further information on expectations regarding capacity assessment.

## Second duty lawyer service

A second duty lawyer service is only available in very limited circumstances, that is, where the hearing is adjourned to within two business days due to reasons beyond the control of the person (Guideline 4.5).

Examples of an adjournment being for ‘reasons beyond the person’s control’ include the:

* Lack of an interpreter for a party
* Absence of the DFFH child protection practitioner who works with the family
* Late discharge of a child or parent from hospital
* Court being unable to hear a matter on the day with no advance notification

Examples where an adjournment is not likely to be considered for ‘reasons beyond the person’s control’ include where:

* Parties apply to adjourn to undertake drug screens or any other relevant actions requested by the Court
* Parties agree that the matter should be adjourned for reserved submissions on a future date

If the matter is adjourned beyond two days, it is expected that the person will apply for a grant of assistance where eligible or arrange private representation.

There is no option for a client to have a second duty lawyer appearance outside two business days from the first hearing.

If a matter is adjourned within two business days and a duty assesses that the person they are assisting is likely to be eligible for a second duty lawyer service, they should notify VLA as soon as possible so that VLA can assess eligibility and if eligible, make a new duty lawyer referral.

# Expectations of practitioners

## Professional responsibilities and requirements

Duty lawyers will deliver services in accordance with the Guidelines.

A duty lawyer must not provide a higher level of service than that determined by applying the service matrix.

Duty lawyers must ensure that services are delivered in accordance with the [*Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/children-youth-and-families-act-2005/121)and VLA’s [*Practice Standards*](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/node/9672) as well as the Australian Solicitor Conduct Rules and any other legislative and regulatory obligations.

Duty lawyers must represent children in accordance with the VLA guide [*Representing children in child protection hearings*](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/node/9812#guides)*.*

## Attendance at court

When rostered at Melbourne, Moorabbin or Dandenong Children’s Courts, practitioners must arrive at court by 9.30 am and advise the VLA triage officer of their presence by email, phone or in person.

When rostered at Broadmeadows, duty lawyers are required to notify the VLA triage officer of their readiness to accept duty lawyer referrals by 9.30 am and are required to attend court within 30 mins of accepting a referral.

For non-rostered duty lawyer schemes, practitioners are required to attend at court within a reasonable time of accepting a referral. Practitioners who are present at court and available to receive referrals are encouraged to proactively notify their availability to the local VLA office (see Annexure 1).

## Accepting duty lawyer referrals

In a rostered scheme, duty lawyers should accept all referrals from VLA unless prevented by an ethical issue (e.g. conflict of interest) or unless the duty lawyer does not have capacity to accept any more referrals. Rostered duty lawyers should respond to the VLA triage officer within 15 minutes of the offer being made.

In a non-rostered scheme, a duty lawyer should accept any referral within a reasonable time. If no response is received, VLA will offer the referral to a different duty lawyer.

Lawyers must decline duty lawyer referrals directly offered from DFFH. Where a person is referred directly to the lawyer by the DFFH, the lawyer must decline the referral, request DFFH notify VLA of the new application, and inform VLA of what occurred.

See Section 4.3 for detail on the referral approach for clients who have had a child protection lawyer previously.

## Meeting with clients

Where a referral has been made to a lawyer, the lawyer should seek to speak to the person they have been referred as soon as possible so that the person can engage the lawyer to represent them, get the lawyer’s contact information, and ask any urgent questions about the court process.

Duty lawyers should not engage in negotiation, seek to obtain further information about the matter or make representations in court until they have been engaged by the client to act for them. Where a referral has been made in advance of a hearing day, the lawyer may contact the client upon receipt of referral but is not expected to do legal work before the hearing day. VLA only funds duty services on the hearing day.

People who cannot travel to attend court should be assisted to participate in the proceedings. This includes people in custody, detention, hospital or psychiatric facility. Where it becomes known that a person is unable to be present at court in person due to one of these factors and that an audio-visual link is required, the child protection duty lawyer should liaise with the court and DFFH to facilitate this.

Duty lawyers should meet face to face any child they are assisting wherever possible. If the duty lawyer and a child they are assisting are unable to meet in person, the duty lawyer should arrange to meet with the child via a videocall. Duty lawyers should follow the [*Good practice guide for meeting children via technology*](https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/changes-our-services-due-covid-19#good-practice-guide-for-meeting-with-children-via-technology) to determine if an online meeting is appropriate and take steps to prepare and manage the meeting.

If the lawyer then assesses that a child cannot provide instructions via an online meeting, the matter may need to be stood down or a short adjournment sought for the lawyer to meet with the child in person.

## Use of interpreters

All practitioners appearing as a duty lawyer must use an interpreter where required to enable the person to participate in the proceedings.

VLA staff members appearing as duty lawyers must use interpreters in accordance with the[Interpreters and Translator Policy](https://viclegalaid.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/policiesandprocedures/working-with-clients/Pages/interpreters-and-translators-policy.aspx).

## Capacity assessments

All adult parties and children 10 and older are presumed to have capacity to instruct a lawyer. Where capacity is in doubt eg. DFFH have advised the person has a cognitive impairment or disability, or the person is a patient at a psychiatric facility, or a possible lack of capacity is indicated when meeting with the person, the lawyer should undertake a capacity assessment.

Where a lawyer meets with an adult party (either in person or remotely) and assesses that they do not have capacity to instruct, the lawyer should notify VLA as soon as possible and not appear in court nor engage in negotiations on behalf of the person.

VLA will notify the Court and request that procedural orders are made for DFFH to notify VLA of the adjourned date so that a new capacity assessment can be undertaken before the hearing. The duty lawyer should submit an invoice for the time spent arranging the meeting and undertaking the capacity assessment, for a period of up to two hours.

Where a lawyer assesses that a child does not have capacity, the lawyer should advise VLA and appear in Court to advise the Court of the outcome of the capacity assessment. If the Court makes an order under s524(4) of the [*Children, Youth and Families Act*](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/children-youth-and-families-act-2005/121) requesting the appointment of a best interests lawyer, the duty lawyer should request the Court make a notation that identifies which duty lawyer undertook the capacity assessment. This will assist VLA to allocate a grant for best interests representation.

## Where a party has multiple applications

Where a person has more than one matter listed in the family division of the Children’s Court on the same day (eg. a child protection application and a family violence intervention order matter), the duty lawyer will provide legal assistance in all matters in accordance with the relevant duty lawyer guidelines. These multiple applications will be funded as a single duty lawyer service.

## Delivery of duty lawyer services

The duty lawyer service must be delivered by the lawyer to whom VLA makes the referral. If a duty lawyer becomes unable to deliver the service after accepting the service, they should advise VLA as soon as possible so a new referral can be made.

In addition to providing information, taking instructions and providing advice to their client as relevant, where providing in-court advocacy the duty lawyer should begin negotiating with the other parties as early as possible to attempt to clarify issues, identify points of agreement and seek to reach a resolution (in part or in full), as is appropriate to the circumstances, including on how the matter is to proceed in the event that it is not resolved.

A duty lawyer should assess the client’s eligibility for a grant of legal assistance and assist the client to complete the application form.

If the duty lawyer assesses that a client is unlikely to be eligible for a grant of legal assistance, they should:

* + - * + advise the client of the option to apply and have VLA assess the application
        + provide the client with referral information of firms who may be able to assist on a private payment arrangement (if the duty lawyer’s firm is unable to), in the event the application for aid is not approved.

## Second duty lawyer service

If a duty lawyer appears for a party and the hearing is adjourned within two business days for a reason beyond the party’s control, the duty lawyer must assess whether their client is eligible for a grant of legal assistance on the day of the first appearance.

If the client is eligible for assistance, the duty lawyer should apply (or refer the client to another lawyer to apply) for a grant of legal assistance for the adjourned hearing.

If the client is assessed as not being eligible for a grant of legal assistance, the duty lawyer should notify VLA as a matter of urgency so that VLA can assess eligibility for a second duty lawyer service. The duty lawyer should provide VLA with the reason for the adjournment.

## Private practitioner invoicing

Private practitioners who act as a duty lawyer must claim their duty lawyer fees separately to any claim for ongoing assistance under a grant of aid via ATLAS. This can be done by completing the Children’s Court Family Division tax invoice and duty lawyer claim form and submitting it to the relevant VLA office. The form is available at:<http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/information-for-lawyers/doing-legal-aid-work/private-practitioner-duty-lawyers/payments-and-records-management-for-childrens-court-family-division>**.**

When calculating the amount to be claimed, the duration of service is to be rounded to the nearest 15 minutes. The duty lawyer may only claim for time spent on services on the day of the hearing.

Claims for duty lawyer services must be submitted to VLA within 30 days of the service.

An individual lawyer of the Firm who provides duty lawyer services at more than one court location on the same day should submit one invoice for all services.

# Child Protection Private Practitioner Short Service Schemes

## Overview

VLA has introduced standard contracts for private firms seeking to deliver duty lawyer and short legal services as part of a Private Practitioner Short Service Scheme. Private practitioners must be Individual Certifiers on the s29A Child Protection and Family Violence Panels to be eligible to deliver child protection services through a scheme. One Individual Certifier corresponds to one scheme position.

## Rostered and non-rostered schemes

Some court locations receive a high volume of child protection applications daily. At these locations a roster of duty lawyers will be maintained to facilitate the referral of children, young people and families to lawyers.

At other locations, there may not be sufficient applications to sustain a rostered duty lawyer scheme. At these locations, referrals will be made to local child protection duty lawyers who are available to provide a duty lawyer service when applications are received, and when parties seek and/or need legal representation.

## Out of area services

In circumstances where there is a lack of locally-based legal services in a regional area, VLA offices may establish a contingency pool of private practitioners located in other regions who are available to accept child protection duty lawyer referrals when local practitioners are not available.

## Joining a scheme

An application process for all PPSSS was held in late 2022, with contracts established until late 2024.

Opportunities to join a scheme during the current contract period will vary region to region. In areas where there is a sufficient supply of practitioners to meet demand, the scheme will not open to new firms until the end of the contract period, an existing firm leaves the scheme, or there is significant increase in demand for services. In these situations VLA will notify panel firms of the opportunity to apply.

In schemes where there remains unmet demand, new firms may seek to join on a rolling basis.

New individual certifiers in a firm that already has membership of scheme can seek approval to deliver child protection duty lawyer services at any time. If it is a rostered scheme, they will not obtain a roster position (unless there is a vacancy which they can apply for) but they can provide duty lawyer services for previous clients and share the rostered duties of an existing scheme member from their firm as a means of upskilling in duty lawyer service provision.

More information on joining a scheme is available at:<https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/private-practitioner-short-service-scheme-contracts>.

## Extended leave from a scheme

Where a private practitioner member of a child protection short service scheme intends to take extended leave for parental, carer or health reasons, their firm should advise the relevant VLA scheme coordinator as soon as possible.

The Firm will be given the opportunity to apply for another employee (a child protection individual certifier) to replace the practitioner taking leave for the duration of the leave period. This application must be made within a reasonable time of the firm providing notice to VLA.

If the new applicant is assessed as unsuitable or no application is made by the Firm, VLA may determine that the vacant position will be shared among all members of the scheme until the person on leave returns, or may open an application process for the time-limited position if warranted by demand.

## Departure from a scheme

Where a private practitioner member of child protection short service scheme leaves their Firm, the Firm will be given the opportunity to apply for another employee (a child protection individual certifier) to join the scheme in their place.

If the new applicant is assessed as unsuitable or no application is made by the Firm, the Firm will forgo one scheme position. In this circumstance, VLA will write to the firm to seek a variation of the contract to reflect the firm’s new scheme positions.

In this circumstance, VLA may determine that the vacant position will be shared among all existing members of the scheme or choose to open an application process for this position if warranted by demand.

Scheme positions are linked to a Firm, therefore a practitioner who moves to another firm or commences practice as a sole practitioner will not automatically retain their membership of the scheme. They may re-apply for a position through their new firm when applications are opened by VLA, in line with the process set out at Section 6.4.

## Scheme membership where a firm dissolves

The approach to scheme membership when a firm dissolves will be resolved on a case by case basis as it will depend on if and how firm practitioners are seeking to continue delivering services following the dissolution.

# Annexures

## Annexure 1: VLA office contact details for child protection referrals

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **VLA OFFICE** | **CONTACTS** | **COURTS** |
| VLA Ballarat | Email: [DHHSapplications-ballarat@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-ballarat@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 5329 6222  Address: Central Highlands Region  106 Market St  Ballarat Central VIC 3350 | Ballarat |
| VLA Bendigo | Email: [DHHSapplications-bendigo@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-bendigo@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 5448 2333  Address: Loddon Campaspe Region  424 Hargreaves St  Bendigo VIC 3550 | Bendigo  Castlemaine  Echuca  Ouyen  Swan Hill  Kyneton  Maryborough  Kerang |
| VLA Broadmeadows | Email: [DHHSapplications-broadmeadows@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-broadmeadows@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 9302 8711  Address: North Western Suburbs  Level 1, Building 1  Broadmeadows Station Centre  1100 Pascoe Vale Rd  Broadmeadows VIC 3047 | Broadmeadows |
| VLA Dandenong | Email: DHHSapplications-dandenong@vla.vic.gov.au[DHHSapplications-dandenong@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-dandenong@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 9767 7111  Address: Westernport Region  14 Mason St  Dandenong VIC 3175 | Dandenong  (from 2023) |
| VLA Geelong | Email: [DHHSapplications-geelong@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-geelong@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 5226 5666  Address: Barwon Region  Level 2, 199 Moorabool St  Geelong VIC 3220 | Geelong  Colac |
| VLA Gippsland | Email: [DHHSapplications-gippsland@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-gippsland@vla.vic.gov.au)  *Bairnsdale*  Tel: (03) 5153 6444  Address: Gippsland Region Branch Office  87A Main St  Bairnsdale VIC 3875  *Morwell*  Tel: (03) 5126 6444  Address: Gippsland Region  4 Chapel St  Morwell VIC 3840 | Morwell  Bairnsdale  Latrobe  Valley  Korumburra  Omeo  Orbost  Sale  Wonthaggi |
| VLA Horsham | Email: [DHHSapplications-horsham@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-horsham@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 5381 6000  Address: Wimmera Region  29 Darlot St  Horsham VIC 3400 | Horsham  Ararat  Edenhope Hopetoun  Nhill  St Arnaud  Stawell |
| VLA Melbourne | Email: [DHHSapplications-melbourne@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-melbourne@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: 9269 0407  Address: 570 Bourke St  Melbourne VIC 3000  GPO Box 4380  Melbourne VIC 3001 | Melbourne |
| VLA Moorabbin | Email: [DHHSapplications-moorabbin@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-moorabbin@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: 9269 0407  Address: 1140 Nepean Highway  Moorabbin VIC 3189 | Moorabbin |
| VLA Mildura | Email: [DHHSapplications-mildura@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-mildura@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: 1300 792 387  Address: Mallee Region  137 Thirteenth St  Mildura VIC 3500 | Mildura  Robinvale |
| VLA Shepparton | Email: [DHHSapplications-shepparton@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-shepparton@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 5823 6200  Address: Goulburn Region  320 – 322 Wyndham St  Shepparton VIC 3630 | Shepparton Benalla  Cobram  Corryong  Mansfield  Myrtleford  Seymour Wangaratta Wodonga |
| VLA Warrnambool | Email: [DHHSapplications-warrnambool@vla.vic.gov.au](mailto:DHHSapplications-warrnambool@vla.vic.gov.au)  Tel: (03) 5559 7222  Address: South Coast Region  185 Fairy St  Warrnambool VIC 3280 | Warrnambool Portland  Hamilton |

## Annexure 2: Protection Application Information Form

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## Annexure 3: Summary Information Form (Form B)



1. The reference to Metropolitan areas means the Children’s Courts at Melbourne, Moorabbin, Dandenong and Broadmeadows; while regional areas refers to all other sitting locations of the Court. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Form available at https://www.childrenscourt.vic.gov.au/court-forms/child-protection-forms [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Lawyers seeking to assist clients in advance of a hearing may support the client to apply for a grant of assistance. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. In some courts, this is done by entering details into a shared document known as ‘New Matters List’, ‘Shared Court Spreadsheet’ or similar. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Formerly known as the certificate of authorisation in some areas. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. This is something young people who had involvement with child protection proceedings told VLA is important to them during the consultations for the Child Protection Legal Aid Services Review. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. - MOU between VLA and the Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service (Djirra): Referral of Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) woman and mothers of ATSI children involved in child protection proceedings by VLA to Djirra.

   - MOU between VLA and VALS: Referral of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) children, young people and parents involved in child protection proceedings by VLA to VALS. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. For example, because the person is unconscious or otherwise unable to communicate. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)