



Australian Government

Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations

Parent Pathways

2024–2027 Evaluation Strategy

Voluntary pre-employment service for parents
and carers with young children

Evaluation Strategy

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The document must be attributed as the (Parent Pathways Evaluation Strategy 2024-2027).

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1. Introduction

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) is required to monitor and evaluate Australian Government employment services and programs progressively under the terms of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and specific directives from Cabinet. This evaluation strategy outlines how the department will evaluate Parent Pathways 2024–2027, the voluntary pre-employment service for parents with young children, which commenced on 1 November 2024.

Program/service evaluation informs future policy development, drives continuous improvement and innovation, and contributes to the Australian Government’s transparency and accountability agenda. With the implementation of the enhanced Commonwealth Performance Framework in July 2015 within the requirements of the PGPA Act, evidence generated from evaluations can also be used to support good performance reporting in annual performance statements.

The Australian Government is committed to improving economic security for parents with young children by offering support to parents to identify and work towards addressing their vocational barriers and non-vocational barriers and their work and study goals. Parent Pathways will support parents and carers with children under 6 years of age to improve their long-term economic security. It will offer parents the ability to access a range of services and complementary programs that take account of the individual needs of the parent, including their caring responsibilities.¹

The evaluation of Parent Pathways will adopt a mixed methods approach. As the focus and scope may need to adapt to changes in policy, the economic environment and data as it progresses, there is a need for flexibility. It follows the approach to performance reporting taken by the Productivity Commission in Report on Government Services 2024.²

1.1 Background

The House Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services (the Committee), in its interim report tabled on 1 March 2023 concluded that there was a need for pre-employment or pre-vocational services to support parents experiencing vulnerability.³ The department undertook an extensive consultation process from May to September 2023 to inform key design features for a new pre-employment service. The key findings from the consultation were that the new service needed to be voluntary, recognise the valuable role of parents caring for their children and family, and be sufficiently flexible and tailored to accommodate their personal circumstances.

On 7 December 2023 the Australian Government announced the new voluntary pre-employment service for principal carers of young children, now named Parent Pathways. The service will take into consideration the needs of parents and carers who are: mothers or fathers, younger parents, First Nations people, parents living with disability and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

A Parents Advisory Group (the PAG) was established to advise the department on the development and implementation of the new Parent Pathways pre-employment service. Membership of the PAG is comprised of parent representatives, community organisations and an academic expert. The PAG

¹ Parent Pathways Deed 2024-2027, [Parent Pathways Deed 2024-2027 - Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government](#)

² [An Approach to performance reporting - Report on Government Services 2024 - Productivity Commission \(pc.gov.au\)](#)

³ [Rebuilding Employment Services – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](#)

participated in a Theory of Change workshop on 13 February 2025. The product of this workshop has been used to inform this strategy.

1.2 Objectives of Parent Pathways 2024–2027

The objectives of Parent Pathways were designed to deliver an effective, efficient and culturally responsive pre-employment service for parents who experience disadvantage and who are caring for children under 6 years of age. The service is designed to support the future aspirations of parents and carers by strengthening their capabilities and supporting them to progress towards their education and employment goals, while respecting their needs and valuing their caring responsibilities.

Specifically, Parent Pathways is intended to:

- support parents to access other services and supports to help them to care for their family and address their vocational barriers and non-vocational barriers
- assist parents to identify their future aspirations and education and employment goals that will lead to secure and decent work that fits with their caring responsibilities
- support parents to progress towards their education and employment goals

improve the longer-term economic security of parents.⁴ The design principles of Parent Pathways are that the service be:

- Voluntary – the service prioritises the parent/carer’s responsibilities and their need for flexibility by enabling eligible parents/carers to retain control of their engagement and use the service whenever they wish.
- Tailored – the service empowers parents and carers by supporting them to meet their needs, make their own choices based on their individual circumstances and gain a sense of their progress.
- Holistic – the service provides support that extends beyond employment, education or training needs. This support includes assistance with challenges such as domestic violence, housing insecurity, transport, access to childcare, and mental and physical health.

1.3 Service principles and requirements

Parents can choose the types of support they receive. This includes referrals to local support services for those who face complex challenges. The principles of the service are to:

- value unpaid care (caring for and raising children) as legitimate, important work
- focus on the parent and provide a personalised service based on each parent’s goals, aspirations and circumstances
- focus on identifying the parents’ strengths and building their capability
- provide flexibility by allowing parents to engage with the Service when they choose and for as long as they wish and for as long as they remain eligible

⁴ Parent Pathways Deed 2024–2027, [Parent Pathways Deed 2024–2027 - Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government](#)

- focus on job quality and security, and intersections between employment and social security, for parents with employment as a goal.

The following service requirements apply to providers:

- continuity of service, with parents connected to one mentor who is familiar with the parent's circumstances
- culturally sensitive and trauma-informed services
- staff working with parents have relevant qualifications and/or experience and have completed mandatory training relating to cultural competency, family and domestic violence, and trauma-informed practice
- capacity to deliver locally engaged and place-based services for parents with young children
- existing community links, or the ability to form strong connections with the community so that parents can be referred to relevant local services
- experience in developing a range of engagement strategies (including outreach and promotional strategies) to reach vulnerable parents
- a culture of continuous improvement and innovation to ensure that parents receive the best possible support
- a strengths-based approach to providing support while being culturally appropriate and holistic.

1.4 Assistance to participants

Providers are required to assist parents with the activities outlined in the **Appendix 1**. Providers are expected to work closely and collaboratively with local community and education organisations that offer complementary programs and services to support parents to achieve their goals. At the same time, the government seeks to minimise the duplication of similar programs and services or outcomes that are already paid for by government. The department reserves the right to exclude certain programs and services.

1.5 Eligibility criteria

Parents eligible for Parent Pathways are those who:

- have primary caring responsibility for a child under 6 years (this includes grandparents, foster carers and kinship carers), and
- are not currently in paid employment, and
- live in a non-remote location where the service is delivered.

And are either:

- in receipt of Parenting Payment Single or Partnered, Carer Payment, or Special Benefit.

Or are:

- not receiving an income support payment and are an Australian resident (including Australian citizens, permanent visa holders, or nominated visa holders), and are either

- a young parent under the age of 22, or
- an early school leaver (parents who have not attained a Year 12 or equivalent or higher qualification), or
- a First Nations parent.

2. Focus and scope of the Parent Pathways evaluation

2.1 The evaluation scope

This evaluation will be formative and summative in nature, and it will pay particular attention to the appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness and equity of the service.

2.1.1 Connections, registrations and commencement

Parents on eligible income support payments who engage with Services Australia will have the option to indicate their interest in Parent Pathways and will be referred to a provider in the location where the parent lives. The referral processes of Services Australia and its success in growing the caseload will be examined in the evaluation.

Providers are required to contact these referred parents to inform them about the service and its benefits and invite them to participate. In addition, providers must make the service accessible to potentially eligible parents by conducting a range of outreach and engagement activities to promote the benefits of participation. Parents who are not connected to a provider through Services Australia or the department, or directly from an outreach and engagement activity, can register with any provider accessible to them.

2.1.2 Engagement strategies

The PAG identified the importance of engagement strategies to the success of Parent Pathways. Members suggested a wide range of activities that providers could employ. The evaluation will examine the extent to which providers employed these strategies to grow the caseload and how parents, who were not directly connected by Services Australia, become aware of the service and its offering. These include, but are not limited to, use of the Community and Parent Engagement Fund, the Individual Fund, the Capacity Building Fund and the Pooled Fund (see **Appendix 2**).

2.1.3 Service delivery

2.1.3.1 Parent Snapshot

Providers will support participants to identify their strengths, skills, experience, circumstances and challenges by taking a strengths-based practice approach and by completing the Parent Snapshot. The Parent Snapshot will be completed at the Initial Discussion, if the participant experiences any significant changes in circumstances, and at their 12 Month Review. The evaluation will monitor changes in the snapshots of individual participants over time.

2.1.3.2 Goal plans and activities

The evaluation will analyse the goal plans and activities of participants at regular intervals. Key performance indicators (**Appendix 3**) will be examined as part of active servicing and service delivery.

2.1.3.3 Interactions with other employment programs/measures

Complementary programs that parents may participate in while also being supported by Parent Pathways include Transition to Work (TtW), Career Transition Assistance (CTA), Skills for Education and Employment (SEE), Self-Employment Assistance (SEA), Employability Skills Training (EST), Observational Work Experience (OWE) and Workforce Australia Online. Eligible parents will be able to exercise choice, when eligible for more than one type of provider-assisted service. Parents cannot participate concurrently in some employment programs and services funded by the Australian Government such as Workforce Australia Services, Disability Employment Services⁵ or the Community Development Program and activities or programs/services funded for the specific purpose of supporting a young person to be work-ready for employment.

The extent to which parents take advantage of these complementary services and measures will be examined as part of the evaluation.

2.1.4 Australian Public Service (APS) Delivery Pilot

The APS delivery pilot will enable government to evaluate the effectiveness of APS service delivery, while raising APS capability in line with APS reform objectives. It is an opportunity to test APS capability in leveraging cross-government infrastructure and connections to better support parents with wrap-around services. The evaluation of the APS Pilot will proceed concurrently with the overall evaluation using a mixed-method approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research to synthesise findings. It will include a quasi-experimental design. Elements such as location, labour market characteristics, and participant characteristics will be controlled for in the design when making comparisons to other Parent Pathways participants or to non-participants. It will take account of elements of the services that are the same, as well as elements where the APS Pilot and the national service have different arrangements such as variables relating to service delivery including staffing and rental of premises.

2.1.5 Coverage

Employment Regions intersecting with remote areas

The focus of the evaluation will be the 51 Employment Regions around Australia where Parent Pathways will be delivered. In line with the establishment of the service, 8 intersect with a 'remote area' as identified by the Remote Indigenous Procurement Policy (RIPP), being: Far West Orana (incl Broken Hill), Esperance (WA), Darwin (incl Alice Springs), Geraldton (WA), North West Country SA, Kalgoorlie (WA), Townsville (incl Mt Isa) and Broome (WA).⁶

2.2 Service evaluation logic

The service evaluation logic is a visual summary of the core elements and activities of the service, and the outcomes that it aims to achieve (**Appendix 4**). It contains essential service information that the evaluation assesses and, reveals whether and how the service works as intended. The logic has been developed in conjunction with policy, service and program colleagues.

⁵ <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-employment-reforms/inclusive-employment-australia>

⁶ A 'remote procurement' is a procurement exercise for a 'remote contract', which is a contract where the majority of the value of the goods and services will be delivered in a remote area. If no First Nations small to medium enterprise (SME) is found suitable, or in the event that all suitable First Nations (WA) SMEs decline the Deed, any Tenderers that have bid for that Employment Region will then be considered.

2.3 Key evaluation questions

Domain	Key questions
Appropriateness, satisfaction and quality	Q1. How well has the service met participants' needs? Q2. Do the operational processes and service design enable Parent Pathways to achieve its objectives? Q3. Does Parent Pathways deliver quality services to participants?
Efficiency	Q4. Is the Parent Pathways service delivered in a timely manner and is the service cost-efficient?
Effectiveness	Q5. How well does Parent Pathways engage and service participants? Q6. Does participation in Parent Pathways lead to progress towards addressing vocational barriers and non-vocational barriers and achievement, of pre-employment, education, training and employment related goals?
Equity	Q7. Is Parent Pathways accessible and meeting the needs of priority cohorts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Nations• Parents and carers living in rural or remote areas• People from a CALD background• People with disability• Young parents• Early School Leavers (ESLs).

3. Evaluation methodology

3.1 Analytical approach

The evaluation adopts a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative research will be utilised to test the appropriateness of the service. The qualitative research will also contribute textural information about participant engagement, compliance issues, long-term impact of the service and service quality. Administrative and survey data will inform the descriptive statistics, and regression analysis will be used to explore and understand the service impacts where possible. Where appropriate and feasible, comparisons will be made with performance targets and/or constructed comparison groups.

Results will be reported at the whole-service level, by participant eligibility groups and locations, and disaggregated for different demographic groups where feasible (including gender, First Nations people, CALD participants, participants with disability, young parents and other equity groups).

Technical details will be provided in report appendices describing the analytical techniques, and limitations will be noted where applicable.

3.1.1 Estimating net service impact

The net impact or relative impact of a service can be determined by comparing a group of service participants (referred to as a treatment group) with a group of non-participants with similar characteristics (referred to as a comparison group).

Selecting an appropriate comparison group will be critical to ensuring that evaluation findings are robust. To enable causal attribution of the effect of the service on participant outcomes, the treatment and comparison groups should be as similar as possible across labour market conditions, socio-economic factors and personal characteristics. After initial selection, the remaining observable differences in the distribution of these variables between the treatment and comparison groups may be controlled through multivariate matching and regression techniques.

Examples of key variables include:

- **Labour market:** Unemployment rate, Participation rate, Internet Vacancy Index.
- **Socio-economic:** Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage, Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia Plus (ARIA+).
- **Personal:** Age, age of youngest child, gender, First Nations status, CALD status, income support type and duration, highest level of education attainment, eligibility group.

3.1.2 Outcome measures

Improvements in capability will be broadly examined through a variety of measures. For example, pre-employment outcomes such as participant levels of self-confidence, resilience and agency, will be explored through a participant survey. Capability measures will also include wellbeing and skills development.

Consideration of how well Parent Pathways engages, and services, participants will include measures around awareness of the service and satisfaction with the activities.

Proxy measures of education and employment outcomes will also be constructed. Examples of these education engagement or employment outcome measures includes receipt of education subsidy payments and income support exits. Further detail is provided in the Effectiveness domain of **Appendix 5**.

3.1.3 Key cohorts of interest

As indicated earlier, the evaluation will examine equity in service effectiveness. For this purpose, the key cohorts of interest in quantitative analyses may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, ESLs and young parents and a range of others.

3.2 Data sources

Principal data sources for this evaluation come from the department's existing data systems, with customisation for Parent's Pathways, and from service-specific research (**Appendix 5**). They include:

- administrative data from the department's Workforce Australia Online for Providers system Employment Services System (ESS) and the Digital Services Contact Centre (DSCC)
- income support and related data through the department's Research and Evaluation Database (RED)
- provider surveys conducted by the department
- qualitative research undertaken by an independent research contractor and inhouse, including research with providers, participants, Services Australia and community stakeholders
- capability assessments conducted by providers and provided to the department
- quantitative surveys of participants undertaken by an independent research contractor.

3.2.1 Other data sources

Where appropriate and necessary, research findings from published literature and data from other agencies and sources, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), will be used to support the analysis. The department will work in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Evaluation.

3.3 Qualitative research

The department will engage an independent research organisation to conduct interviews with participants, providers, Services Australia and community organisations to seek their feedback on service operation and service quality.

3.4 Participant surveys

The department will engage an independent research organisation to conduct a survey of participants to gauge participant attitudes towards education and work, participant wellbeing, participants' work-related skills, and behavioural changes. Identifiable information remains confidential.

3.5 Confidentiality

Each research deliverable will be a contribution to the evaluation report as a whole and, as a result, will not be available to the public on an individual basis.

3.6 Limitations

There are several risks and limitations to the conduct and quality of the evaluation, including:

- The pre-employment nature of the service makes quantifying the service effect difficult.
- Data quality issues including missing or poorly recorded data may limit measurement of the effectiveness of Parent Pathways.
- Parent Pathways participants are eligible for employment services and programs such as TtW and SEA. State, local governments and non-government organisations may also have interventions targeting a similar cohort. Therefore, it may be difficult to control for participation in other programs when assessing outcomes for these participants.
- Changing policy and service elements: changes to policy and service settings make it more difficult to attribute effects and outcomes to the service settings.
- The performance of the overall service and the APS delivery pilot during its initial roll out and implementation phase may not reflect its longer-term performance.
- The APS Pilot findings may be more relevant to regions with similar characteristics, and therefore caution will be needed before generalising to broader geographical regions and participant populations.

4. Evaluation reporting

An evaluation report is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2028. The report will include qualitative and quantitative research and administrative data analysis to address the evaluation questions. A qualitative assessment of service and process appropriateness and a statistical description of participants will be featured. The report will cover participants' progress towards their education and employment goals, as well as their level of engagement and their satisfaction with service quality.

5. Evaluation management

The Parent Pathways evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the relevant legislation and departmental policies. Regular meetings of the Parent Pathways Evaluation Working Group (comprised of representatives from policy, operational programs, reporting and specialist advisors across the department), the PAG and with Services Australia will provide input and advice.

5.1 Governance

The Employment Evaluation Branch (EEB) in the Evidence and Assurance Division is responsible for planning, designing and conducting the evaluation of Parent Pathways. The evaluation findings are to be developed independently of other areas of the department.

The department's Senior Responsible Office (SRO) for Evaluation will be responsible for approving the evaluation strategy, approving changes in evaluation priorities, monitoring progress, and receiving and accepting evaluation reports. The SRO will receive advice on the evaluation from the relevant governance committees, such as the Employment and Workforce Assistant Secretaries Committee (EAC).

- The major stakeholders for the Parent Pathways evaluation include:
- Parent Pathways participants
- PAG
- Parent Pathways providers (including the APS provider)
- the policy and program areas in the department
- Federal Government – for example, Services Australia, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Health (mainly as link to employers in aged care), Disability Employment Services (DES), Department of Education (child care)
- State Government – for example, Departments of Education, Housing, Family and Community Services (SA), Corrections, Health and TAFE.
- Local Government – for example, City of Playford, Gawler Local Council, Sainsbury Local Council.
- Community organisations, First Nations and peak bodies.

To the extent possible, EEB will aim to incorporate the views of stakeholders in the Parent Pathways evaluation report.

5.2 Research ethics

The research activities will be undertaken in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Where required, a review by a registered Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) will be undertaken by the data collection business supporting the evaluation.

5.3 Risks

This strategy assumes that the data collected through the Employment Services System, and other processes managed by the department will be sufficient to enable the proposed analysis. If the collected data are insufficient, the scope and timeliness of the evaluation may be compromised. The strategy also assumes that income support data from Services Australia will be available and will be like the current data collected.

The risks most relevant to the Parent Pathways evaluation are:

- Data availability and quality: our ability to answer the key evaluation questions outlined above depends on the availability and quality of the data collected as part of the administration of the Parent Pathways and contracted research.
- Changing policy and service elements: changes to Parent Pathways service policy and design throughout the course of the evaluation make it more difficult to attribute effects and outcomes to the service.
- Resource management: the evaluation depends on the availability of adequate funding for external research, as well as being able to recruit and retain staff with appropriate analytical skills.
- Evaluation findings not supported by stakeholders: key stakeholders may not agree with evaluation findings or recommendations.

6. Evaluation timeline

6.1 Timeline of key evaluation activities

Key evaluation activities	Expected timing
Collaboration with the relevant policy, service and program areas for the design and conduct of the evaluation.	4 th quarter 2024
Service logic workshop	4 th quarter 2024
Theory of Change workshop with the PAG	1 st quarter 2025
Literature review	2 nd quarter 2025
Evaluation Strategy completed, noted by the department's EAC and published.	3 rd quarter 2025
Provider survey	3 rd quarter 2025
First stage qualitative research	3 rd quarter 2025
Insights summary	4 th quarter 2025
Participant survey (quantitative research)	2 nd quarter 2026
Second provider survey	3 rd quarter 2026
Updated insights summary	4 th quarter 2026
Second stage qualitative research	1 st quarter 2027
Third provider survey	3 rd quarter 2027
Final report	1 st quarter 2028

6.1.1 Ongoing sharing of insights

The evaluation team will provide regular and timely fieldwork reports to policy, service and program areas, the PAG and to departmental senior management to facilitate evidence based continuous improvement. The evaluation team will also contribute to any reviews or inquiries as evidence becomes available. This includes presentations of findings to departmental senior management committees as appropriate.

6.1.2 Final report

The final report will assess the overall effectiveness and appropriateness of Parent Pathways. It will be informed by both qualitative and quantitative research. It is expected to be completed by the 1st quarter 2028. The expectation is that any interim and final evaluation reports will be published.

Appendix 1: Providers' assistance with participants' activities.

Assistance type	Activity
Parent Snapshot	Assessment to assist the parent to identify their existing skills, strengths, needs and challenges.
Referral of parents to local community and social services for support where appropriate	For example, referrals to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - crisis accommodation and/or legal support where a parent is escaping domestic violence - counselling and other professional service to assist parents suffering from mental ill-health - health services - drug and alcohol support services.
Financial support	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - paying for transportation costs so that parents can attend meetings with their mentor or access community services, attend education or training, travel to job interviews or to work - assistance with education or training opportunities - purchase work-related goods or services.
Caring: help parents access early childhood education and care	Assistance with finding early childhood education and care with associated costs, such as waitlist fees and bonds.
Career guidance for parents wishing to develop a career	Providing relevant guidance which consider parents': strengths, goals, and local labour market opportunities.
Goal Plan	Development of a Goal Plan in the department's IT system to help parents understand their strengths, non-vocational challenges as well as their needs. This could relate to the parent's health, safety, or basic material needs, as well as their social and economic participation.
Human capital development	Helping parents to address their barriers and improve their motivation, confidence and wellbeing
Education and training	Helping parents to establish and achieve their education or training goals, aligned with their strengths and local labour market opportunities and connect parents to education or training opportunities Providing vocational and non-vocational training.
Employment	Assistance to parents who are ready to start looking for employment to obtain and retain suitable, secure employment through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - résumé development and job interview preparation services - post-placement support once a parent obtains work - financial assistance with transportation and other work-related costs - transitional support for parents moving into employment services - assistance for parents to access wage subsidies and relocation assistance

Assistance type	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vocational development courses.
Engagement	<p>Helping parents to engage with the service, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engagement local promotional events or activities in shopping centres, community hubs, social media etc - use of Engagement Supports incentives for initial engagement and for ongoing engagement - participants' continued engagement with the service (for example, regular catch-ups) - connecting participants to local community/network.
Awareness	<p>Raising parents' awareness of the service, including: social media campaigns.</p>

Appendix 2: Payment type to providers.

Payment type	Fee (GST inclusive)
Service Fee	\$1,500 paid to Providers per parent per 6 months of servicing.
Community and Parent Engagement Fund	\$25,000 per Full-Time or Part-Time Site, and \$10,000 per Outreach site (the Outreach site payment is capped at \$200,000 per contract per financial year) paid to Providers per annum, subject to the amount being used for approved outreach and engagement activities.
Individual Fund	\$1,250 credited to each parent's Individual Fund on the parent's commencement in the services and per year of servicing that the Provider may seek reimbursements from. Unused credits do not carry forward from year to year.
Pooled Fund	\$600 per parent commencing in the services credited to each Provider's Pooled Fund from which the Provider may seek reimbursements.
Relocation Assistance	Uncapped amount (provided that it is proportionate to the relocation needs of the relevant parent) that may be paid by the Provider to each eligible parent to relocate to take up a job, and for which the Provider may claim a reimbursement.
Wage Subsidies	Up to \$10,000 that may be paid by the Provider to each eligible employer per eligible employment placement, and for which the Provider may seek a reimbursement. There are two Wage Subsidy types available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth Bonus Wage Subsidy, funded from a demand-driven pool - Workforce Australia Services Wage Subsidy, funded through the Pooled Fund.
Capacity Building Fund	Up to \$60,000 per eligible Provider paid as reimbursements for eligible costs

Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Module	KPI	Target	Weighting
1. Operational efficiency (30%)	1A – Commencement	50%	7.5%
	1B – Goal Plans	80%	7.5%
	1C – Active Servicing	N/A*	7.5%
	1D – Parent Snapshots	80%	7.5%
2. Service effectiveness (40%)	2A – Education	60%	20%
	2B – Employment	35%	20%
3. Quality of service (30%)	3 – Service Delivery Assessment	TBC	30%

*There is no target for KPI 1C in Performance Period 1. Data will still contribute to the Provider’s overall Performance Score, and results will be discussed at the mid-cycle and annual review. A target will be set for later Performance Periods based after analysing parent engagement data over the initial months of the service.

KPI 1A – the proportion of Participants who are Commenced within four weeks of their Services Australia Connection

KPI 1B – the proportion of Participants who have a Goal Plan created, with at least one Goal, within four weeks of Commencement.

KPI 1C – the average monthly proportion of Participants that an active Activity Referral and have attended an Appointment.

KPI 1D – the proportion of Participants that have Parent Snapshots completed when they are due.

KPI 2A – the proportion of Participants, with an Education and Training Goal, who participate in Education or Training.

KPI 2B – the proportion of Participants, with an Employment Goal, who participate in Employment.

Appendix 4: Parent Pathways Service Evaluation Logic

Problem statement: Parents and carers at risk of entrenched disadvantage arising from individual and systemic issues need access to appropriate, individualised support to build their human capital and capability to achieve their work and study goals.

Service objective: To provide appropriate, individualised support to parents and carers to build their human capital and capability to achieve their work and study goals, secure decent work that fits their caring responsibilities which leads to their well-being and long-term economic security.

Inputs	Activities/Processes	Outputs	Short term outcomes	Medium term outcomes	Long term outcomes
<p>Resources</p> <p>\$452.63 million over 4 years</p> <p>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (the department) departmental staff</p> <p>State office network</p> <p>Partners</p> <p>Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations</p> <p>Services Australia</p> <p>Department of Social Services</p> <p>Department of Education</p> <p>Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Office for Women</p> <p>Department of Finance</p> <p>Treasury</p> <p>Federal, state and local government employment support programs in 51 Employment Regions</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Parents Advisory Group (PAG)</p> <p>Community groups and services</p> <p>Peak bodies including ACOSS, Council of Single Mothers and the child, Settlement Services etc.</p> <p>Fist Nations-led community peak bodies</p> <p>Local community interventions etc.</p> <p>First Nations-led community peak bodies</p> <p>Providers</p> <p>Other Players</p> <p>Other initiatives impacting the same target group.</p> <p>Federal, state and local government programs.</p> <p>Local community interventions</p>	<p>The department</p> <p>Build departmental IT system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Build Parents Snapshot to facilitate participant’s engagement and commencement– Build capability assessment tool to measure changes in participants’ work readiness– Build Goal Plan tool to facilitate goal setting and tracking between participants and providers– Build system for referring eligible participants to local providers for servicing <p>Maintain and develop payment policy settings for providers and participants</p> <p>Develop communication strategy suite of internal and external communications</p> <p>Maintain and develop documents suite, including Guidelines, Service Guarantee, Performance and Assurance Frameworks (KPIs and KPMs), and so on</p> <p>Evaluate and establish Deeds with local providers</p> <p>Set-up and operate APS pilot in Playford LGA</p> <p>Procure learning and development supplier(s) to produce mandatory Parent Pathways training modules</p> <p>Establish qualification minimum standards for provider staff</p> <p>Develop Community of Practice principles and joint charter in concert with community of practice members</p> <p>Maintain current list of national support services</p> <p>Regular stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Program monitoring, evaluation and reporting</p> <p>Providers</p> <p>Design an attractive service offer that responds to individual needs, builds confidence, combats isolation and supports parents’ aspirations</p> <p>Employ suitably skilled, with appropriate checks, child safe/child friendly environments and experienced staff, ensure appropriate ratios and consistency/retention of mentors</p> <p>Undertake outreach, promotional and engagement activities to attract eligible participants – and direct commencement of eligible parents</p> <p>Commence participants promptly</p> <p>Undertake Parent Snapshot, develop goals, goal plans and schedule appointments with participants</p> <p>Develop culturally appropriate individualised and strength-based activities with parents, with attention to special needs of equity groups</p> <p>Establish links with community services and refer parents to appropriate services</p>	<p>The department</p> <p>Department IT system facilitating service delivery, including payments, monitoring and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Parents Snapshot available in departmental IT system for use by providers– Capability assessment tool available in departmental IT system from use by providers– Goal Plan developed and iterated with participants, describe goals and how they achieve them– Voluntary participants can be commenced in the system <p>Communication strategy and suite of communications, including regular notifications, promoting service</p> <p>Payments</p> <p>Community engagement fund for providers to promote service in local communities (\$10–25k p.a.)</p> <p>Individual fund of \$1,250 p.a. for each participants’ individual financial support</p> <p>Engagement support payments of \$100 and \$50 to participants at key engagement points</p> <p>Pooled fund of \$600 per participant engaged for providers to provide flexible support</p> <p>Capability fund payment (once-off, up to \$60k) to eligible (SME/First Nations) providers</p> <p>Providers</p> <p>Diverse local providers onboarded to deliver place-based service (including APS Pilot).</p> <p>Provider resources</p> <p>Provider Portal and suite of key documents available for use by providers</p> <p>Mandatory training modules available for provider staff to complete</p> <p>Qualification minimum standards required of provider staff</p> <p>Parent Pathways Community of Practice providers</p> <p>Current list of national support services for participants or provider referral</p>	<p>The department</p> <p>Procurement completed and funding agreements/deeds in place</p> <p>Participants referred to local providers for servicing are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– aware of the service and engage with it in a manner that they choose– engage with a mentor and discuss and set goals for the future– access appropriate support services by themselves or by referral– receive financial assistance to participants in pre-employment activities and pursue goals <p>Providers are referred local participants for servicing</p> <p>Providers engage with local community, organisations and support services</p> <p>Providers access payments and resources to support their performance and meet service requirements and standards</p> <p>Provider staff meet mandatory qualification requirements in the pre-employment services sector</p> <p>Participants</p> <p>Barriers disclosed and assistance sought</p> <p>Increase in human capabilities, including confidence about future education, job prospects and wellbeing</p> <p>Education and/or employment goals identified</p> <p>Education and/or employment activities in progress</p> <p>Community connections to reduce social isolation developed</p> <p>Voluntary employment-related activities, concurrent referrals, wage subsidies, relocation assistance and so on</p> <p>Personalised participation plan activities started or in train</p> <p>Engagement with service delivery agent consultative forums</p> <p>Providers</p> <p>Successful strategies in place to recruit volunteers to participate in the service</p> <p>Supportive services developed in accordance with the deed of agreement</p> <p>Culturally appropriate, welcoming and child-friendly/age services operating effectively</p> <p>Participation in communities of practice</p> <p>Assist with accessing child care and other support services available to participants</p> <p>Service delivery plans</p>	<p>The department</p> <p>More professionalised pre-employment services sector</p> <p>Demonstrated service efficiency and effectiveness</p> <p>Monitoring impacts on children and on participants with disability or a child with disability</p> <p>Demonstrated accountability</p> <p>KPIs are met</p> <p>Cost effectiveness (unit cost per outcome)</p> <p>Participants</p> <p>Participants are satisfied that the service supported them to identify and achieve their goals</p> <p>More participants follow education pathways. Build hard and soft skills and gain an educational qualification</p> <p>While acknowledging parents’ legitimate choice to care for children, more participants are ready to look for work and more participants enter secure and sustainable employment</p> <p>Regular use of child care places to support participation</p> <p>Engagement in local community activities</p> <p>Demonstrated improvement in personal wellbeing</p> <p>Providers</p> <p>Culturally appropriate services delivered in accordance with the deed of agreement</p> <p>Assistance with accessing child care available to parents</p>	<p>The department</p> <p>More effective pre-employment services sector leading to increased provider performance</p> <p>Contribution to Closing the Gap and Gender Equity targets</p> <p>Reduction of the indicators of intergenerational disadvantage for participants</p> <p>Vibrant participatory communities as parents increase engagement with the community</p> <p>Parents with skills to meet the needs of local employers</p> <p>Diverse workplaces</p> <p>Improved personal, family and child wellbeing</p> <p>Reduced reliance on/level of/numbers on income support</p> <p>Reduced incidence of intergenerational unemployment</p> <p>Improved social, financial and economic security of parents</p> <p>Participants</p> <p>Improvement in participants’ holistic wellbeing</p> <p>More participants have secure and satisfying employment</p> <p>Providers</p> <p>More effective pre-employment services sector leading to increased provider performance</p>

Challenges	Assumptions	Data collection	Key performance Indicators (KPIs)
<p>Changes in the political landscape including political appetite for voluntary participation</p> <p>Changes in Australia’s economic landscape</p> <p>Natural and other disasters (local, regional and national)</p> <p>Australia has relatively low women’s workforce participation</p> <p>Australia’s uneven distribution of affordable child care places</p> <p>Patchy transport systems in Australia</p> <p>Loss of work-specific skills after long periods out of the workforce</p> <p>Intergenerational disadvantages</p>	<p>Professionalisation of the pre-employment services sector will increase effectiveness</p> <p>Local services exist and have capacity to receive referrals</p> <p>People have the capacity and ability to engage with the service</p> <p>People are willing to volunteer to participate in the service</p> <p>Providers can sustainably deliver a service that meets service standards as outlined in key documents</p> <p>The service offering is appropriate</p> <p>Policy settings remain stable over the life of the service</p> <p>Other agencies (for example, Services Australia) carry out their agreed activities supporting successful delivery of the service</p> <p>Supporting parents and carers of young children to achieve their education and employment goals and human capability will lead to an increase in women’s workforce participation</p> <p>Wellbeing improves and intergenerational poverty decreases with skills development and workforce participation</p>	<p>Collection methodology will be dependent on resource availability and KPIs. quantitative and qualitative.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental administrative data; income support (RED); Participant and provider surveys; Capability building data, audit data and Post-Program Monitoring and other surveys. Qualitative research of participants and providers from interviews, focus groups, case studies, document analysis and observation. 	<p>Efficiency: 90% attendance; 90% participation in an activity; 80% commencement within 28 days</p> <p>Quality: provider program assurance; number and quantum of recoveries; verified complaints; site appropriateness and accuracy of records.</p> <p>Effectiveness: proportion of ESLs who participate in Year 12 or similar certificates; proportion of Participants who achieve education/employment outcome or reduce income support.</p>

Appendix 5: Key measures and data sources.

Domains	Key measures	Data sources
Appropriateness, satisfaction and quality	<p>Q1. How well has the service met participants' needs?</p> <p>Key measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the stated objectives of Parent Pathways are met as assessed through the views of participants and providers. Participants' and providers views on whether the design principles have been met 	<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and OECD data</p> <p>Parent Snapshots</p> <p>KPI data</p> <p>Provider and participant surveys</p> <p>Qualitative research</p> <p>Capacity Building Fund, Individual and Pooled Funds data</p>
Appropriateness, satisfaction and quality (cont.)	<p>Q2. Do the service design and operational processes enable Parent Pathways to achieve its objectives?</p> <p>Key measures include participants' and/or providers' views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and connection mechanisms by Services Australia Engagement strategies between providers and participants The extent to which parents' needs were met, and listened to by mentors Participants' and providers' views of the flexibility of the service offering, including ability to service a heterogeneous participant population Quality/competency and lived experience of staff and mentors Providers' views on manageability of mentors' caseloads. Connections to community organisations and local services Relations with departmental staff and satisfaction with departmental systems and service ratios of participants to mentors Internet and departmental websites Appropriateness of the Parents Pathways eligibility criteria, including the age of the youngest child. Sufficient funds available to support parents to engage in the service including activities of their choice designed to achieve their identified goals. Appropriate pathways for participants to provide feedback and register complaints, from anonymously, to informal to formal. <p>Note measures will be examined for cohorts, where appropriate. See equity domain below for examples</p>	<p>Provider and participant surveys including equity cohorts</p> <p>Qualitative research</p> <p>Administrative data</p> <p>DSCC and complaints data</p> <p>Feedback from parents, peak bodies, community organisations and the PAG</p> <p>DSCC and complaints data</p>

Domains	Key measures	Data sources
Appropriateness, satisfaction and quality (cont.)	<p>Q3. Does Parent Pathways deliver quality services to participants?</p> <p>Key measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction of participants and providers with quality of the service. Satisfaction of participants with their sense of progress and appropriateness of services. 	<p>Provider and participant surveys</p> <p>Qualitative research</p> <p>PAG</p>
Efficiency	<p>Q4. Is the Parent Pathways service timely and is the service cost-effective?</p> <p>Key measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time between connection and commencement of participants with the service. Time taken for Goal Plans to be signed. Expenditure per participant as compared with similar services or programs Expenditure and outputs from the Community and Parent Engagement Fund. 	<p>Provider and participant surveys</p> <p>Administrative data including referral and commencement</p> <p>Capacity Building Fund, Individual and Pooled and Community and Parent Engagement Funds data</p> <p>KPI data including Post Program Monitoring (PPM) data</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Q5. How well does Parent Pathways engage and service participants?</p> <p>Key measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the service in the anticipated target population. Visibility of providers in the community and within community network Providers' engagement in local employer and employment networks. Providers offer flexible times and locations that suit participants best, whether in person, online or over the phone. Usefulness and relevance of activities offered to participants Participants reasons for disengagement. Complaints are acted upon, as appropriate <p>Q6. Does participation in Parent Pathways lead to progress towards and, achievement of pre-employment, education, training and employment related goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in participants' attitude, behaviour, skills, confidence, financial security, mental health and wellbeing following participation in the service. Improvement in participants' self-reported empowerment, safety, personal control, confidence, sense of purpose and feelings of isolation. Identification and achievement of participants' personal goals. The proportion of participants engaged in education and training courses. 	<p>Qualitative research</p> <p>Administrative data including Goal Plan goals, activities, job placements, equity cohorts, Post-Placement Support and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) data</p> <p>Provider and participant surveys including Personal Wellbeing Index data</p> <p>KPI data including Post Program Monitoring (PPM) data</p> <p>DSCC and complaints data</p>

Domains	Key measures	Data sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement of sustainable employment, including due to completion of Post-Placement Support. The proportion of parents taking up Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Providers' success in engaging with employers to support participants' needs including caring responsibilities and flexible jobs. The net impact of the service on participants' education and employment related outcomes as measured against a comparison group of non-participants. <p>Note measures will be examined for cohorts, where appropriate. See equity domain below for examples</p>	
Equity	<p>Q7. Is Parent Pathways accessible and meeting the needs of priority cohorts.</p> <p>Key measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of the community in the selected equity group compared with their proportion in the service user population. Access to Parent Pathways and associated speciality services. Recognition of the needs of First Nations participants Respect for the requirements of the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of participants Activity types undertaken by eligibility and equity groups Consistency of delivery of a quality service by providers, including cultural safety and a safe and welcoming environment for participants and their children. Contribution to Closing the Gap targets Contribution to women's Workplace Gender Equality and workforce participation. 	<p>ABS, AIFS AIHW and OECD data</p> <p>Parent Snapshots</p> <p>KPI data</p> <p>Provider and participant surveys</p> <p>Qualitative research</p> <p>Administrative data including Capacity Building Fund, Individual and Pooled Funds data</p>