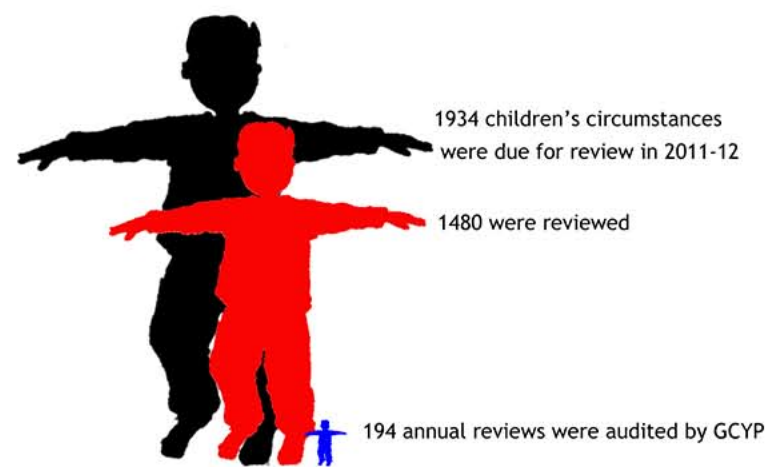


Office of the Guardian’s Audits of Annual Reviews 2011-12



The law requires a review of the circumstances of each child or young person on long term orders be carried out at least once a year by a panel appointed by the Minister for that purpose.

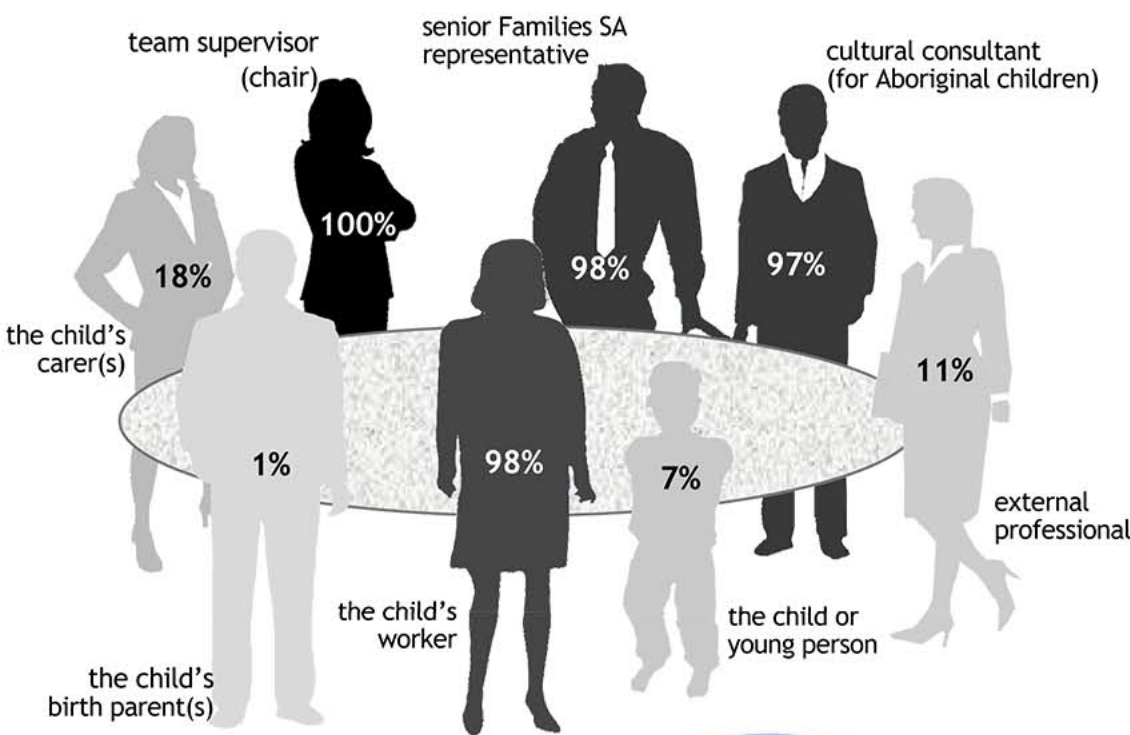
The Office of the Guardian intends to audit 10% of these reviews each year. The Office does this to:

- provide further **external accountability** on review panels
- provide some **external scrutiny** of case management practice and interagency collaboration
- **advocate** for quality outcomes for children and young people.

We provide feedback to individual offices and a detailed report of our findings to Families SA. Page references below refer to that report.

- * Families SA guidelines require that each meeting be chaired by the supervisor of the relevant care team and attended by at least one other senior Families SA staff member. Other attendees capable of making a contribution include:
- the child
 - the child's worker
 - carers—foster, relative or residential care
 - external professionals from, for example, education, CAMHS or disability
 - birth parents
 - a cultural consultant (for Aboriginal children)

The review panels*

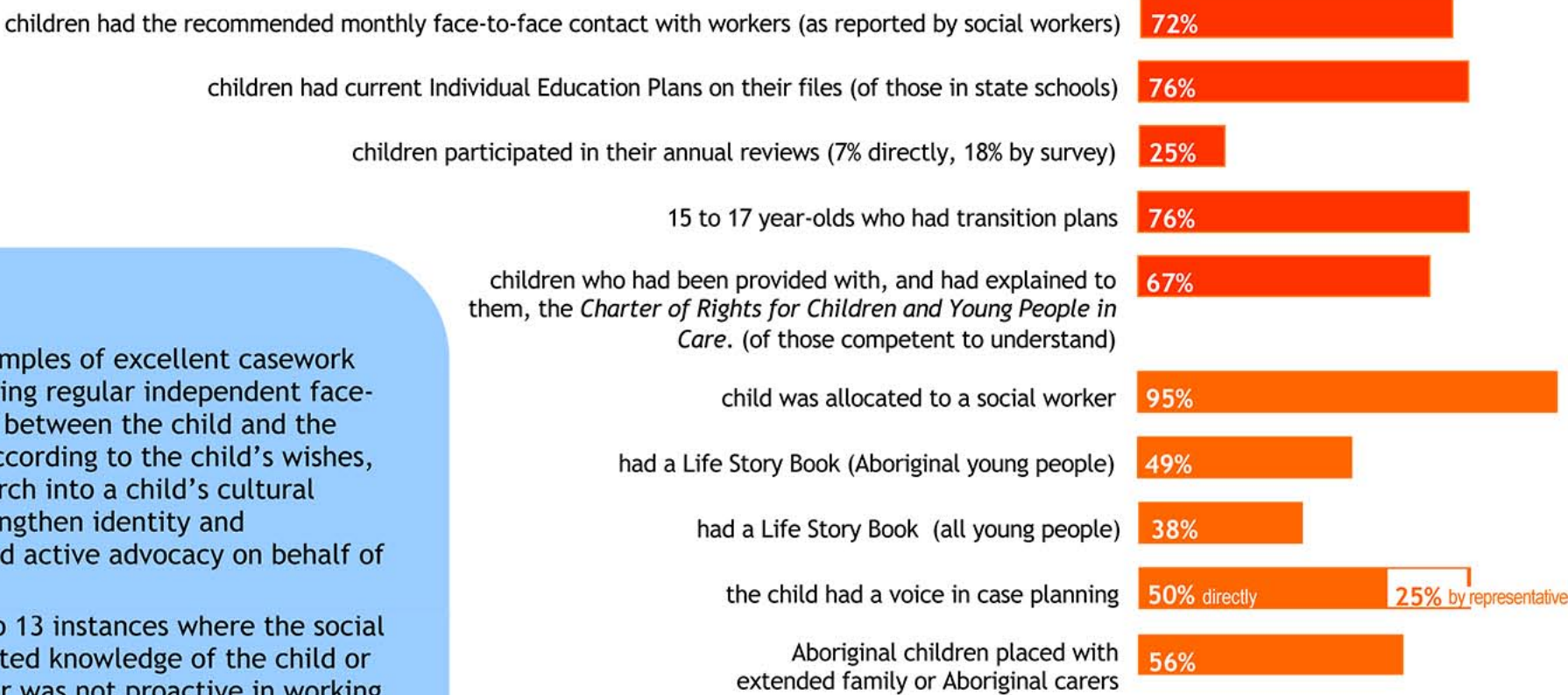


Participation

- 13 young people attended in person.
- 2 attended by teleconference
- 35 completed a survey form
- 81 had their views represented in detail by their workers
- carers and birth families can also contribute their views via a survey presented by the child's worker

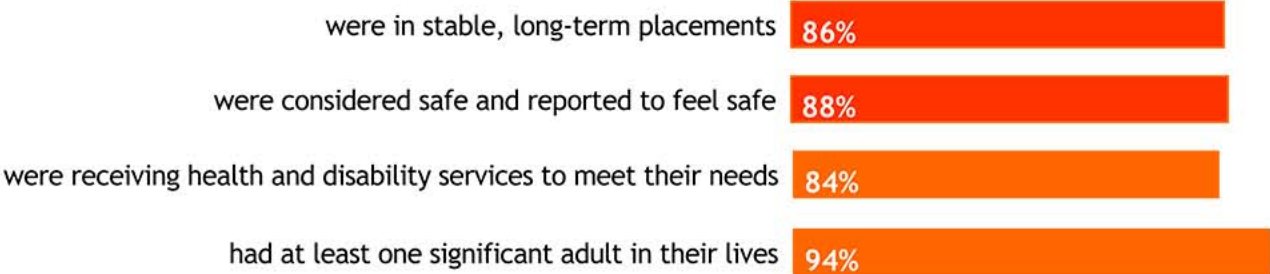
“ The way in which reviews are conducted is inconsistent across Families SA offices... a child's circumstances are discussed and considered in greater detail where there is some level of participation from external service providers and/or independent panel members, and when more than thirty minutes is allocated to the review... Of particular concern this year was evidence in a few cases that previous reviews' recommendations had not been implemented. p. 16 ”

Case management practice and interagency co-operation



“ There were examples of excellent casework practice, including regular independent face-to-face contact between the child and the social worker according to the child's wishes, extensive research into a child's cultural heritage to strengthen identity and connections, and active advocacy on behalf of the child... there were also 13 instances where the social worker had limited knowledge of the child or young person, or was not proactive in working with the child.... In 14 of the cases (7 per cent) reviewed there was no current case plan on the child's file. p. 15 ”

Outcomes for children and young people



Aboriginal children and young people

- 59 cases were reviewed (30% of the total)
- 33 (of 59) were placed with their extended family or with Aboriginal carers
- a Principal Aboriginal Consultant or Aboriginal Senior Project Officer was present at 57 reviews
- 54 cases showed evidence that cultural consultation had occurred to inform case planning
- 47 cases showed evidence of provision of information about cultural heritage
- 42 had opportunity to engage in activities to promote their cultural identity
- development and application of a cultural identity plan was inconsistent across Families SA offices.
- in 29 cases developing the Aboriginal Life Story Book had commenced
- of the 25 in non-Aboriginal placements, 19 had an Aboriginal Life Story Book and 13 of these had a life story book specific to their clan group.

