



CDS IN-PERSON INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This protocol is designed to reduce the risk of being in close contact¹ with a Court user who may be infectious with COVID-19 by limiting the extent to which Court users have close contact (based on medical advice) with staff and other Court users. This is the most appropriate way, at present, for the Court to balance important health and safety considerations with the need to continue this essential for Australian families. This protocol is to be used in addition to the usual COVID-19 hygiene practices of regular washing of hands and not touching one's face.

Use of technology

Wherever possible, face-to-face interviews should not take place, and should instead be conducted electronically in accordance with the CDS Guidelines for Conducting Assessments.

Scheduling interviews/observations

CDS should arrange interviews in such a way so as to minimise the number of people coming into the court at any one time. Remote interviews with adult parties will generally occur on a separate day. Care should be taken to ensure that larger numbers of people do not gather in a waiting area at any one time.

Duration of interviews/observations

In adhering to the principles of social distancing, which must take place in face-to-face interviews with children and parent/child observations, interviews must be limited to a maximum of 1.5 hours with the same individual(s). Observations should occur in a separate room to that used for the interviews with children. Subject to the factors above, Family Consultants will conduct interviews with, and observations of, the children from one family per day.

Interview/observation rooms

CDS should ensure where interviews are being conducted, they are adhering to the '4 square metres' rule. This means that there must be 4 square metres per person available in each room. For example, for an interview room measuring approximately 4 metres by 5 metres (20 square metres total) there should be no more than 5 people in the room. For an interview room measuring approximately 3 metres by 4 metres (12 square metres total), there should be no more than 3 people in the interview room. Depending on the number of participants, CDS may need to make special arrangements for the use of larger rooms where possible.

Distance from parents/children

During interviews or observations, taking into account the age of the child, Family Consultants are, to the extent possible, to keep an appropriate distance (i.e. at least 1.5 to 2 metres apart) from parents and children.

¹ A close contact is typically someone who has been face-to-face for at least 15 minutes, or been in the same closed space for at least 2 hours, with a person that was infectious (World Health Organisation definition).

Note:

Additional cleaning of interview rooms is being arranged and additional hand sanitiser is being sourced. This includes cleaning inside the interview rooms and the placement of hand sanitisers outside interview rooms.

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