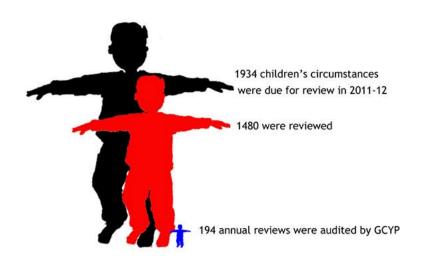
Office of the Guardian's Audits of Annual Reviews 2011-12



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.

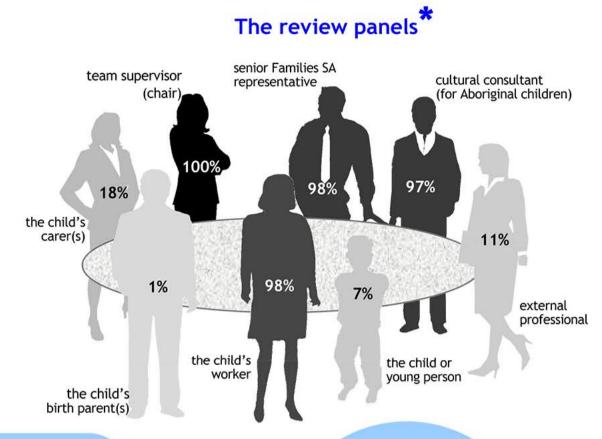
The Office of the Guardian intends to audit 10% of these reviews each year. The Office does this to:

- 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 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

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

Case management practice and interagency co-operation

children had the recommended monthly face-to-face contact with workers (as reported by social workers)

children had current Individual Education Plans on their files (of those in state schools)

children participated in their annual reviews (7% directly, 18% by survey)

15 to 17 year-olds who had transition plans 76%

them, the Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in

children who had been provided with, and had explained to

Care. (of those competent to understand)

95% child was allocated to a social worker

had a Life Story Book (Aboriginal young people)

had a Life Story Book (all young people)

38%

the child had a voice in case planning

50% directly 25% by representative

Aboriginal children placed with extended family or Aboriginal carers

56%

There were examples of excellent casework practice, including regular independent faceto-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

were in stable, long-term placements 86% were considered safe and reported to feel safe 88%

were receiving health and disability services to meet their needs 84%

had at least one significant adult in their lives 94%

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

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.

had commenced





for Children and

Young People