Participant Information

Project title: **Factors influencing placement decision making for children in out of home care**

You are invited to be a part of a study seeking to understand how decisions are made about where children are placed when they enter out of home care. The researchers carrying out this project are:

*Ms Jenna Meiksans, PhD Student, Australian Centre for Child Protection, UniSA*

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*Prof Fiona Arney, Director, Australian Centre for Child Protection, UniSA*

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*Dr Sara McLean, Research Fellow, Australian Centre for Child Protection, UniSA*

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*Dr Paul Harnett, Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology, University of Queensland*

Ph (07) 3365 6723  p.harnett@psy.uq.edu.au

**Project information:**

The Australian Centre for Child Protection is a national research centre at the University of South Australia, Adelaide. As part of the centre’s ongoing research in the area of out-of-home care service provision, we are investigating the factors within child protection systems and organisations that may influence where children are placed in out of home care.

We are asking you to voluntarily participate in a telephone interview conducted by Jenna Meiksans, a PhD Student under the supervision of Prof Fiona Arney, Director, and Dr Sara McLean, Research Fellow, of the Australian Centre for Child Protection, and Dr Paul Harnett, of the University of Queensland. The interview involves answering some questions about the factors that you believe may help and hinder the placement of children in the best possible out of home placement. We are particularly interested in what happens within organisations and systems to support decisions that lead to safe and stable out of home placements. Participation in this interview is expected to take approximately 1 hour of your time. The researcher may contact you with some follow up questions to clarify information provided in the interview if required.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate in the interview, or withdraw from the research at any stage. The researcher will take every
care to remove responses from any identifying material as early as possible. Likewise, individual responses will be kept confidential by the researcher and not be identified in the reporting of the research. The data obtained from this study will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Australian Centre for Child Protection for 5 years following completion of the study. This data will be kept completely confidential and only be accessible to the researcher of this project. The researcher has a responsibility, however, to report descriptions of practice that are unethical or present a risk to children and families. If examples of this type of practice arise during the interview process the researcher will report these according to the requirements of the statutory child protection authority in the relevant Australian state or territory.

The combined results from interviews from a number of child protection practitioners in Australia will be used to examine practitioners’ beliefs about the factors that might help and hinder the safe placement of children in out of home care. It is envisaged that the information obtained in this study may be also used in the future to contribute to the development of a measure of the factors that influence how children are matched to safe and stable out of home placements, and that it may ultimately contribute to the development of policy and practice in this area. A summary of results in this study is expected to be available in late 2016, reported on the Australian Centre for Child Protection website (www.unisa.edu.au/research/australian-centre-for-child-protection).

Due to the sensitive nature of issues in child protection practice, it is possible that some participants may experience some distress or discomfort relating to the content of this interview. As your participation is completely voluntary, you may decide not to participate in the study at any time throughout the process. Should you experience any discomfort during the interview you may take a break or choose to end the interview at any time. A list of national services that may be of assistance should you need them have been provided below. Support services in your local area will be identified for you at the time of your interview.

If you have any questions about the research process or about the content of the interview, please contact Jenna Meiksans on (08) 8302 1222 or via email jenna.meiksans@mymail.unisa.edu.au or Prof Fiona Arney, Director, Australian Centre for Child Protection, on (08) 8302 2918 or via email Fiona.arney@unisa.edu.au.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia’s Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this committee, (08) 8302 3118, email: Vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au.

Please retain a copy of this information sheet for your records.
Counselling and Support Services

The following are a list of national and state and territory based counselling support services that participants can access if necessary. If you choose to participate in this study, the researchers will discuss additional support services available in your local area with you at the time of your interview.

**Lifeline**


**State crisis numbers**

**NSW** - 1800 011 511 - Mental Health Line

**VIC** - 1300 651 251 - Suicide Help Line

**QLD** - 13 43 25 84 - 13 HEALTH

**TAS** - 1800 332 388 - Mental Health Services Helpline

**SA** - 13 14 65 - Mental Health Assessment and Crisis Intervention Service

**WA** - 1800 676 822 - Mental Health Emergency Response Line

**NT** - 08 8999 4988 - Top End Mental Health Service

**ACT** - 1800 629 354 - Mental Health Triage Service