

Terms of Reference

Commissioner for Children and Young People to investigate changes to the allocation of Child Safety Officers for children and young people in Tasmania's Out-of-Home Care system

The Commissioner for Children and Young People, Leanne McLean, is undertaking an own motion investigation into the introduction of a new Out-of-Home Care case management model (the model) which has changed the allocation of Child Safety Officers for children and young people in care in Tasmania.

Under the new model, some children and young people in care are no longer allocated to an individual Child Safety Officer. Instead, these children and young people are allocated to teams (which include Child Safety Officers) within the Child Safety Service, with communication managed through a generic phone number and email address.

The Commissioner has identified this as an emergent systemic issue warranting further investigation through her independent monitoring of the Tasmanian Out-of-Home Care system.

The Commissioner's investigation is informed by the principles set out in the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016 (Tas) (CCYP Act)*, and relevant provisions of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)* and the *Charter of Rights for Tasmanian children and young people in out of home care (Charter)*.

In announcing this investigation, the Commissioner acknowledges that the Department for Education, Children and Young People has been consulted on the below Terms of Reference and is supportive of the investigation in the spirit of collaboration and continuous improvement.

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Without limiting the scope of the Commissioner's investigation, the purpose of the investigation is to:

1. Develop a detailed understanding of the new Out-of-Home Care case management model (the model) in the context of relevant policy, practice, and legislation.
2. Examine any effect of the new model on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in care.
3. Report and make recommendations in respect of the introduction of the new model in line with the general functions of the Commissioner as outlined in section 8 of the CCYP Act.



To achieve this purpose, the Commissioner will have regard to the views and experiences of:

- Children and young people in care with direct or indirect experience of the new model.
- Other stakeholders, including carers, providers of Out-of-Home Care services and others who support and/or work with children and young people in care.
- The Department *for* Education, Children and Young People, as system owner of the Child Safety Service and the Out-of-Home Care system.

The Commissioner invites any person who has an experience of the new model to share their views by making a submission to her. During the investigation, the Commissioner will also provide opportunities for children and young people with an experience of the new model to share their views with her.

The Commissioner will recommend any necessary reform to policy, practice and legislation to promote and protect the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in care.

Call for submissions

To support people to make submissions, the Commissioner has produced a Submission Guide with further information and questions.

For further information about making a submission, please contact the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People on (03) 6166 1366 between 9 am and 5 pm on weekdays (excluding public holidays) or email childcomm@childcomm.tas.gov.au. Additional information about the Commissioner and the Investigation is available at www.childcomm.tas.gov.au.

The Commissioner looks forward to receiving responses to this important issue.

Submissions **close 24 February 2023**.