

Annual Report

2017-2018



Government of South Australia

Office of the Guardian
for Children and Young People

October 2018

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Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People

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The Hon. Rachel Sanderson, MP
Minister for Child Protection
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Dear Minister

I am pleased to present to you the annual report of the Guardian for Children and Young Persons for the year ended 30 June 2018, as required under section 28(2) of the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016*.

This report provides a summary of the activities and achievements for the 2017-18 financial year.

Yours sincerely

Penny Wright
Guardian

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Penny Wright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

31 October 2018

Notes to this report

Scope

This report refers to the activities of the Guardian for Children and Young People. The Guardian is also Child and Young Person's Visitor and this report additionally reports on the Child and Young Person's Visitor Scheme pilot which is being conducted by the Guardian.

The Guardian is also the Training Centre Visitor. This report makes mention of some aspects of the activities of the Training Centre Visitor but full details are in the Training Centre Visitor's Annual Report which is published separately.

The activities of the Guardian, the Child and Young Person's Visitor and the Training Centre Visitor are conducted in one location with the same administrative infrastructure. Accordingly, the final section, 'About the Office' includes and refers to all three.

Case studies

Where case studies have been included to illustrate the work of the Office of the Guardian, identifying characteristics have been changed to protect the children's privacy but indicated ages are accurate.

Data

This report uses annual data provided by the Department for Child Protection (DCP). Some of this data refers only to children on 12 Month Care & Protection and GOM to 18 Years Orders,¹ and some of it refers to all children and young people in out of home care.² Some of the data provided by DCP comes from the Productivity Commission's annual *Report on Government Services* (ROGS). This data reports on children on care and protection orders from the previous year.³ Due to the differing ability to disaggregate and compare data, there are small variations in the numbers and percentages referred to in this report.

Glossary

CYP	Children and Young People (Child and Young Person)
CYPV	Child and Young Person's Visitor
DCP	Department for Child Protection
DE	Department for Education
GCYP	Guardian for Children and Young People
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
TCV	Training Centre Visitor

Out of home care

In this annual report, this term is used generally to refer to all children and young people under the guardianship of the Minister as at 30 June 2018 and does not reflect the definition contained in section 69 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

¹ There were 3,402 children/young people on 12 Month Care & Protection and GOM to 18 Years Orders (Aged 0 - 17 Years) at 30 June 2018.

² There were 3,695 children/young people in out of home care (age <=17) at 30 June 2018. This figure is higher as it includes children under arrangements other than Care and Protection Orders and Orders for Guardianship of the Minister.

³ There were 3,484 children on care and protection orders as per ROGS specifications at 30 June 2017.

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The role of the Guardian

The Guardian for Children and Young People promotes and protects the rights of all children and young people under the age of 18 years who are under court orders granting guardianship or custody to the responsible Minister (who was the Minister for Education and Child Development, up to March 2018, and the Minister for Child Protection, after March.)

The position of Guardian was established in an amendment to the *Children's Protection Act 1993* proclaimed on 1 February 2006 and is now enacted within the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016*.

The Guardian and the Guardian's staff (collectively referred to as GCYP) work to improve services to children and young people in out of home care, and those in secure care including the residents of the Adelaide Youth Training Centre (AYTC), to promote and protect their rights and to strengthen their voice. To do this GCYP works in partnership with children and young people, their families and carers, government agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs).

The Guardian is independent and advises the Minister for Child Protection.

Penny Wright was appointed as Guardian on 10 July 2017 (to expire on 9 July 2022).

The Guardian currently holds two further roles, which overlap with, and are complementary to, her functions as Guardian: Training Centre Visitor (TCV) and Child and Young Person's Visitor (CYPV).

The terms, 'Office of the Guardian' or 'Office,' will be used in this report to describe the combined functions and work of all three roles: GCYP, the TCV program and the CYPV program, which are co-located.

The functions of the Guardian

The Guardian has statutory functions defined in section 26(1) of the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016*:

- (a) to promote the best interests of children under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Minister, and in particular those in alternative care; and
- (b) to act as an advocate for the interests of children under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Minister and, in particular, for any such child who has suffered, or is alleged to have suffered, sexual abuse; and
- (c) to monitor the circumstances of children under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Minister; and
- (d) to provide advice to the Minister on the quality of the provision of care for children under the guardianship, or in the custody of, the Minister and on whether the children's needs are being met; and
- (e) to inquire into, and provide advice to the Minister in relation to, systemic reform necessary to improve the quality of care provided for children in alternative care; and
- (f) to investigate and report to the Minister on matters referred to the GCYP by the Minister; and
- (g) such other functions as may be conferred on the Guardian by or under this or any other Act.

These functions form the basis of this annual report.

The role of Training Centre Visitor

Penny Wright was appointed as the Training Centre Visitor on 11 July 2017 for the period until 9 July 2022.

The Training Centre Visitor (TCV) is an independent government role established by the *Youth Justice Administration Act 2016* and reports to Parliament through the Minister for Human Services. The TCV promotes and protects the rights of children and young people sentenced or remanded to detention in a youth training centre. The TCV Program is in its establishment phase and is located within the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People.

The TCV's specific responsibilities under the *Youth Justice Administration Act 2016* overlap with the Guardian's responsibilities under section 26(1)(a) of the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* because the category of alternative care 'includes care provided in a detention facility for a child who is held there in lawful detention' [pursuant to section 26(4) of that Act].

Full details of the TCV program, and substantive reporting on those children and young people who are both in alternative care and in detention, can be found in the [Annual Report of the Training Centre Visitor](#) published separately.

The role of Child and Young Person's Visitor

Penny Wright was appointed the inaugural Child and Young Person's Visitor on 26 February 2018 (until 9 July 2022).

The Child and Young Person's visitor (CYPV) is an independent government role established by Chapter 9 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and will report to Parliament through the Minister for Child Protection. The CYPV promotes the best interests of children and young people who are under court orders granting guardianship or custody to the Minister for Child Protection and who are living in residential care. The CYPV's functions include visiting and inspecting residential facilities, advocating for the residents and advising the Minister for Child Protection.

Although the functions and structure of the CYPV scheme have been legislated, the scheme has not yet formally commenced. The Guardian is currently conducting a trial visiting program to inform the necessary arrangements and resourcing of the CYPV scheme when it is ultimately established.

Details of the CYPV program can be found on page 41 of this report.

What the Office believes and values

In the 2017 Strategic Review, we revisited the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan and identified the following vision for the work of our Office:

Every child and young person in care and detention is - and feels - safe, respected, cared-for, can realise their full potential and can engage with (and challenge) systems that impact upon their lives.

The rights of children and young people are the key that will enable them to engage with (and challenge) the systems that impact upon their lives. We believe that children and young people have fundamental rights which include the right to feel good about themselves, the right to live in a place where they are safe and well cared for, the right to get the help they want or need and the right to understand and have a say in decisions that affect them.

These rights are contained in the [Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care](#) (the Charter), prepared and maintained by the Office of the Guardian, as required by Part 4 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

The Charter is consistent with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC), which Australia has ratified. Section 5 of the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2017* provides that every State Authority in South Australia must seek to respect and uphold those rights of children in the UNCRC when carrying out its functions and powers.

The values of the Office

- We are caring, brave and tenacious in our advocacy for children and young people.
- We are mindful of the responsibility, independence and reach of our office.
- We seek others' perspectives, and take decisive action to do the right thing. We are optimistic that through this commitment change will happen.
- We are committed to ensuring the voice of children and young people informs our work and are active in pursuing their best interests. We encourage others to do the same.
- We are respectful of the challenges facing children and young people and our colleagues in pursuing their best interests.
- We act ethically, with understanding and take responsibility to create confidential, safe spaces that facilitate honest and robust interactions.
- We are playful and creative in our work and encourage innovation.

Who the Office works for

The Office promotes and protects the rights of South Australian children and young people who are under the guardianship, or in the custody of, the Minister. This includes those who are in relative or kinship care, foster care, residential care or secure custody.

As at 30 June 2018 in South Australia there were 3,402 children and young people under the guardianship of the Minister through care and protection court orders. They had the following characteristics:

Children and young people under the guardianship of the Minister through care and protection court orders at 30 June 2018 (n = 3,402)	
	%
Male	51.3
Female	48.6
Indeterminate	.05
Not stated/inadequately described	.02
0-1 years	6.1
2-4 years	15.6
5-9 years	29.0
10-14 years	32.5
15-17 years	16.5
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	33.8
Long-term care and protection orders	86.1
12-month care and protection orders	13.8

The living arrangements for children and young people in out of home care are as follows:

Care arrangements for children and young people in out of home care ⁴ at 30 June 2017 (ROGS 2018) ⁵ (n = 3484)	
	%
Foster care	36.4
Relative or kinship care	43.1
Residential care (incl. commercial care)	15.7
Independent living	1.0
Other home based out-of-home care	3.5

Case Study: 'Darcy'

'Darcy' was 15 and being attended to by a roster of paid carers in commercial care. When he spoke to GCYP Advocates he had been told about a possible family-based placement interstate eight weeks earlier but he felt as if 'nothing was happening' about progressing the placement and 'no-one was listening' to him. His social worker had gone on extended sick leave and he had not been allocated another one.

He told the GCYP Advocate, 'Two months is a long time. I hate being in care and I want to be in a family.'

When the Advocate made inquiries on behalf of Darcy, she was told that the DCP Office lacked the staff to appoint a case manager or take action on Darcy's placement. There were plans to transfer his file to another DCP office but that had not happened.

Within a few days of advocacy for Darcy, his file was transferred. He reported that he'd met his new social worker and discussed his needs. The assessment of the family-based placement was underway. DCP had told him that they would support him to travel interstate to spend time with family in the upcoming school holidays and Darcy reported to his Advocate that things were 'really good, things are going really well.'

⁴The numbers of children and young people under the guardianship of the Minister for DCP and those classed as in out of home care for the purpose of the Productivity Commission's annual *Report on Government Services* refer to similar but not identical populations. 2018 data will be available in June 2019.

⁵This data responds to reporting criteria for the Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services* as included for 2016/17 in the 2018 ROGS.

From the Guardian - the year in review

At June 2018 there were 3,695 children⁶ in out-of-home care and 3,402 on care and protection orders in South Australia. Many of those children will have thrived in stable, safe and loving placements. Supported by dedicated adults, many will have been making the hard journey back from trauma and neglect, developing strong identities and building friendships. Some will have excelled at school, in sport, music or the arts.

However, it is also true that for many children our state continues to seriously fail its obligations as parent. In this review for 2017-18, I acknowledge the evidence and inspiration we can take from much good work I have seen. But I also look closely at those areas where our achievements fall short of our aspiration to provide the best that is possible for the children in the care of our state. That is what my role requires and that is what the public deserves. In recommending the establishment of the position of Guardian in her 2003 Review of Child Protection in South Australia, Robyn Layton QC reflected that: “there is a need to ensure that those children who are most vulnerable and who are under the statutory guardianship of the Minister or otherwise in care away from their parents have their rights articulated or safeguarded.”⁷ In a huge system of competing needs and pressures, my office must ensure that the voices of the smallest and most vulnerable - *but most important* - participants are heard and heeded.

As I review my first year as Guardian I also want to acknowledge the work of my immediate predecessor, Amanda Shaw, who had a long history as Senior Advocate with the Office and then led the organisation with dedication, courage and commitment as Acting Guardian during a time of great uncertainty and change.

Early intervention and prevention

Children tell us that if their family can care for them safely, they want us to help their family to do so. It was the hope and the plan in [A Fresh Start](#), the Government’s response to Commissioner Nyland’s 2016 report on the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission, to slow the growing rate of children, and especially Aboriginal children, coming into state care, through a variety of measures.

⁶ This report will use ‘children’ to refer to children and young people below the age of majority.

⁷ Layton, Robyn QC, ‘Our Best Investment: A State Plan to Protect and Advance the Interests of Children’, 2.3, Recommendation 4.

In her inquiry Commissioner Nyland found that existing services were poorly coordinated and many worked from models which were not evidence-based or evaluated. It is heartening to see the thorough work of the Early Intervention Research Directorate, together with its partner organisations⁸, investigating the nature of the challenges facing families in South Australia, identifying those families who most need support and researching the best ways to support them. Reliable data and evidence is a crucial basis for working effectively in this complex field.

This year has seen the establishment of a number of child and family assessment and referral networks (CFARNs) and Child Wellbeing Practitioners to work with struggling families flagged by child protection. There have also been initiatives to develop culturally appropriate interventions and connections and the upskilling of the Department for Child Protection (DCP) workforce as part of an ambitious five-year plan to shift the emphasis towards early intervention.

South Australia has historically spent less on early intervention and prevention services than other Australian jurisdictions. In 2015-16, expenditure on intensive family support services was only 36.8 per cent of the national average but by 2016-17 this has risen to be marginally higher than the national average. Despite this, the numbers of children under guardianship orders and the number of Aboriginal children under orders rose again in 2017-18. This major shift in policy towards more investment in early intervention will only start to have an effect in subsequent years if the focus is maintained and the necessary resources provided.

Foster and kinship care

The majority of children under care and protection orders live in home-based care with either foster parents (39 per cent) or kinship carers (40 per cent). Good home-based care is acknowledged in research and in practice to be the desirable placement for most children. As in many other jurisdictions, the number of people and families able and prepared to provide such placements is not keeping up with the growth in the numbers of children coming into care. This results in increasing overflows of children being placed into residential care.

Some work to better induct, train, support and work with foster carers has proceeded in accordance with [recommendation made by Commissioner Nyland](#). Induction and training for prospective foster carers has been improved but still does not include children and

⁸ including the Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of SA; BetterStart Child Health and Development Research Group, University of Adelaide; Positive Futures Research Collaboration, University of South Australia.

existing carers in the induction training. Information for foster carers has been improved but the promised review of the structure and levels of reimbursement for foster carers is yet to happen. In surveys conducted by my office in the 2017-18 year, respondents assessed the level of coordination and collaboration between the DCP and carers as generally unsatisfactory. DCP has been working to improve this and I look forward to seeing more positive responses in the next survey.

There has been some progress addressing deficits in the management of kinship care identified by Commissioner Nyland. A new kinship and assessment review resource has yet to be rolled out but approval processes for carers have been improved and DCP has recruited several Carer Relationship Officers to support kinship carers. I have heard encouraging reports about the Winangay tool for the assessment of foster parents and kinship carers in the Aboriginal community and look forward to the results of its trial in remote areas.

Children from regional areas who move to residential care in Adelaide often experience distress and dislocation and Aboriginal children are disproportionately affected by this practice. The initiative to develop more alternative care placements in regional areas will allow more children taken into care to remain connected to their communities.

Residential and emergency care

Originally conceived as part of a temporary staging and assessment process for children coming into care, residential care is now the permanent home for 11 per cent (and growing) of children in out-of-home care.

The evidence is that all is not well for many children in residential care, with a disproportionate number of issues coming to GCYP Advocates from residents. Many of these pertain to both physical and emotional safety. A disproportionate number of allegations of sexual abuse referred to this Office as a result of recommendation 20 of the Mullighan Inquiry, also involve children in residential care.

Large scale facilities (those with more than four residents) continue to operate to the disadvantage of their residents. GCYP's advocacy and monitoring visits tell us that the newer large facilities, which were built in previous years against the advice of the Guardian and against lessons drawn from good practice, remain especially problematic for residents. Issues associated with facilities, including assaults and bullying, exposure to drugs and alcohol, predation by older people in the community, restrictive practices (locking doors, limiting the use of the kitchen) and exposure to the criminal justice system, have contributed

to further or repeated trauma and residents 'voting with their feet' by leaving the placement for extended periods of time (generating MPRs, or Missing Person Reports). These issues have been previously reported in State inquiries, including the Nyland Royal Commission, and I have continued to bring them to the attention of the Minister and DCP.

Commercial care (formerly called 'emergency care') is a sub-set of residential care where children are housed in temporary accommodation and cared for by rotating shifts of commercially-sourced workers who usually have minimal training and supervision. It is unsuitable and unacceptable for any but the shortest time in a genuine emergency and has reflected the number of children coming into the system for whom there are not alternative family-based or residential care placements. Commercial placements generally do not support children's psychological needs and place them at enhanced risk of abuse.

DCP has been working on safety issues, phasing out commercial carers and bringing some commercial care houses under DCP management. There are a number of children, however, who have been in their emergency/commercial care placement for an extended period of time or who need to be housed on their own because of their particular acute care needs. Herein lies a wicked dilemma. Due to concerns about the quality – and cost – of commercial care, there has been a single-minded focus over the last year to reduce the numbers of children in commercial care placements. This has resulted in pressure to move children into residential care sometimes at the expense of other significant considerations, including existing attachments and relationships, their schooling, proximity to their family or country and, most significantly, their safety.

This imperative sometimes overrides the wishes of the children (where they are sought), appropriate placement matching, proper transition planning and the advice of case managers, residential care staff, psychologists and other practitioners involved in the child's care. Over the past year various DCP workers and those from non-government agencies, as well as others involved in children's care have expressed their concerns to my Office about a stated requirement to have 100 per cent occupancy of all residential facilities, irrespective of the needs of the child to be moved and the needs of the residents already living there.

Case study: 'Katy', 'Janie' and 'Lea'

After a traumatic background before coming into care and previous breakdowns of her placements and difficulties in care, 'Katy' (11) was living as the only young person in a residential care facility. With committed support from NGO staff, working with psychological services and her case manager, Katy began to thrive in her placement and become involved with extra-curricular social activities. Over some weeks she was starting to manage relationships better, beginning to attend school and her behaviour was improving, with no police involvement.

One day Katy found that 'Janie' (12) had come to live in her home, without any notice or transition period to give her time to get used to the idea. Janie also had a history of trauma and very difficult behaviour.

Violent clashes between the two young women began immediately and continued on a daily basis. Care staff at the facility told the Guardian's Office that they were not resourced or supported to manage the young women's behaviour or to meet their complex needs.

Katy became very fearful and anxious, struggled to attend school and ceased the social activities and her therapy because of the difficulties she was having. Each member of her care team raised concerns about Katy's safety in the placement. The violence was also affecting Janie adversely.

Then, after a brief orientation visit, and no warning or consultation with Katie or Janie, 'Lea'(13), also with a traumatic history, joined the household.

The level of violence escalated. Sometimes there were broken windows. Sometimes the young people climbed on the roof. The police were often called.

In considering the circumstances of these young people, the Guardian's Office has been told by care staff they have had no choice but to accept new residents even where they know them to be unsuitable to live with each other and have felt powerless to influence decisions about placement even where they have knowledge of the young people involved and can predict the difficulties that will eventuate.

Katy, Janie and Lea were unhappy, in fear of their safety and, because of the violence and escalated behaviour in their home, they faced involvement with the juvenile justice system and a criminal record that would affect their future.

GCYP has advocated strongly for these young people to have their therapeutic and placement needs met and raised this matter with DCP and the Minister as an example of the consequences of poor placement matching and transition planning.

[Post June 2018 one of these young people had been moved and a cap was placed on any additional young people in the home until some intensive work was carried out. The remaining young people reported that their experience is marginally better but both are still unhappy and wish to move.]

The reduction in commercial care places without a corresponding increase in family-based or residential care placements has resulted in a very low vacancy rate. This reduces flexibility, with fewer options available for careful placement matching. Requests to my Office for intervention arising from unsuitable placements, from children, DCP and non-government agencies, and residential care staff have spiked over the last year. Some placement decisions have resulted in a breach of the rights of children to be informed and consulted about changes. In some cases unsuitable and predictably volatile placements have occurred, leading to physical and emotional harm to already vulnerable children. I have brought these concerns to the attention of the Minister and DCP.

Therapeutic care

Many children come into state care suffering trauma that, if not treated, may go on to cause a lifetime of damage. We know that a stable and caring home environment with skilled and motivated adults can assist a child to recover and trauma-aware care and therapeutic care are being widely discussed as keys to a more effective and humane way of working with children.

Training for prospective foster carers now includes modules on trauma, attachment and responding to challenging behaviours. A more flexible and tiered foster care structure providing levels of foster carer training and remuneration to match the needs of individual young people is highly desirable.

The promised 'streamlined model of residential care' with its benefit of specialised care for children with high therapeutic care needs is being actively considered by DCP and I understand that a therapeutic framework to be applied across residential care is in development.

The voice of children

Listening to and cultivating the voice of children allows us to plan and evaluate systems and provide more appropriate day to day care. It is also a novel experience for many of the children who come into care from a background of abuse or neglect. The human need to be acknowledged, heard and have some agency over our lives is as beneficial for children as it is for adults. Modelling respect and consideration for another's feelings and views is the best way to encourage and develop these beneficial behaviours.

One important chance to hear and act on the views of children in care lies with the annual reviews that should be conducted for every child in state care at least once each year. They are an opportunity for the child, carers, social workers, educators and other professionals to meet, to address issues, to plan for the future and, perhaps, to dream. Annual reviews were conducted for 66 per cent of children eligible in 2017-18 and, of those, only half had their

views represented in some way and only a few were present in person. Every annual review that is not done, or not well, represents a great opportunity lost.

Conclusion

In my first year in this role I have grappled with a sense of dissonance. There is now a wealth of evidence available about what children want – and need – to flourish. Many of the policies and guidelines in place, if implemented, would ensure that this happens.

Despite worthy intentions and ideals in the legislation enacted by our parliament, and in DCP's documented standards, they are frequently not applied, or not prioritised. Sometimes this is due to inadequate resources – case managers, for instance, with just too many cases to allow them to meet their requirements and do the job they want to do. It is not fair when frontline workers are at risk of criticism if they cannot meet unattainable standards but it is children who bear the ultimate risk of under-resourcing – not being allocated a social worker, not having an annual review, not receiving the services they need to be safe or to flourish. As a broad community, represented by our government, we must all take responsibility for this situation.

Sometimes pressures other than resourcing are at play – such as the imperative to move a child out of commercial care as quickly as possible which will not be reconcilable with DCP's own guidelines for placement matching in that individual case. As the case study demonstrates, it is children who bear the consequences of these larger systemic pressures, sometimes with their physical and emotional safety.

Overall, some positive changes have occurred and many others are underway. Other major reforms, those requiring profound changes in culture and attitude, will only bear fruit if maintained over many years, evaluated and supported with new investment.

I have witnessed many excellent and committed practitioners in DCP and NGO agencies who have dedicated their lives to making things better for the children they work with – in difficult and sometimes thankless circumstances. We all owe them a debt of gratitude.

I have been privileged to meet children and young people who have experienced aspects of life most of us will never endure, who are astonishing in their wisdom and grace. They have so much to tell us and teach us – through their words and also their behaviour – if only we would listen.

On behalf of my staff and myself, I sincerely thank everyone we have worked with over the past year and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.



Penny Wright

Achievements in 2017-18

- *Responded to 297 requests for intervention on behalf of children and young people, an increase of 26 per cent on last year. Of these, 255 fell within the Office's mandate, an increase of 8 per cent from last year.*
- *Audited 33 annual reviews at three DCP offices.*
- *Visited children and young people living in residential care or youth justice detention in 41 announced visits.*
- *Worked with the CREATE Foundation to consult with children and young people and other stakeholders on the production of materials to educate them about making complaints and having a voice after physical intervention incidents.*
- *Extended the network of advocates for children's rights to 420 Charter (of Rights) Champions, across 82 agencies.*
- *Reported on the circumstances for Aboriginal children and young people in child protection and youth justice detention.*
- *Reported on expenditure on child protection in South Australia.*
- *Reported on trends in government school enrolment and, attendance and literacy and numeracy skills from 2008-2017 for students under guardianship compared to their age peers.*
- *Managed the commencement of the new Training Centre Visitor function and transition of relevant policy and operational arrangements in that context, noting that the TCV Unit operates from the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People.*
- *Designed and established the Child and Young Person's Visitor program pilot.*
- *Substantially grew the reach of the Office's subscriber list and social media network.*
- *Undertook a Strategic Review in November 2017.*
- *Increased staff numbers from nine to thirteen.*
- *Progressed the plan for a move to larger premises.*

[A note about the growth of the Office

2017-18 has been a period of great change for the Office of the Guardian. One role has become three, with the addition of the Training Centre Visitor and the Child and Young Person's Visitor. Staff numbers have nearly doubled and will continue to grow with the implementation of the Training Centre Visitor program and that of the trial Child and Young Person's Visitor program.

These additional roles have necessitated an extensive re-structure, including considerable work to create a Common Engagement Framework. This is necessary to avoid duplication but to ensure that the Office fulfils all its functions in a cohesive and integrated way, with consistent internal and external procedures and values, for the benefit of the children we work for.

Because of the additional roles and programs, the Office has outgrown our current accommodation. Since July 2017, I have worked with the Department for Education and the Department for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure to find an alternative location. Extensive preparation was underway but took a backwards step in May 2018 when the prospective landlord unexpectedly let the building to another party.

As a result of inadequate office space in the current premises, the Training Centre Visitor unit of three staff has re-located to the offices of the Child Death and Serious Injuries Committee and the Child Development Council, next door, and we are thankful for their generosity in making the space available until we move. Our 'landlord' from whom we sub-let our current premises, the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, has also been gracious in allowing the Office to 'encroach' on some of their space. We are fortunate and grateful to have benefited from this example of public agencies working co-operatively and collaboratively in the public good.

I thank my staff for the patience and cheerful forbearance they have shown in these challenging conditions. The recruitment of some additional staff and some aspects of program delivery will be delayed in the coming year, until our re-location in February 2019.]

Functions and outcomes of the Guardian

As previously described at page 2 of this report, the Guardian has six statutory functions, set out in section 26 of the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016*.

This section reports on the work and outcomes of the office to meet the Guardian's statutory functions.

Promote

Statutory function

To promote the best interests of children under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Minister, and in particular those in alternative care

The Office's goals

Action is prompt on issues that impact on the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Effective early intervention services for high need families ensure only those who need state care are taken into care.

Responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is shared.

Promoting the rights of children in care as expressed in the Charter of Rights

The Office of the Guardian has responsibility for preparing, promoting and monitoring the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care* (the Charter) pursuant to section 13 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

The Charter includes the right of children and young people to feel good about themselves, the right to live in a place where they are safe and well cared for, the right to get the help they want or need and the right to understand and have a say in decisions that affect them.

In early 2016 Parliament accepted revisions to the original Charter (developed after extensive consultation with children and young people). Since then the Office has sought endorsements from all relevant government and non-government agencies and service providers.

At the end of June 2018, 82 agencies had endorsed the revised Charter, and an additional three agencies had commenced the endorsement process. There were 420 Charter Champions engaged to promote children's rights in their agencies.

Notwithstanding that section 13(10) of the *Safety Act* currently provides that the Charter does not create legally enforceable rights or entitlements, the Office consistently seeks to remind 'each person or body engaged in the administration, operation or enforcement of a relevant law' of their obligation, consistent with the safety of a child or young person, to give effect to the Charter.

A Charter of Rights for Children and Young People Detained in Youth Justice Facilities is provided for in section 22 of the *Youth Justice Administration Act 2016*. As at 30 June 2018, in the absence of dedicated resources, the Office of the Guardian (and specifically the TCV program) has not been in a position to undertake the additional responsibilities required to promote that Charter.

Engaging children and young people in the Office's work through whatever avenue we can

The Office is committed to strengthening the voice of children and young people and modelling their participation in decisions. Even where the outcome of advocacy may not be the result a child or young person is seeking, the process of being heard, respected and validated in matters affecting their own lives is as important for children and young people as it is for adults. The feeling of being respected and deeply considered can be an empowering one, especially for those whose have experienced neglect, abuse or a lack of control over any aspect of their lives.

Further to this, section 27 of the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* requires the Guardian to establish and maintain processes to ensure the participation of children and young people in strategic, policy or systemic practice development or review processes.

The Office continues to work to enhance the voice of children and young people in office decision-making and processes.

In 2017-2018 employment procedures have been developed to ensure the voice of the child is included in merit selection for positions which will involve contact with, and advocacy for, children and young people. As detailed in the TCV annual report, the selection processes for the Principal Training Centre Advocate and the Training Centre Advocate were designed to include consultation and feedback from residents of the Adelaide Youth Training Centre.

Recruitment of GCYP Advocates and Community Advocates (employed in the CYPV program) featured the participation of a young adult care leaver (who was also a CREATE young consultant) on the interview panels. The consultant also contributed questions to the interview process and participated in the discussion to select the candidates.

The monitoring visits to residential and youth justice detention units, as well as individual advocacy matters, also engage children and young people in talking about their views on the care provided. These views are reflected in submissions and presentations made by the Office. The TCV program developed consultation with residents to inform the design of the proposed visiting program and the CYPV program will include children and young people's views in the developmental evaluation process.

Planning is under way to secure a dedicated role for a youth participation officer to develop a broader youth participation strategy and to support the consultation the Office currently undertakes with children and young people, including with the assistance of other agencies such as the CREATE Foundation.

Working with the CREATE Foundation to develop materials to develop an education program for children in residential care to promote their rights to make complaints, including to the Chief Executive of DCP, and to inform them of their rights in relation to physical intervention, including the right to speak about what happened

GCYP was tasked with this work following recommendation 136 of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission. The Office has been working with the CREATE Foundation to consult with children and young people and stakeholders to develop the program, including materials. The scheduled end-date of June 2018 was extended to December 2018, due to the development of revised DCP complaint pathways and processes, which have been subject to review and reform in light of recent legislative amendments.

What young people told us about making complaints

'A lot of the time it can feel like nothing happens [*with a complaint*] or it gets lost or stuck in the system.'

'No matter what, [*complaints*] should be followed up by someone and the young person should be kept in the loop with regular communication.'

'[*Some reasons young people may not complain include*] not knowing that they can, fear that it won't matter or go anywhere or nothing will change, having to see the person [*they complain about*] every day, emotional manipulation and bribes, being scared, don't know how to say it and guilt trips.'

'[*There should be*] something like CARL for young people to report and make a complaint about.'

Promoting the rights and best interests of children in care and detention to the community

The Guardian was invited to speak about the rights and interests of children in care and detention at various events, including:

- *Democracy Co Presentation: People's Policy for Children's Wellbeing*
- *Baptist Care Annual Conference*
- *Salisbury Youth Services Network Lunch and Presentation*
- *Presentation to DCP Frontline Workers' Forums*
- *Presentations to students of the Diploma of Leadership and Management at the Department for Education Registered Training Organisation*
- *Karen Fitzgerald Oration*
- *Amnesty International AGM*

Sharing the knowledge and information of the Office through a range of media

The website is the major source of public information about the Office's activities, findings and views. In 2017-18 the 29 pages were extensively revised for ease of access and the site expanded to a searchable archive of 460 posts and 100 documents on matters related to child protection and children's rights.

The Office continued its communications strategy which entailed making information and opinion available via shorter and more frequent posts and expanding the subscriber base to the Guardian's Information Service. Website page views increased modestly in the 2017 calendar year to 70,241 and the number of unique viewers grew significantly to 23,640. Subscriptions to the Guardian's Information Service also grew significantly to 1,691 at the end of 2017-18.

The Office maintains two Facebook pages and a Twitter stream, each with a modest following. By these means the Office makes available information on child protection and children's rights including, and in addition to, that which is on the website, as well as providing the opportunity for community comment.

In 2017-18, the Office published four quarterly newsletters.

In 2017-18 the Guardian appeared in the following media, to discuss the rights and interests of children in care and detention:

- *Interview on role of Guardian, Peter Goers, ABC Radio Adelaide 891 (July 2017)*
- *Interview on the role of the Guardian for children's newspaper "Cringling" (July 2017)*
- *Channel 10 news, Youth Sentenced as Adults Bill (September 2017)*
- *Op Ed, Advertiser, Sentencing repeat juvenile offenders as adults (21 September 2017)*
- *News article on GCYP Annual Report, ABC On-line, Nicola Gage (17 November 2017)*
- *Interviews, ABC North West Regional Radio regarding regional visits to Ceduna and Port Lincoln (January 2018)*
- *Interview on role of the Guardian, SACOSS' "Small Change", Radio Adelaide (February 2018)*
- *News article – costs of Residential Care, Miles Kemp, Advertiser (March 2018)*
- *Interview re costs of Residential Care, David Bevan, ABC Radio Adelaide (March 2018)*
- *News article on Youth Justice and Detention, Luke Griffiths, "Australian" (April 2018)*
- *News article on Youth Justice and Detention, Stephanie Richards, "In Daily" (April 2018)*

In 2017-18 the Office promoted the best interests of children and young people in care and detention via the following publications:

- *Report on [NGOs and Coordination and collaboration in child protection](#)*
- *[Aboriginal children in state care – a statistical report](#)*
- *[A summary of requests for advocacy made to the Office in 2016-17](#)*
- *[A review of the findings in the Office’s Audits of annual reviews 2007-17](#)*
- *[An analysis of expenditure on child protection in South Australia 2015-16](#)*
- *[Summary statistics about children in care in SA at June 2017](#)*
- *[Paper on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs in reducing youth reoffending](#)*
- *[Summary data on young people in the Adelaide Youth Training Centre 2016-17](#)*
- *Summary reports on the [January 2018 Coordination and collaboration survey](#)*
- Publication of *[Advice to the Minister of Education and Child development on principles of secure care](#)*
- *[Summary statistics about Aboriginal young people in care and juvenile detention 2016-17](#)*
- *[Analysis of the lessons from the Oakden report for community visitor programs](#)*
- *[Paper from the Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians on child protection frameworks in Australia](#)*
- *[Poll on extending the age of support to young people leaving state care](#)*

In 2017-18 the Office promoted the best interests of children and young people in care via the following public submissions and responses:

- *Response to the Statutes Amendment (Recidivist and Repeat Offenders) Bill 2017 (October 2017)*
- *Submission: Looking for balance: a response to the Statutes Amendment (Youth Sentenced as Adults) Bill 2017*
- *Submission to the Law Council of Australia Justice Project: Children and Young People (September 2017)*
- *Secure Therapeutic Care Framing Principles (October 2017)*

Advocate

Statutory function

To act as an advocate for the interests of children under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Minister and, in particular, for any such child who has suffered, or is alleged to have suffered, sexual abuse

The Office's goals

More children and young people in care feel good, are safe and cared for, get help, understand and have a say.

Allegations of sexual abuse of children in care are investigated promptly.

Through outreach activity the Office ensures that children and young people who need individual advocacy receive it.

Visits to residential care facilities and DCP (and other NGO agency) Open Days and Christmas parties, presentations and attendance at staff training and other forums all assist in promoting awareness of the Office's advocacy function. When the CYPV program becomes operational it will further increase this awareness on the part of children and young people and staff.

Through our 'Being in Care' products the Office reinforces messages about children's rights and provides information about where to go for assistance. The product range was developed with advice from young people in care and now includes booklets, posters, contact cards, comic books, flash cards, back-packs, wristbands, tattoos, key-rings, a soft toy, stress balls and drink bottles. These products are provided free to children in care and are available to agencies that have endorsed the *Charter of Rights*. Oog ('Office of [the] Guardian'), the creature created for children in care to represent the right to be safe, appeared again in the 2017 Credit Union Christmas Pageant.

GCYP's advocacy for individual children is consciously linked to advocacy on systemic issues. Trends or repetition of problems are identified in advocacy and pursued. In 2017-18 GCYP received 297 requests for intervention on behalf of children and young people. Of these, 255 fell within Guardian's mandate, that is, they were requests about children and young people under guardianship, or in the custody, of the Minister. This is an increase of eight per cent from the previous year.

A single matter sometimes affects more than one child or young person in care. GCYP assisted or advocated on behalf of 359 children and young people (an increase of 12 per cent from the previous year). GCYP's intervention ranges from providing information about policies or rights through to a full review of the circumstances of a child with advocacy for change.

In 2017-18 Advocates reported that matters tended to be of greater complexity and took longer to investigate and attempt to resolve than in previous years. The 255 requests that were within the Guardian's mandate were initiated by:

	No.	%
Child or young person	80	31.4
Adult in child's life (carer, parent, other relative)	69	27.1
Other	21	8.24
Department for Child Protection	20	7.84
Alternative care agency	18	7.06
Non-government Agency (excluding alternative care agency)	17	6.67
Health	14	5.49
Education	9	3.53
Legal	3	1.18
Youth Justice	2	0.78
Unknown	2	0.78

The presenting issues⁹ were categorised as:

	No.
Stable and secure placement	97
Contact with significant others	57
Participation in decision making	31
Relationship with case worker	31
Safety	23
Appropriate care	20
Understanding circumstances	13
Education	12
Access to health and disability services	7
Nurturing environment	0
Other	95

⁹ There is often more than one presenting issue in a request and one issue may affect more than one child. Therefore, the total is greater than the number of requests.

Case study

'Kevin' and 'Brett' were two Aboriginal young people, aged 15 and 13, who were under Guardianship orders and detained in the Adelaide Youth Training Centre. When they were visited by an Advocate from the Office they told him about their strong desire to return to their family and their community in the Northern Territory and to be reconnected with their culture.

Kevin felt sad about losing his language in the four years since being taken away from his family and country and he wanted to return home to fulfil his customary responsibilities as a young Aboriginal man. As well, both young people wanted to visit an elder in their family who was unwell. Kevin and Brett told the Advocate they were feeling 'lost' in a State that was foreign to them and they did not belong here.

At the time, neither boy was having contact with his social worker and felt like not much had been done for them for a lengthy period of time. They distrusted the DCP and did not have much hope that things could change.

After seven months of persistent representations of their voices by the Advocate and sustained work with DCP staff, including Principal Aboriginal Consultants, DCP undertook a scoping trip to find suitable carers for the boys in the Northern Territory. A DCP staff member reflected that the process was transformative for them, helping them to understand more fully the critical importance of culture, country and connection for Aboriginal children and young people.

When released, Kevin and Brett were able to be reunited with their family and culture and funding was obtained by DCP so that Kevin could participate in a culturally appropriate program upon his return to country. The process also encouraged DCP to initiate and facilitate a return to home for another family member who had been living in residential care in South Australia.

Through the advice the Office provides we ensure that what we hear and see results in systemic change

Once advice has been provided to the Minister on specific issues [see *Advise*] the Office pursues most matters through advocacy. In 2017-18 the Office continued to advocate for improvements in the following issues:

- improved transition from care planning as young people approach the age of 18 and their placement and support services will cease
- security of placement
- safety of placement, particularly in residential care
- improvements in conditions for children and young people residing in youth training centres and residential care.
- halting the use of residential facilities which accommodate more than four children and young people.
- improvements in educational outcomes for children under guardianship
- telephone access for children in emergency/commercial care
- improved case management of children under Guardianship (some of whom did not have allocated social workers, were not seeing their allocated workers or were being managed by Intake and Assessment workers rather than through a designated Guardianship Hub)
- Improved access to mental health and therapeutic services for children in care – with the CAMHS service inadequately resourced to meet their needs and inadequate alternative private providers being available
- safety of children in residential care
- reducing the reliance on temporary rented properties and agency staff to care for children

Additionally, the Office continued to provide advice on legislative reform and initiatives following the staged implementation of recommendations from the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission, and in respect of youth justice, and other government agencies' service delivery frameworks. These included:

- DCP Draft Clinical Governance framework and Draft Practice Framework
- DCP Complaint Management Framework, Procedure and flow chart
- DCP Persistent Complainants' Policy

- Commencement of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*
- Draft Rapid Response Framework
- Attorney General re Training Centre Visitor and OPCAT – Resourcing Training Centre Visitor
- Feedback to Attorney General on the *Children and Young People (Development, Wellbeing and Early Intervention) Bill 2017*
- Feedback on Operational Orders for Adelaide Youth Training Centre
- *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Regulations 2017*
- CREATE Foundation SORTLI smartphone app

The Guardian is a member of the Australian and New Zealand Children’s Commissioners and Guardians network. Major items discussed at the two 2017-18 ANZCCG meetings were promotion of the participation and engagement of children and young people, the findings of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (RCIRSA), the role of Aboriginal Children’s Commissioners, youth justice detention, therapeutic care, children and young people in relation to family law, family violence, harmful sexual behaviours, e-safety issues and kinship care.

Working with the police, public prosecution and investigations units to ensure that children involved in investigations of sexual abuse in care have an advocate and that investigations are conducted in a timely manner

This process was established in response to recommendations 20 and 24 from the Mullighan Inquiry in 2008,¹⁰ which had concluded that allegations of sexual abuse of children and young people in care, and their investigation, should be monitored and co-ordinated.

GCYP receives notifications from the DCP Care Concern Management Unit in relation to allegations of sexual abuse of children and young people in care. The role of the Guardian is to monitor the progress of the investigations and to ensure that the child has an advocate. GCYP convenes the ‘R20’ meetings quarterly and they are attended by the South Australian Police (Special Crimes Investigations Bureau) and the DCP Investigations as well as the Care Concern Management Unit. GCYP also relies on the co-operation of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

¹⁰ Mullighan, [Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry.pdf](#) pp.23-24 of 583

In 2017-18, 50 Serious Care Concerns notifications referred to GCYP were subject to investigation by SA Police and/or the Department. In addition, GCYP monitored 23 investigations that were ongoing from previous years. GCYP also received 25 Minor and 18 Moderate Care Concerns.

The new notifications related to alleged sexual abuse in the following care arrangements:

Relative care	13
Foster care	13
Residential care	14
Commercial care	10

These notifications represented a significant increase on the year before.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	Increase
Relative care	11	13	18 %
Foster care	6	13	116%
Residential care	5	14	180%
Commercial care	4	10	250%
Totals	26	50	92%

Table: New notifications of alleged sexual abuse 2016/17 to 2017/18

Monitor

Statutory function

To monitor the circumstances of children under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Minister

The Office's goals

Know what is happening for children and young people in care.

Identify and promote what is working well.

Identify weaknesses in the child protection system.

Implementation of monitoring framework

In 2007 GCYP introduced a framework for its monitoring activities so that it could report against standards endorsed by children. There are 12 quality statements based on the rights set out in the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care*.

Monitoring activities

The number of children and young people under guardianship orders grew by 3 per cent in the year to 30 June 2018.

GCYP undertook the following activities to monitor the circumstances of children and young people in care:

- Receipt and analysis of data available from the Department for Education and Child Development, the DE and DCP
- Audits of annual reviews (33 audits)
- Enquiries lodged at the Office (7.5 per cent of children on care and protection orders)
- Visits to residential care houses and youth training centre units 42 visits
- One six-monthly review of safety records in the Adelaide Youth Training Centre

Reports relating to monitoring

GCYP did not release a report on its audits of annual reviews for children who are under long-term care and protection orders this year due to the small number of annual reviews attended (33 compared to 94 the previous year).

After each visit to a residential care house, GCYP forwarded a report to the responsible agency and senior management.

GCYP provided one report pertaining to the formal review of records at the Adelaide Youth Training Centre to the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, Youth Justice Directorate. This was fewer than in previous years pending the establishment of the TCV Unit and the development of more rigorous and formal reporting mechanisms.

GCYP released reports compiled from the following aggregate data:

- Expenditure on child protection in South Australia, 2015-2016 (analysis of the Productivity Commission ROGS Report for that period)
- Expenditure on child protection in South Australia, 2016-2017 (analysis of the Productivity Commission ROGS Report for that period, following on from previous report)
- Audits of Annual Reviews 2007-2017 – children, systems and practice
- Aboriginal Children and Young People in Care and Juvenile Detention 2016-2017

Aggregate data

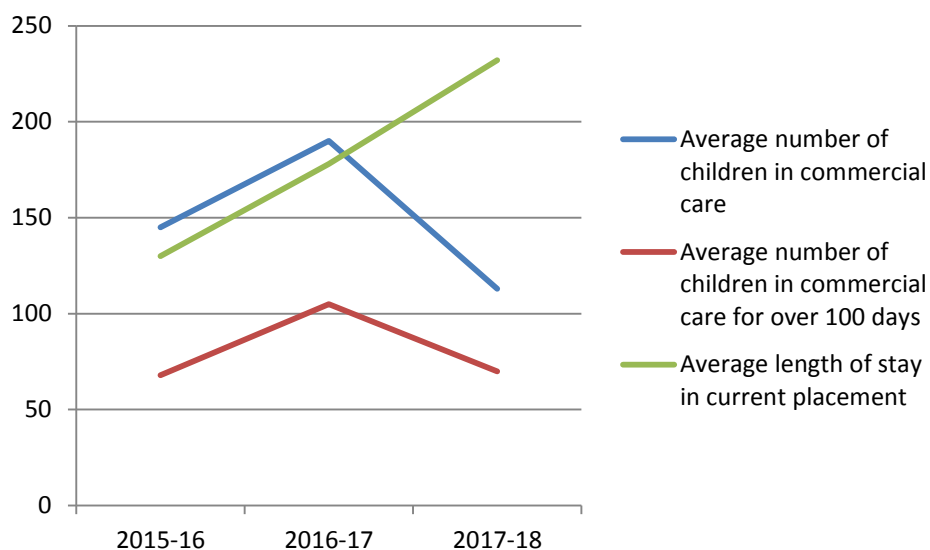
Aggregate data is primarily sourced from, and with the cooperation of, the Departments for Child Protection (DCP) and the Department for Human Services (DHS). The most current and all-purpose data is available on the [Office of the Guardian website](#).

- The number of children and young people on short (12 month) and long term (to age 18) care and protection court orders at 30 June 2018 was 3402, an increase of 106 individuals from the same time twelve months earlier.
- The proportion of children in out of home care who lived in residential care (this includes emergency/commercial care) has increased steadily from 2.3 per cent in 2005, to 15.7 per cent in 2017 and then dropped to 13.5 per cent in 2018 (501 of 3695 individuals).
- The proportion of children under the guardianship of the Minister who identified specifically as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, compared to those who specifically identified they were not (i.e. 1,133 compared to 2,269 individuals, n = 3402), has increased steadily from 22.8 per cent in 2006 to 35.2 per cent in 2017, and lowered to 33.3 per cent in 2018.

- The Adelaide Youth Training Centre (AYTC) accommodated 329 children and young people at some time in 2017-18 compared to 388 children and young people in 2016-17. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people accounted for 166 of those accommodated in 2017-18, 69 were female and 77 were under a guardianship order at the time of their admission.
- The average daily occupancy rate of the AYTC in 2017-18 was 44.31 residents.
- The total number of separate AYTC admissions in 2017-18 was 671. For these separate admissions (i.e. some individual children and young people were admitted more than once), 128 were female, 363 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and 207 were under a guardianship order at the time of the admission.

Children in commercial care

There was substantial growth in the use of commercial care up until this reporting period. The chart below demonstrates the decrease of numbers of children in commercial care, but shows that the average length of time spent in commercial care is growing.



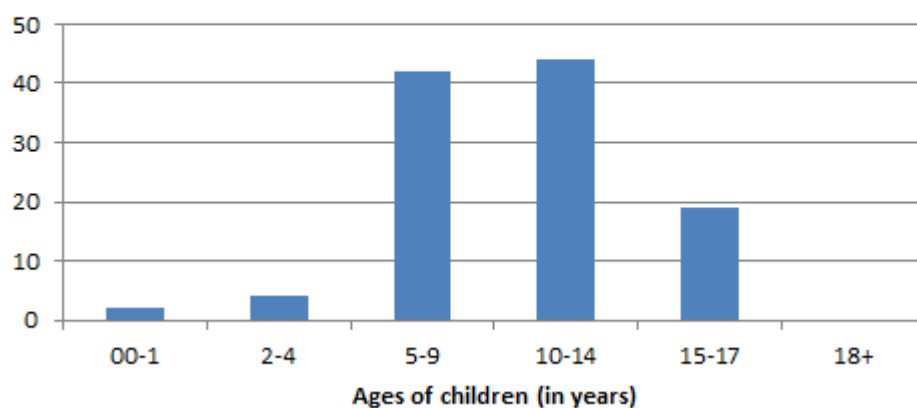
In 2017-18, the highest number of children and young people in commercial care at any one time was 166, which occurred at the beginning of the reporting period of July 2017.

- The following calculations are based on weekly reports received:
- average number of children per day – 113
- average length of stay – 232 days
- average number of children in placement for over 100 days - 70
- average age of children – 10 years

At 25 June 2018, an average of 70 children had stays of over 100 days, which is a reduction on last reporting period, where 106 children had stays of over 100 days.¹¹ The average age of children in 2016-17 was nine, and in 2017-18 it is ten years old. Given the increasing average length of stay, this may mean there is a core group of children who are experiencing stability in the commercial care system.

Particularly concerning is the very young age of more than half of those accommodated in 2017-18.

Average ages of children and young people in commercial care



There is consensus that the 'interim' care arrangements are inappropriate for children who are already in vulnerable circumstances and there is limited continuity and consistency in carer staff. While the quality of day-to-day care varies considerably, the instability and uncertainty for children is universal. GCYP has continued to receive reports of, or witnessed, problems such as staff who are insufficiently trained and qualified in trauma-responsive care, inconsistency in boundaries and approaches to managing behaviour, frequent absconding and/or missed schooling by children and young people, lack of personal belongings and isolation.

¹¹ Comparisons of 'long-stays' with previous years is now not possible. In August 2014 DCP stopped providing detailed reports, so GCYP could not do independent analysis. DCP reports on the number of children with stays over 100 days. In previous years, GCYP's tracking has been on numbers with stays over 60 days.

There has been a concerted push to reduce the number of children in commercial care arrangements over the course of the reporting year. While this is to be commended on one hand, GCYP has received an increasing number of requests for advocacy due to poor transition planning from commercial care to other placements (usually residential care) and inappropriate placements that have caused harm to children and young people and breached the Charter of Rights. These are unintended but often foreseeable consequences of decisions to reduce the use of commercial care at a time when other placement options, especially family-based care, are not expanding at the same rate. This concerning trend is discussed more fully in The Year in Review.

Audits of annual reviews

Annual reviews are to be conducted for children and young people placed under long-term guardianship orders. This is an opportunity for every individual child, in a big system, to have the focus on them, their progress, their needs, their future and their voice.

As DCP has described the process, it is an excellent opportunity to gather the child or young person's care team, including the child, to review progress over the last year and plan for the future. The principles underlying the process are sound. Audits by GCYP are the means by which the practice can be measured against the intent.

GCYP attended a relatively small number of annual reviews this year (33 compared to 94 the previous year). This reflects the fact that 2017-2018 has been a year of significant change and growth for the Office with an expanding range of activities and programs, the departure of a number of established staff and the arrival and induction of a number of new staff. It is the Senior Advocate who generally attends and audits annual reviews and for some months the Senior Advocate position was either vacant pending recruitment, or filled by a new member of staff who was learning the complex role while simultaneously managing a recruitment process for two of the four Advocate positions in his team.

The Senior Advocate audited 33 annual reviews at three DCP offices. The Guardian also attended a series of reviews over two days at two offices, to become acquainted with the process, assess the degree to which the voice of the child is 'heard' and 'reflected' in the reviews, and to gain an insight into the challenges faced by DCP staff in adhering to the well-intentioned guidelines for annual review. The main challenge noted by the Guardian was the time available for case managers to attend to the needs of children and young people because of high caseloads. There were no children or young people present at any of the 10 reviews attended by the Guardian. In several cases the case manager had clearly made great

efforts to obtain the child's presence, or at least their views. This was not the case with other reviews.

Due to the relatively small number of audits it is not possible to make reliable conclusions about longer term trends. However, the following findings are based on the 33 reviews attended for 2017-18:

- Of the 33 children and young people whose cases were reviewed, 30 were in stable, long-term placements.
- Seven of the annual reviews audited were for Aboriginal children and young people. Five of the Aboriginal children and young people were placed with their extended family or with Aboriginal carers.
- Sixteen children and young people participated in their annual review, three by attending and 13 by completing a survey. It is notable that country offices were responsible for all of the reviews where children and young people attended, and most of the participation via surveys. Sixteen children and young people did not have a direct voice in their annual reviews. Over recent years, participation by children and young people in their annual review has remained unchanging – being between one third and one quarter. Term trends show that country offices consistently have better participation rates of children and young people in their own reviews.
- Of the 24 children and young people who were of school age and attending pre-school, primary school or secondary school, it was reported that 16 (66 per cent) had current Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Negotiated Education Plans, at the time of their annual review. GCYP has monitored the implementation of the IEP since 2007-08. The numbers this year, though based on a small sample, are broadly consistent with previous years.
- Of the 22 children and young people who had the capacity to understand, four had been provided with the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care. Although the sample was small this year, it is consistent with the low level evident in previous years.
- Twenty-two children and young people whose cases were reviewed had a Life Story Book. This included three Aboriginal children and young people who have been supported to develop a culturally appropriate Life Story Book.

Residential care and youth training centres

Monitoring of the circumstances of children in residential care has been based, in part, on formal visits to some residential settings by the three Advocates in the Advocates' team. GCYP is unable to visit all facilities, which numbered 182 at 30 June 2018. Decisions about which sites to visit were made from analysis of information about the sites.

The visit includes interviews with managers and a visit to residents to hear their views. In addition, residential care supervisors complete an annual self-evaluation survey prior to the visit that captures the perspective of the service provider and staff. After the visit, GCYP provides a report to senior management of the organisation.

At the beginning of 2017-18, GCYP was advised that 131 residential care properties provided by the Department for Child Protection and non-government organisations accommodated children and young people under the guardianship or custody of the Minister for Child Protection. By the end of 2017-18, the number of residential care properties expanded to 182 as the oversight of commercial care properties moved to the DCP's Residential Care Directorate and the funding of additional non-government residential care properties. In 2017-18 Advocates completed 41 formal visits to residential facilities.

The visiting aspect of monitoring is currently subject to revision and restructure in light of the trial Child and Young Person's Visiting program, as discussed at page 40.

In November 2011, on the advice of the Guardian, the Minister for Education and Child Development began to progressively close the six larger and older residential care facilities. Two were scheduled for replacement by the end of 2013 and the four remaining were to have been closed by mid-2016. However, two of the older facilities remain in operation and there are three newer, large facilities which accommodate 12 children in each. As discussed in the Year in Review, these large residential units are not suitable for children and should be closed.

There are two campuses for the Adelaide Youth Training Centre which operate under a single management team. In 2017-2018 GCYP Advocates conducted one visit to units within the youth training centre to talk with groups of residents. Written feedback followed this visit. There was one review of records¹² and a more comprehensive written report provided

¹² The records reviewed are Incident Reports, Resident Complaints, Youth Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes and the Staff Training Register.

to the Director, Youth Justice. Further visits were discontinued pending the development of the Training Centre Visitor program, which will enable increased visiting and advocacy for the residents, and increased and more thorough monitoring of the quality of care, treatment and control of residents of the AYTC as well as formal inspections.

Further information about the TCV program is available in the [Annual Report of the Training Centre Visitor 2017-18](#).

Advise

Statutory function

To provide advice to the Minister on the quality of the provision of care for children under the guardianship, or in the custody of, the Minister and on whether the children's needs are being met.

The Office's goals

Advice results in action on critical issues for groups of children and young people.

The Minister and others have confidence in the advice provided.

Advice and inquiry

Prior to March 2018 the Guardian provided written advice to the Minister for Education and Child Development on the following topics:

- Educational outcomes for children and young people in state care in government schools
- GCYP Survey into coordination and collaboration in child protection
- Case examples of children in commercial care not having ready access to a phone
- Expenditure on child protection in South Australia 2015-16 (analysis of the Productivity Commission, ROGS Report)
- Submission: Looking for balance: a response to the *Statutes Amendment (Youth Sentenced as Adults) Bill 2017 (July 2017)*
- Response to the *Statutes Amendment (Recidivist and Repeat Offenders) Bill 2017 (October 2017)*
- Secure Therapeutic Care Framing Principles (October 2017)

After March 2018 the Guardian provided written advice to the Minister for Child Protection on the following topics:

- Analysis of expenditure on South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care and detention (based on Productivity Commission's ROGS report)

- Expenditure on child protection in South Australia 2016-17 (analysis of the Productivity Commission, ROGS Report)
- Paper from the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians on child protection frameworks in Australia

Inquire

Statutory function

To inquire into, and provide advice to the Minister in relation to, systemic reform necessary to improve the quality of care provided for children in alternative care

The Office's goal

Inquiries result in systemic reform that is long-standing.

As discussed in the Year in Review (at page 8), 2017-2018 has been a year of significant growth and change for the Office of the Guardian. In addition, GCYP has continued to see an increase in the number and complexity of advocacy matters, an increase in the number of residential care facilities to be monitored and the requirement to respond to and support initiatives arising from legislative reform and DCP's responses to recommendations of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission. For these reasons GCYP did not have the resources available to conduct any major inquiries in 2017-18 but commenced work on the systemic issue of placement matching which informed a report to the Minister during the 2018-2019 reporting year.

Investigate

Statutory function

To investigate and report to the Minister on matters referred to the GCYP by the Minister

The Office's goal

Investigations result in practical recommendations that are acted on.

One individual matter was referred to the Guardian by the Minister.

Functions of the Training Centre Visitor

To address the Training Centre Visitor's functions under section 14 of the *Youth Justice Administration Act 2016* we -

- conduct visits to training centres
- conduct inspections of training centres
- promote the best interests of the residents of a training centre
- act as an advocate for the residents of a training centre – to promote the resolution of issues to do with the care, treatment and control of the residents
- inquire into and provide advice to the Minister in relation to any systemic reform needed to improve the care, treatment and control of residents or the management of a training centre
- inquire into and investigate any matter referred by the Minister

In fulfilling these functions, the Training Centre Visitor must pay particular attention to the needs and circumstances of residents who are under guardianship, or are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people, or who have a physical, psychological or intellectual disability.

The Training Centre Visitor must also encourage residents of a training centre to express their own views and must give proper weight to those views.

Please read the [Annual Report of the Training Centre Visitor– 2017-18](#) for a complete description of the Visitor's activities.

The Child and Young Person's Visitor Program

The Child and Young Person's Visitor (CYPV) is a new independent position that reports to Parliament through the Minister for Child Protection pursuant to section 117 of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* (the *Safety Act*). The CYPV's role is to promote and protect the interests and rights of children and young people living in residential care in South Australia.

The Guardian for Children and Young People, Penny Wright, was appointed as the inaugural CYPV on 26 February 2018.

The CYPV's functions include visiting and inspecting residential facilities, advocating for the residents and advising the Minister for Child Protection.

The CYPV must act independently, impartially and in the public interest. The Minister cannot control how the CYPV exercises statutory functions and powers and cannot give any direction with respect to the content of any report prepared by the CYPV.

The CYPV Program

Although the functions and structure of the CYPV 'scheme' have been legislated in the *Safety Act*, it has not yet formally commenced. The CYPV is being conducted by the Office of the Guardian as a trial program, designed to inform planning and decisions about the structure, arrangements and resourcing of the official scheme.

The CYPV program is located within the Office of the Guardian and will run until June 2019.

At 30 June 2018 the program comprised a Principal Community Advocate and two part-time Community Advocates. Further staff will be employed as the program is developed.

The program arose in response to Recommendation 137 of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission: 'Legislate to provide for the development of a community visitor's scheme for children in all residential and emergency care facilities.' In 2017 the DCP asked the Guardian to undertake a 'two-year pilot visiting scheme for 100 children and young people in residential and commercial care facilities, to be finalised in June 2019.' The lead agency role is held by the Office of the Guardian.

The Children and Young People living in residential care in South Australia

The CYPV's focus is children and young people living in residential care in South Australia.¹³ Unlike family-based care such as foster care or kinship care, residential care takes place in a house or facility staffed with paid DCP employees or carers from non-government organisations.

In comparison to most other Australian States and Territories, South Australia has a relatively high reliance on residential care. As at 30 June 2018, 408 children and young people were living in residential care in South Australia. This represents 11 per cent of children in SA who live in out-of-home-care.

The number of children and young people in residential care has increased rapidly from 275 as at 30 June 2015.

The number of residential care facilities has also increased significantly. In 2006 there were 18. In 2012 there were 65. As at 30 June 2018 there were 182 residential care properties, of which DCP operates 76 and non-government organisations operate 106

The Child and Young Person's Visitor's functions

The CYPV's powers and functions are outlined in section 118(1) of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*. They are to:

- conduct visits to, and inspections of, residential care facilities¹⁴
- communicate with children living in residential care facilities
- promote the best interests of children living in residential care facilities
- act as an advocate for children living in residential care facilities to promote the resolution of issues to do with their care, treatment and control
- inquire into and provide advice to the Minister in relation to any systemic reform needed to improve the care, treatment and control of residents or the management of residential care facilities.

¹³ The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare defines residential care as 'placement in a residential building where the purpose is to provide placements for children and there are paid staff': (2018) Child protection Australia 2016–2017 (Child Welfare Series No. 68). Canberra: AIHW, p. 43.

¹⁴ In the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, residential care facilities are called "prescribed facilities" (section 116).

Section 118(2)(b) provides that in performing these functions, the CYPV must pay particular attention to the needs and circumstances of residents who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or who have a physical, psychological or intellectual disability.

Aboriginal children and young people

Aboriginal children are over-represented in terms of the number of children and young people living in out of home care and this over-representation has been growing. Between 2009/10 and 2016/17, the rates per 1,000 children and young people on care and protection orders increased from 42.4 to 74.3 for Aboriginal and 5.6 to 6.8 for non-Aboriginal children and young people¹⁵. At 30 June 2018 they accounted for 33.3 per cent of the children in out of home care in South Australia.

Given the growing over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people living in care, it is likely they also comprise a higher proportion of the recent growth in the residential care population than non-Aboriginal children. As at 30 June 2017, there were 1,150 Aboriginal children and young people under guardianship and, of those, 207 (18 per cent) were living in residential or commercial care¹⁶. The CYPV will seek to work with the DCP to obtain this information on a regular basis, with respect to both children living in residential care facilities run by DCP and those run by non-government agencies.

Children with a disability

Between 25 and 30 per cent of children and young people in care have a disability and/or significant developmental delay and at least one-third are Aboriginal children. The DE reports that 30.1 per cent of children in care attending DE schools had an identified disability, compared to the state average of 9.3 per cent of all students in DE schools¹⁷. DCP is in the process of compiling specific data and CYPV will seek to obtain that data on a regular basis and further ascertain the rates for children in residential care.

The voice of children and young people

Section 118(2)(a) provides that the CYPV must encourage residents of residential care facilities to express their own views and must give proper weight to those views. The CYPV staff will actively seek and include the views of children living in residential care in

¹⁵ *South Australian child protection expenditure from the Report on Government Services 2018*, GCYP, 2018 pg.5

¹⁶ *Report on Government Services 2018*, Productivity Commission. The data does not differentiate between residential and commercial care. Data for 2018 will be available in June 2019.

¹⁷ *Children and Young People in State Care in South Australian Government Schools 2008-2017*, GCYP, 2018 pg. 8.

developing the CYPV program. This will mainly occur through direct contact with children during visits conducted by the program.

Development of the program

In the course of the Child Protection Systems Royal Commission, Justice Nyland recognised that residential care is not an appropriate or safe environment for most children and young people. This led her to recommend that a visiting program be established ‘for all children in residential care’ to provide ‘important services for vulnerable populations...accommodated in out-of-home environments’¹⁸ including:

- inspecting facilities
- advocacy
- improving the residents’ experiences
- identifying gaps in service provision
- increasing accountability and transparency within service provision
- helping resolve complaints
- acting as a link between frontline service delivery and policy and service development

Justice Nyland did not propose a particular model or approach. Instead, she noted that ‘the powers that community visitors will require to effectively perform their function will depend on the model adopted’.

¹⁸ Justice Nyland, ‘The life they deserve’ Child Protection Systems Royal Commission, p.331.

Design

The *Safety Act* provides limited guidance around terms like ‘visiting’ and ‘inspecting’. In order to design an appropriate model, it has been necessary to undertake significant research, including consideration of other visiting schemes and programs such as those conducted by the Queensland Office of the Public Guardian and the UK’s Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted). Further guidance has come from inquiries such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the ICAC report into the Oakden facility.

What has been done

During the 2017-2018 year the Principal Community Advocate was recruited and proceeded to design the program including research, scoping and the recruitment of two community visitors. As at 30 June 2018, the CYPV program is in a position to commence formal visits to DCP residential care facilities in July. Facilities run by non-government organisations will not come into scope until the commencement of the second phase of the *Safety Act* on 22 October, 2018.

Evaluation

Flinders University has been engaged to conduct external ‘developmental evaluation’ over the course of the program, to allow the program to respond and adapt to ongoing feedback and findings and take a creative and flexible approach to designing a visiting program that is appropriate for South Australian conditions.

Challenges

In the course of scoping and designing the program, some challenges and impediments to implementation of the program have become evident. It will be necessary to make some changes to legislation to ensure the success of the CYPV scheme in the future.

Freedom of Information

While the Guardian and TCV are exempt from Freedom of Information (FOI) requirements, the CYPV is not. Due to the overlap of mandate the CYPV has with the Guardian, the nature of FOI exemption is currently not clear.

Ability to conduct unannounced visits

The *Safety Act* states the Visitor can only conduct unannounced visits to facilities in ‘exceptional circumstances’. This may limit the capacity of the visitor to fulfil the functions of the role as intended by Parliament. It is noteworthy that Commissioner Lander opined that community visitors attending the Oakden facility “should have made random, unannounced visits”¹⁹. It was his view that ‘it can be expected on any announced visit that the institution under inspection will present itself as best it can ... [whereas] ... the purpose of an unannounced visit is to see how an institution operates without the glare of an announced visit’²⁰.

Power to require information

The CYPV does not have a specific statutory power to require information, unlike the Guardian and TCV. This is likely to undermine the capacity of the role to fulfil the functions in some circumstances and/or it may be necessary to use the powers of the Guardian. This may result in a complicated and/or unwieldy process if the CYPV and Guardian roles are ever held by different people

Function not included

Unlike the Guardian’s and TCV’s functions, ‘to inquire into and investigate any matter referred to the Visitor by the Minister’ is not one of the CYPV functions. As a result, only the Guardian will be able to inquire into and investigate matters regarding residential care if that is required by the Minister. This may result in a complicated and/or unwieldy process if the CYPV and Guardian roles are ever held by different people.

Ability to delegate

The Guardian has the ability to delegate functions to others but the CYPV and the TCV do not. It is not possible for the CYPV to fulfil the functions of the role without delegating some of those functions

Resources

Unlike similar provisions for the Guardian and the TCV, the *Safety Act* does not currently include a requirement that the CYPV be provided with the staff and other resources reasonably needed for carrying out the CYPV’s functions.

¹⁹ *Oakden: A shameful chapter in South Australia’s history*, Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, 2018 p 226.

²⁰ *Ibid* p 226.

About the Office of the Guardian

Legislation

The role of Guardian for Children and Young People was originally established in an amendment to the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, proclaimed on 1 February 2006. Amendments were subsequently made to strengthen the independence and powers of the role, particularly in response to recommendations made in the Mullighan Inquiry Report²¹.

In 2017, the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* re-established the Guardian's role, the same legislation for the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee and the two new entities, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Child Development Council.

The *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* provides the statutory basis for the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care*.

Governance

Under the Act, the Guardian is appointed by the Governor. The Guardian has statutory functions and reporting requirements as previously discussed in this report. The functions are broadly those of monitoring conditions of care, investigating matters of concern and advocating for children and young people under guardianship, or in the custody of, the Minister. The Guardian provides advice to the Minister for Child Protection on these matters.

The Guardian is not subject to directions from the Minister which inhibit inquiries or investigations, prevent or restrict communications or which limit the content of advice, reports or recommendations made in fulfilling the statutory functions.

The Guardian has powers necessary, expedient or incidental to the performance of their functions. The Act explicitly gives the Guardian the power to require information from organisations and people that is necessary to fulfil the functions.

The Guardian must establish and maintain processes to ensure the participation of children and young people in strategic, policy or systemic practice development or review processes.

²¹ Hon. Mullighan E.P. QC, *Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry Final Report* (2008) <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/cisc-introduction.pdf>

Location

The Office of the Guardian, including GCYP, the TVC Unit and the CYPV program, is located at Level 4 East, 50 Grenfell Street, Adelaide.

The office hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Access

The office space has been designed for wheelchair access and, within workplace imperatives, for children.

The Office of the Guardian website is built on a self-hosted WordPress platform which is compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's web content accessibility guidelines.

Complaints

The grievances and complaints policy is available from the website and is provided when someone complains about the service.

There were three formal complaints made to the Office of the Guardian about the service in 2017-18, which were dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy.

Energy management

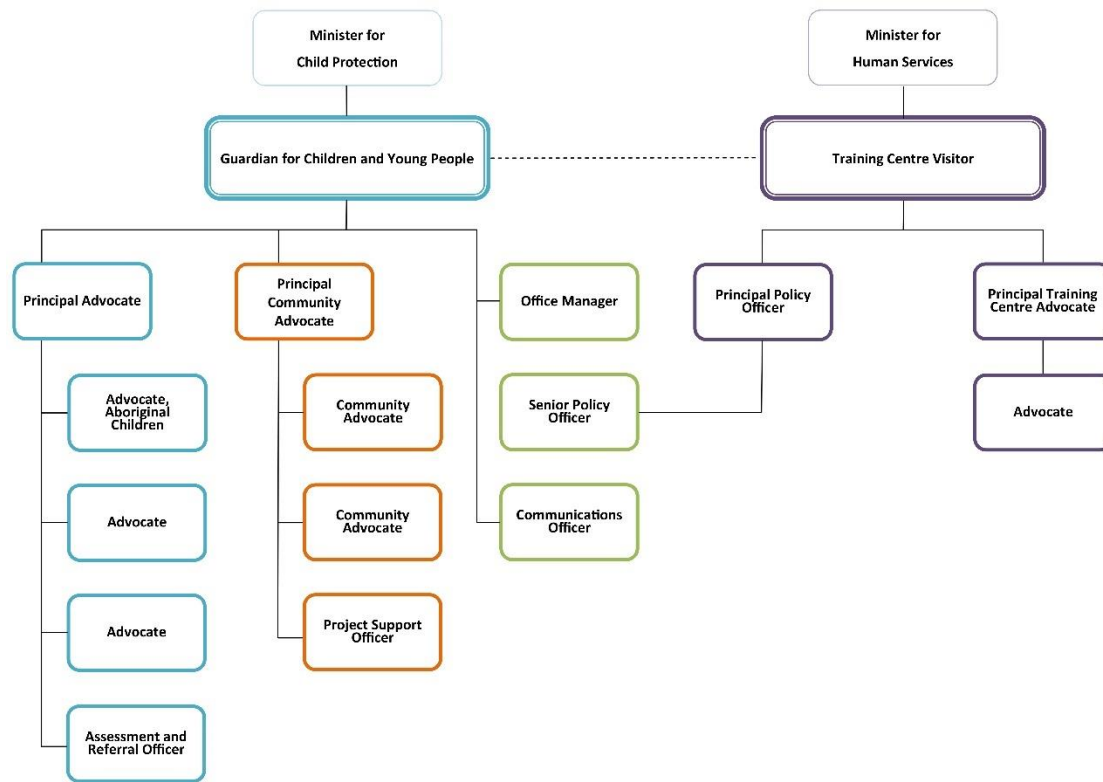
The office recycles all waste paper and power standby features are engaged on appliances.

Freedom of information

Legislation exempts information about individual cases from disclosure under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.

There has been one FOI request for other information during 2017-18.

Organisational Structure



Strategic and organisational planning

The Office of the Guardian released a Strategic Plan for 2011-15 in June 2011. Subsequently, delays in appointing a new Guardian and the uncertainties of legislative change meant that this plan was extended to cover 2016 and much of 2017. In November 2017 the Office of the Guardian undertook a [Strategic Review](#), pending the finalisation of a new Strategic Plan in 2019 when a full complement of staff for all three programs is able to participate.

Membership/participation on external committees

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Advisory Panel
- Australian and New Zealand Children’s Commissioners and Guardians
- Interagency Children and Young People’s Safety Steering Committee
- Exceptional Needs Executive Committee
- Rapid Response Working Group
- Children and Law Committee, The Law Society (periodic guest)
- National Inspectors’ Teleconference
- Youth Court Stakeholders Forum

- Office of Guardian and Principal Aboriginal Consultants
- Law Council of Australia, Justice Project, Steering Committee

Learning and development (including conferences / seminars and workshops)

- Responding to Abuse and Neglect (Education)
- SNAICC National Conference
- CREATE Conference - Voices in Action – empowering young people for positive change
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - Building Capacity on Implementation and Reporting (Flinders University)
- ‘Preventing Abuse in Detention’ – RMIT Expert national symposium on Independent Monitoring within the OPCAT Framework’
- Managing Budgets and Financial Plans (IPAA) (5 members of staff)
- Cultural Awareness Program, Grief and Loss Workshop (Australian Institute for Grief and Loss)
- Placement Matching & Intentional Practice Workshop (Life Buoyancy Institute)
- Women in Leadership (DPC)
- Performance Management Essentials (DPC)

Employee numbers, FTE and gender profile

Total number of employees (including Guardian) at 30 June 2018			
	Persons		16
	FTEs		13.7
Gender	% Persons		% FTEs
Female	63%		35%
Male	37%		65%

Workforce Diversity: age and gender profile

Number of Employees by age bracket by gender at 30 June 2018				
Age Group	Female	Male	% of Total	2017 Public Sector Workforce ²²
Up to 20				0.34
20-24				4.31
25-29	2		12.5	9.39
30-34	3	1	25	10.96
35-39	3	1	25	11.18
40-44		1	6.25	12.05
45-49		1	6.25	13.17
50-54	1		6.25	12.73
55-59	1		6.25	13.26
60-64		1	6.25	9.08
65+		1	6.25	3.53
Total	10	6	100	100.00

Workforce diversity: disability

Total number of employees with disabilities				
Male	Female	Total	% of agency	
0	1	0	6%	

Workforce diversity: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Total number of employees				
Male	Female	Total	% of agency	
2	0	0	14%	

Leave Management

Average days leave per full time equivalent employee	
Leave Type	2017-18
Sick leave	5.35
Family Carer's Leave	0.43
Special Leave with Pay	1.15

²² Table 3(a) - Employees in the SA public Sector by age and gender, June 2017 (Workforce Information report 2016-17 pg12, Office of the Public Sector)

Workplace health and safety

In 2017-18 there were no incidents resulting in workplace injury.

Performance development

Documented review of individual performance development plan	
Employees with ...	% total of workforce
a review within the past 12 months	100
a review older than 12 months	
no review	

Consultants

Miranda Furness was engaged jointly with the Child Development Council to review the *Youth Justice Amendment Act 2018*.

Financial

Financial services are provided by the DE. The financial operations of the Office of the Guardian are consolidated into and audited through the DE. As the Guardian was appointed to the additional positions of TCV and CYPV in 2016 and 2017, these project budgets are also provided below.

Financial Summary of expenditure 2017-18			
Project 996: Guardian for Children & Young People			
Item	Actual	Budget	Variation
Salaries and wages	1,103	1,103	0
Goods and services	158	158	0
Total	1,261	1,261	0

Financial Summary of expenditure 2017-18			
Project 972: Community Visitor Scheme			
Item	Actual	Budget	Variation
Salaries and wages	136	247	111
Grants, Goods and services	64	77	13
Total	200	324	124

Financial Summary of expenditure 2017-18			
Project 973: Training Centre Visitor			
Item	Actual	Budget	Variation
Salaries and wages	111	123	12
Goods and services	26	14	-12
Total	137	137	0
Revenue	-313	-313	0
Net	-176	-176	0

GCYP, TCV Program and CYPV Program staff

Office Manager

Nicole Pilkington (to January 2018)

Pam Johnson (February to April 2018)

Mardy McDonald (from May 2018)

The Office Manager provides a range of services within the office including records management, human resources and finance support. She manages the implementation and maintenance of key facilities and services.

Communications Officer

Malcolm Downes

The Communications Officer researches and produces print, online and video materials for electronic and paper distribution, oversees the website and provides ad hoc support and services to office staff on communications and information matters and coordinates the Charter of Rights.

Principal Training Centre Advocate (TCV program)

Belinda Lorek and Alan Fairley (job share from November 2017)

The Principal Training Centre Advocate provides management and leadership for the TCV Program.

Principal Policy Officer

Alan Fairley (from May 2018)

The Principal Policy Officer provides high level policy and strategic advice to the TCV, conducts research, prepares policy papers, briefings and reports.

Training Centre Advocate (TCV program)

Travis Thomas (from February 2018)

The Training Centre Advocate has a key role in the visiting program, maintains effective dialogue with and advocates for AYTC residents, and develops relationships with AYTC management and staff and other government and non-government stakeholders.

Senior Policy Officer

Alan Fairley (to May 2018)

Jessica Flynn (from May 2018)

The Senior Policy Officer conducts research and consultations, prepares policy papers, briefings and reports for the Guardian.

Senior Advocate

Amanda Shaw (to January 2018)

Danijel Kevesevic (from February 2018)

The Senior Advocate leads the advocacy team, manages GCYP's monitoring activities and audits annual reviews for children and young people under guardianship.

Advocates

Sarah-Jayne Meakin

Zoe Dalton

Amy Allen

Conrad Morris

Catherine Whittington (from May 2018)

Courtney Mostert (from May 2018)

Advocates investigate and advocate on individual matters and monitor quality of care in residential and youth justice facilities. They also undertake project work specific to their skills and areas of interest to GCYP.

Principal Community Advocate (CYPV program)

Jordan Bell (from August 2017)

The Principal Community Advocate leads the CYPV program team and manages the development and implementation of the trial CYPV Scheme

Community Advocates (CYPV program)

Mignon Borgas (from June 2018)

Lucy Brown (from June 2018)

The Community Advocates conduct inspections and visits to children and young people in residential care facilities and advocate on some individual matters.