

Towards a new IT system to help manage and safely share child protection and youth justice information

Over the next four years, \$51.1 million will be invested towards a new core child safety and youth justice system called Unify, as the department works to replace the current Integrated Client Management System (ICMS).

The vision of this multi-year program is to implement a contemporary case and client management system that will enable the best outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Unify Program

The Unify Program will be:

- Client-centric: supporting targeted, needs-based responses to children, young people, parents, families, carers and communities while delivering earlier and more effective interventions
- Data driven: improving how we manage data to enable the effective monitoring of outcomes and ensuring that future investment is directed to what works
- Integration-enabling: designed around collaboration and information sharing, enabling connected and integrated responses to clients across government agencies and non-government partners.

The Program has a broader focus, including:

- Better supporting our staff
- Continuing our service reforms
- Enabling more streamlined processes
- Enabling our engagement with young people, families, carers and services, and
- Improving information sharing and collaboration across Queensland Government and with the social services and justice sectors.

We will be taking a staged approach with strong governance and assurance to ensure success.

Program benefits:

- There will be an increased ability for clients to access and contribute to appropriate information about themselves and their services received or needed.
- Improved ability to compare effectiveness of service provision and interventions together inform decisions on services for clients.
- Allow increased ability to draw insights from data to monitor and inform investment decisions.
- Improve data to easily see all relevant information about a client and for agencies and funded service providers to access and contribute to this view.
- Increased system reliability and ease of use with the right information available at the right time, resulting in users spending less time capturing and sharing the equivalent information.
- Improved access to information 'on demand' and in 'real-time' for service delivery and reporting.
- Increased ability to change the system when policy, legislation and business process change.
- Increased ability to plan and manage performance, resource allocation and workload effectively.
- Improved scalability of the system to support evolving business model, clients and service providers.

Departmental Achievements to date:

The Unify Program will build on activities the department has undertaken in recent years, including:

- New guidelines to support the information sharing provisions of the Child Protection Act 1999
- Development and rollout of iDOCS, a new electronic documents and records management system, which will be implemented across the state by June 2020
- The Release of Our Child, a multi-agency real-time information sharing platform allowing child safety officers and Queensland police officers access to important child data from Child Safety, the Department of Education, the Office of Public Guardian, Youth Justice and now Queensland Health
- Improved reporting capabilities and data analysis
- Development and rollout out of digital apps – kicbox, Carer Connect and CS Xpress for kids in care, Carers and child safety staff
- Annual public reporting on the progress of its Supporting Families Changing Futures reform program
- Strengthened Memorandum of Understandings between Child Safety, Youth and Women (CSYW) and Department of Education, focusing on achieving the best possible outcomes for children, including the reporting of key outcome areas
- Improvement to the quality and completeness of data in the ICMS
- Security risk assessments for all new ICT systems, ensuring the exchange of information is specified in business cases and design
- Improved information security within the department by introducing Penetration Testing for existing ICT systems, cyber security plans for new systems, mandatory training for new staff on information privacy, and statewide user access reviews on critical systems
- Updated the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) which service providers are required to comply with under their service agreements, to inform NGOs of information security standards
- A new internal data governance framework.

Responding to Queensland Audit Office

In 2014, The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) undertook an audit of the security and management of child safety information.

The *Managing Child Safety Information 2014-15*, report was tabled in Parliament in May 2015, providing six recommendations to the department:

1. Develops and implements a coordinated model that includes a holistic approach for information management and sharing across the entire child safety service chain.
2. Implements contemporary information systems
3. Uses information available across organisational boundaries within the service chain to gain insights and improve service outcomes
4. Specifies the efficient and secure exchange of information as a key business requirement when selecting new systems or revising the existing system
5. Improves security within the existing environment
6. Develops security standards for service providers. These standards should be included in service agreements

The department welcomes the QAO's follow up performance audit report in 2018-19 and has acknowledged their findings. The Unify program along with the implementation of other child safety information systems like iDOCS and Our Child are expected to strengthen information sharing and improve the way the entire child safety system works to achieve the best outcomes for vulnerable children and families.