Child and Family Services

# Our objective

* Enable the safety, belonging and wellbeing of children and young people, especially those in or leaving care, and enable their voices to be heard and to contribute to their community.

# Our strategy

* We work with parents, families, carers and communities to make sure children, especially children in care, are safe, cared for and thriving.
* We work with communities and our partners to enable vulnerable young people to strengthen their relationships with families and support networks.

# Our performance indicators

* Reduce child abuse and neglect.
* Improve outcomes for, and wellbeing of, vulnerable young people, and children in or at risk of entering, the child protection system.
* Reduce the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

# Our achievements

* Established the Office of the Chief Practitioner, Child and Family Services, to bring together the teams responsible for child death and serious injury reviews, child safety complaints, child safety officer training, complex case consultations, specialist services for children with a disability, practice development, operational policy, partnerships and programs and the child safety practice manual.
* Established the Office of the Assistant Chief Operating Officer, Statewide Operations, to bring together teams responsible for Statewide Services, including Adoptions and Permanent Care Services, Service Response, Central Screening Unit and Child Safety After Hours Service Centre; Systems and Statewide Service Improvement; Strategic Projects; Office of the Child and Family Official Solicitor and Court Services.
* Updated Complaints Management Policy and Procedure in line with recommendations from the Queensland Ombudsman and managed all incoming child safety complaints.
* Worked with Office of the Public Guardian to deliver joint complaints management training to regional leadership teams.
* Developed training to assist frontline child safety staff members within the department in their work to seek disability supports for children and young people in the department’s care.
* Facilitated Risk Assessment training through an external provider, to all senior team leaders and senior practitioners.
* Offered *Safe and Together* domestic and family violence training to regions and extended to partners, including the Queensland Family and Child Commission.
* Implemented the Family Matters Reflective Tool with regional and Indigenous practice leaders.
* Developed information sharing training for staff and delivered to the Queensland Police Service.
* Amended Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect procedures and manual, including amendments to deliver recommendations from the Mason Jet Lee coronial inquest.
* Released a revised Statement of Commitment to Queensland Foster and Kinship Carers.
* Partnered with two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak to co-design and implement delegated authority.
* Delivered the internal Permanency Strategy and Roadmap 2020-2024 to increase relational, physical and legal permanency.
* Completed the implementation review of 2018 legislative reforms strengthening permanency and safe care and connection for children in care.
* Completed permanency case reads of over 1,000 children under child protection orders to identify practice needs, system issues and training opportunities to improve permanency outcomes for children and young people in care.
* Developed genogram training, one of the identified outcomes of the permanency case reviews to improve kinship caring options.
* Implemented operational aspects of the failure to report and failure to protect amendments to the *Criminal Code Act 1889.*
* Completed a desktop review of the Assessment and Service Connect program.
* Updated the Child Safety Practice Manual to reflect Youth Justice Amendments and Child Safety Officer responsibilities when a young person in care is before the court.
* Developed practice guidance for children and young people with gender and sexual orientation diversity.
* Continued to support the implementation of Navigate Your Health across Logan, Brisbane and Cairns in partnership with Queensland Health
* Produced resources and training to assist Child Safety staff to navigate the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to secure and implement NDIS plans for children and young people.
* Monitored, coordinated and reported on Child Safety targets for children across all Regions to access and utilise NDIS plans.
* Delivered the Dual Order Project to increase the safety and case planning for young people who were subject to a Child Protection Guardianship Order and identified by Youth Justice as engaging in repeat offending.
* Led implementation of the cross-sector Memorandum of Understanding to support children and young people with disability-related complex support needs who require or are at risk of needing accommodation outside the family home where no child protection concerns have been identified.
* Created a team of statewide court liaison officers to increase information sharing and support when young people in care are in contact with the youth justice system.
* Established an intake reform project, including options for improved responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
* Initiated Operational Performance Reviews, designed to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families through a process that seeks to enhance service delivery, performance and practice.
* Implemented the Workload Management Policy and Workload Management Manual, for Ongoing Intervention Child Safety Officers, with the policy intent to ensure reasonable workloads for Child Safety staff.
* Commenced phase two of the *My Home* Adoption and Permanent Care Service program.
* Expanded the Service Response Team within Statewide Operations with an additional six permanent Child Safety Officers, to increase capacity to travel the state, and respond to emerging issues, need and pressures in frontline service delivery in regions.
* Established the Youth Justice After Hours response team to manage Youth Justice Legislative amendments and provide ongoing support to co-responder teams.
* Established the department’s COVID-19 response to continue to hold the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children, young people, families and staff as a top priority. During the pandemic this has included:
  + working differently and creatively to ensure children continued to have contact with their families when social distancing restrictions were in place, for example family contact facilitated virtually
  + guiding regional child protection staff by new decision-making principles to ensure continuity in providing essential services to children, young people and families during various phases of the *Queensland Government Pandemic Plan*
  + collaborating with Queensland Health to ensure children in care are safe and complying with quarantine, border or self-isolation requirements
  + working closely with other key agencies regarding school attendance for vulnerable children and supporting Department of Education with increasing their knowledge and confidence in accessing secondary family support services
  + providing ongoing communication linking carers to COVID-19 information and resources developed by the department and relevant to carer functions on the department’s website
  + providing 39 repurposed departmental iPads to Queensland Foster and Kinship Care for foster carers to facilitate their communication with the department
  + expanding the Foster and Kinship Carer Support Line to be a 24-hour service
  + implementing a directive to make temporary changes to the dual payment of carer allowances for foster and kinship carers who may be hospitalised and/or temporarily unable to continue in their caring role due to COVID-19
  + supporting service providers through funding guarantees and funding flexibly to be responsive to COVID-19
  + communicating and engaging with service providers, peak bodies and government partners supported by resources developed and published
  + providing guidance on business continuity planning for care services and guidelines for operating residential care services during the COVID-19 pandemic are available on the department’s website
  + working with the Fair Work Commission and peak bodies to support providers to enter into Individual Flexibility Agreements in non-family-based care settings with willing employees, reducing the number of employees having contact with a young person impacted by COVID-19.

Performance statement

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| **Service Area:**  **Child and Family Services** | **Notes1:** | **2020-21**  **Target / estimate** | **2020-21**  **Actual** |
| Rate of substantiated harm per 1,000 children (0-17 years of age) |  | 6.1 | Not available |
| Rate of children entering out-of-home care per 1,000 children (0-17 years of age): |  |  |  |
| * All children |  | 2.7 | Not available |
| * Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children |  | 15.5 | Not available |
| * Non-Indigenous children |  | 1.6 | Not available |
| Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children placed with kin, other  Indigenous carers or Indigenous residential care services |  | 56% | Not available |
| Proportion of children on a care and protection order exiting care after 12 months or more who  had 1 or 2 placements |  | 39% | Not available |
| Percentage of youth receiving Youth Support services whose majority needs have been met | 2 | 57% | 71% |
| Out-of-home expenditure per placement night |  | $255 | Not available |
| Average cost per hour of Youth Support service delivery |  | $129 | Not available |
| Rate of children subject to protective orders per 1,000 children (0-17 years of age): |  |  |  |
| * All children |  | 10.1 | Not available |
| * Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children |  | 54.3 | Not available |
| * Non-Indigenous children |  | 6.2 | Not available |
| **Notes:**   1. Data not currently available is expected to be published on the department’s website in October 2021. 2. Actual is based on the majority of needs met as a percentage of the number of clients who can be contacted by the service. Clients who are unable to be contacted or are referred to another service are now excluded from the total, resulting in a higher figure than the target/estimate. | | | |