

Pathway to Good Health

Overview and guidance for Child Protection Practitioners

What is it?



Free health screening

Pathway to Good health (PTGH) is a program that provides free health screening, assessment and health planning for all children and young people who enter or re-enter care in Victoria. This is an important program as children and young people in care have significantly poorer health and wellbeing outcomes than other children.

The service is delivered in each DFFH Area by a local community health service provider. A list of providers can be found [Pathway to good health for children in care | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/pathway-to-good-health-for-children-in-care)

Who works in it?



Health teams

The program is part of a community-based health service and consists of a team of health professionals which include a **Health Navigator** who is usually a nurse or allied health clinician and a **Clinical Assessment Team** that includes a paediatrician and allied health clinicians such as speech pathologists and psychologists.

The program may also include other health workers such as Aboriginal Health workers, youth workers and mental health workers.

How do children get referred to the program?



Fortnightly referrals

All children and young people who enter care for the first time or re-enter care for subsequent times and are placed in care on statutory orders (except for Permanent Care Orders) are referred each fortnight to their local PTGH service by the *Care Support Help Desk* in each Division.

This automated referral is extracted from the CRIS files and provides key information such as the name of the child, cultural status, age, type of protection order, name of allocated Child Protection practitioner and team leader, name of carer and residential address.

This referral does not provide any additional details about the protective or social history of the child or young person. If the CRIS record is not up-to-date, then referral information may not accurately reflect children or young people eligible for the program.

What happens after a child or young person is referred?

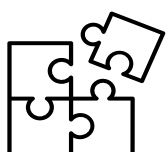


Connect with Health Navigator

The PTGH Health Navigator in the program will work closely with the local child protection office either by co-locating in the same building, visiting regularly or being available for virtual consultations. This supports the Health Navigator to more easily connect with the allocated child protection practitioner for each of the referred clients. This connection will enable the required health and social history about the child or young person to be gathered to inform what pathway of health care the child or young person needs.

Regular communication and local relationships with the Health Navigator may also support the identification of other children or young people who Child Protection practitioners feel should be referred or assisted by the program who are not included in the initial referral list.

Can we share information about the child or young person with the Health Navigator?

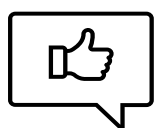


Sharing information is critical for good assessments

Yes, Child Protection have legislated powers to receive and share information about children and young people to assist in carrying out their delegated responsibilities. This sharing of information includes health professionals delivering appropriate health care that will support a child or young person's development and wellbeing. [Information sharing in child protection practice | Child Protection Manual | CP Manual Victoria](#)

The Health Navigator may also ask Child Protection to seek information about a child or young person's past medical history from another health service and then share it with PTGH to ensure that current health information is available to support good health decision making, referral and reduce any duplication of health service. Without a comprehensive health and social history, good assessments cannot be made.

Does the person with parental responsibility need to consent for the child or young person to receive a PTGH service?



Consent is provided when referral is made

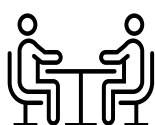
The PTGH service is an assessment service that supports the timely identification of the physical, developmental, intellectual and mental health conditions. Children and young people have been referred by child protection to the program to gain this assessment about the health of a child or young person. [Consent for medical examination and treatment - advice | Child Protection Manual | CP Manual Victoria](#)

While consent is provided at referral, it is good practice for Child Protection practitioners to consult with the parent/s to discuss the PTGH program and where appropriate seek their consent and participation in providing information to the health service about their child and attending any clinical appointment.

A young person (usually 14 and over) who is deemed by a health professional to have sufficient maturity to consent to the medical care can also provide consent for a PTGH service and other types of health interventions.

If recommendations and referrals are made for further health treatment, Child Protection practitioners should seek the consent of the parent if they retain parental responsibility for these additional interventions to occur.

What do I do when I receive a Health Management Plan?



Timely actions

Children and young people who are supported through the program may receive a comprehensive health assessment that will include a Health Management Plan. This plan will detail the assessment of the child or young person and any recommendations for further treatment or referrals to other health services.

It is important that this plan is uploaded into the CRIS file with the case note title – *Health Management Plan* on receipt. A time should also be made with the Care Team and/or appropriate case manager to discuss the plan with the Health Navigator so that any health information can be explained clearly.

It is important that any recommendations for treatment are actioned quickly following receipt of the plan and setting up a meeting with the Health Navigator will support the best way to progress the recommendations.

The PTGH service may also seek to share the Health Management Plan with other health professionals who the child or young person has been referred to after the assessment. Sharing this information reduces duplication and streamlines the referral process. Please discuss with the PTGH service if you have any concerns about sharing this assessment.

For further information

[Pathway to good health for children in care | health.vic.gov.au](https://health.vic.gov.au/pathway-to-good-health-for-children-in-care)

Or contact pathwaytogoodhealth@health.vic.gov.au