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# **SECTION 1**

Introduction

# Working better together for radically improved client experiences

At the heart of this model is the belief that we will deliver better services when we collaborate and coordinate our efforts. In everything we do - from how we welcome clients, to our referral processes, and how we pool together resources - if we are easy to find and act together (as a network), our clients will feel cared for and supported by the system. When service providers work together, all pulling in the same direction, the potential to deliver radically better service is within our reach.

The Linker Network is currently focused on early intervention service providers across Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains.

## 'Always Welcome' Approach

The Linker Network is working to deeply embed a customer service culture throughout the sector so that the client contact experience feels welcoming and helpful, rather than as an assessment or intake. When clients have been listened to and treated with respect, dignity and care; they are significantly more likely to continue to engage with support, and significantly more likely to recommend services to family and friends.

## Flexible to Need

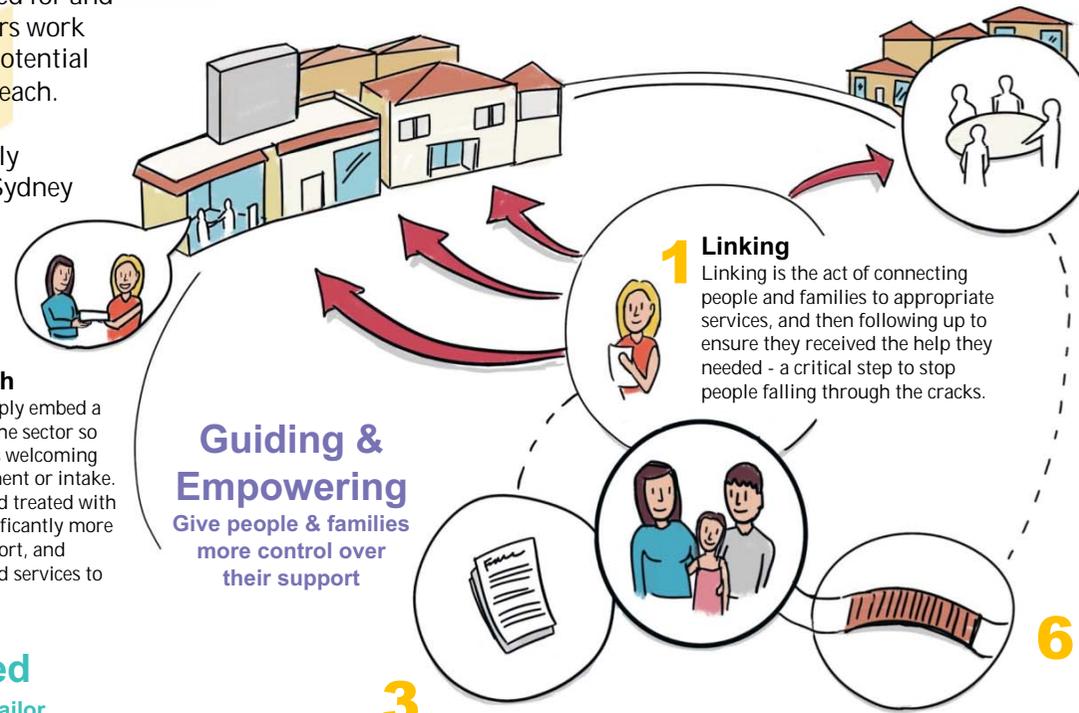
Services understand and tailor support to individual needs

## Client-Centred plan

A simple, one-page profile (co-authored by the client) outlines their goals, as well as the providers needed to help them achieve their goals. They choose whether to share their plans with providers, and use it as a sort of road map - helping them navigate and understand the service system.

## Refreshingly Simple

Every interaction is designed to feel as effortless as possible - for clients and for service providers.



## 1 Linking

Linking is the act of connecting people and families to appropriate services, and then following up to ensure they received the help they needed - a critical step to stop people falling through the cracks.

## 4 Place-Based Integrated Services

Services designed to address the unique needs of a local area and delivered in an integrated way.

## 5 Common Branding

A shared name and logo that sits alongside existing branding to help people and families easily identify local service providers - highly recognisable and easily identifiable to all.

## Guiding & Empowering

Give people & families more control over their support

## Working Together

The service system works together to support people and families holistically

## 6 Collaborative Practice Meetings

Leaders and managers from member organisations meet regularly to identify, agree and implement collaborative practice strategies that build consistency and increased capacity across the Linker Network.

## Child & Family Focused

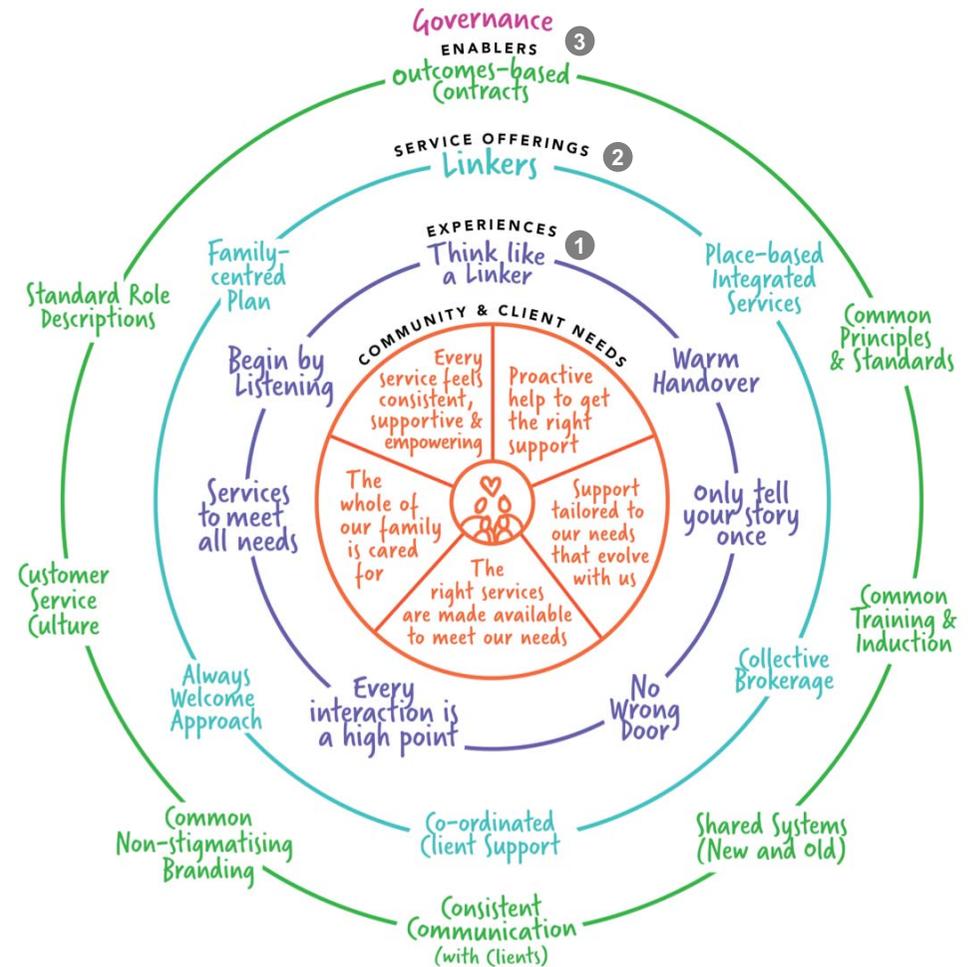
The needs of the child and family are at the heart of everything we do

# A new model that places individual and community needs at the heart of what we do

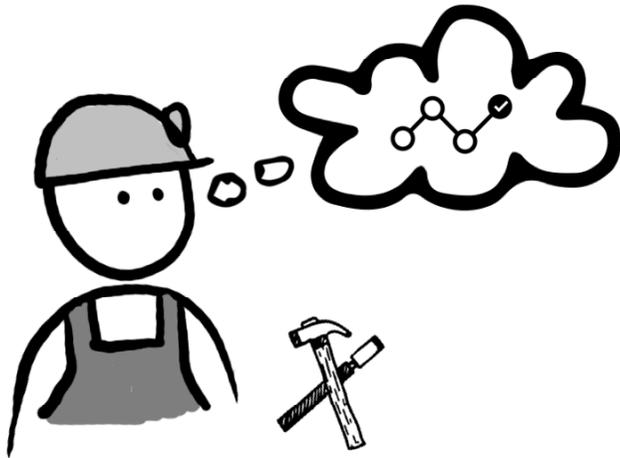
The Linker Network model was designed around the needs of the individual to create the following positive **experiences** ① for clients:

- Think like a Linker** – From the client’s perspective, we are interconnected services of the Linker Network.
- Warm handover** – Clients aren’t only directed to the next service, but are supported in the transition, and only when they are ready for us to let go.
- Only tell your story once** – Clients don’t have to repeat their story to everyone they meet. Together we’ll build a shared understanding of our client’s situation, context, and history.
- No wrong door** – Continuity for the client means when they walk through the front door of one Linker organisation it is equal to and feels like they are walking through the front door of all Linker organisations.
- Every interaction is a high point** – Clients feel that each interaction is positive, so they are encouraged to come back and recommend us.
- Services are flexible to meet all needs** – Clients ensure they can get the right support at the right time. The Network supports us to be flexible in the way we respond to clients needs.
- Begin by listening** – Clients are treated like people, not paper. We don’t let our processes dehumanise what we do.

To bring these experiences to life we designed **six** ② **service offerings** supported by **eight enablers** ③. Collectively, all the components of the model help to enact and enable a radically improved experience for our clients. This could translate into significant improvements for people seeking support from community services.



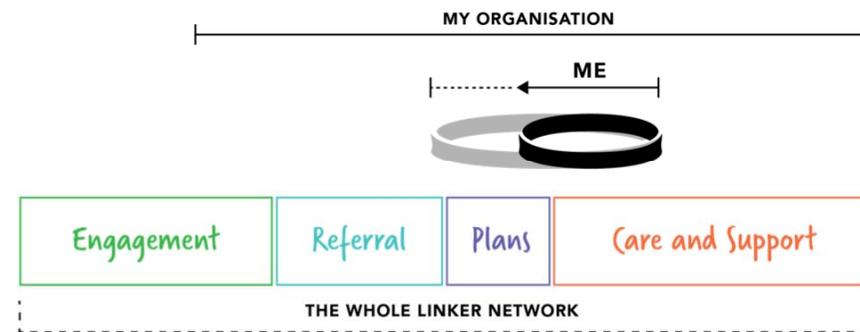
# We want to move from individual organisations to a linked network of service providers



## The Linker Network is about creating radically better experiences, not a new set of tools

We want people to think about how they can create better experiences for people accessing community services through the Linker Network, rather than thinking about which tool they need to use. For example, it is unlikely someone chooses to become a plumber because they really want to use a particular tool. They want to help their clients by solving their problems, but for them to be successful they also need the right tools to confidently work in different situations.

This Playbook contains tools and materials to help you in certain contexts and situations. Which one you need (if any) will ultimately depend on what you need to create the best experiences for your clients.



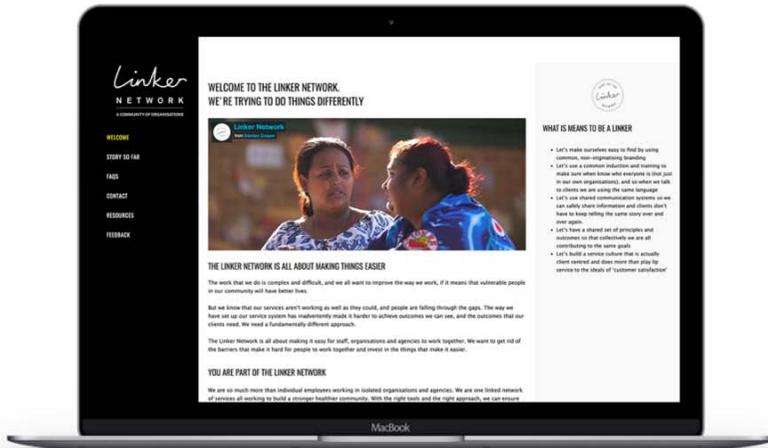
## We are all responsible for responding in a 'Linker' way

People frequently make the false assumption that the Linker Network expects everyone to do everything. This is not the case.

The Linker Network needs everyone to 'stretch' a little beyond the typical limits of their standard role. However we are not asking people to remain stretched for long (a rubber band stretched for too long can't bounce back and is broken), nor do we ask people to stretch further than their individual rubber band will allow (we don't want them to 'snap'). How long your rubber band is and how far you can stretch depends on you, your role and/or organisation.

# We're here to help!

There are multiple systems in place to make sure you are supported as you transition to a more collaborative way of working. You're not in it alone!



## The Linker Network Website

Head to [linker.org.au](http://linker.org.au) for up to date training, resources and tools, as well as lists of other Linker organisations in your network.



## Need a little more assistance?

If at any time you run into a problem, feel like something doesn't fit, or you can't make sense of something in the Playbook, please ask us for help by sending an email to:

[helpdesk@linker.org.au](mailto:helpdesk@linker.org.au)