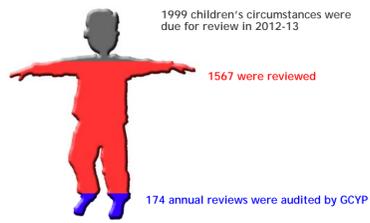


Office of the Guardian's Audits of Annual Reviews 2012-13



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.

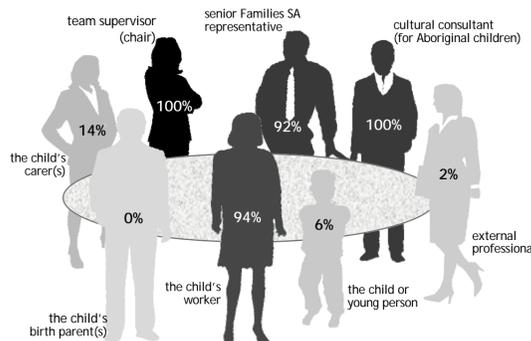
The Office of the Guardian intends to audit 10% of these reviews each year. The Office does this to:

- 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*



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Similar to previous years 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.

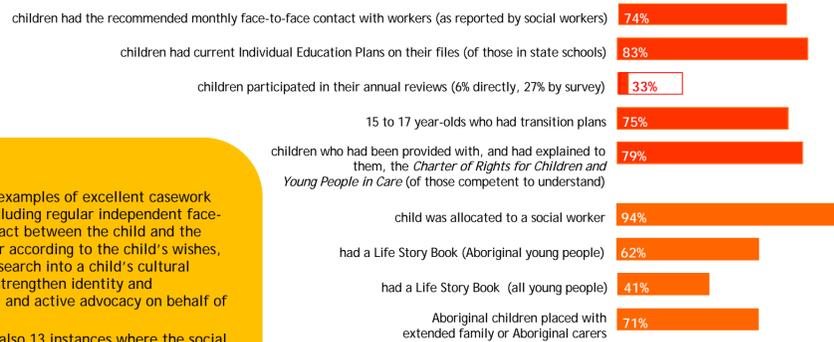
Similar to last year's findings there was evidence in a few cases that previous reviews' recommendations had not been implemented. p.23

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Participation

- 10 young people attended in person
- 42 completed a survey form
- 73 had their views represented in detail by their workers
- 33 had their views represented by a carer

Case management practice and interagency co-operation



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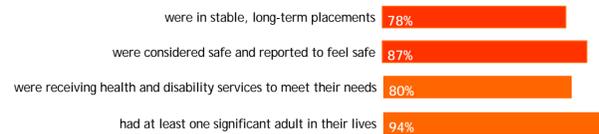
There were examples of excellent casework practice, including regular independent face-to-face contact between the child and the social worker according to the child's wishes, extensive research into a child's cultural heritage to strengthen identity and connections, and active advocacy on behalf of 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 16 of the cases (9 per cent) reviewed there was no current case plan on the child's file. p.21

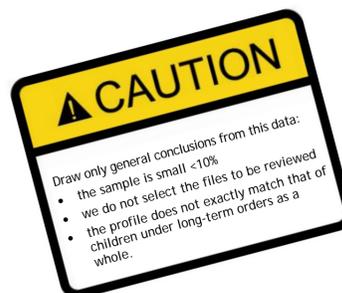
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Outcomes for children and young people



Aboriginal children and young people

- 42 cases were reviewed (24% of the total)
- 30 (of 42) were placed with their extended family or with Aboriginal carers
- a Principal Aboriginal Consultant or Aboriginal Senior Project Officer was present at all reviews of Aboriginal children
- 38 cases showed evidence that cultural consultation had occurred to inform case planning
- 37 cases showed evidence of provision of information about cultural heritage
- 36 had opportunity to engage in activities to promote their cultural identity
- 18 were confirmed to have a cultural identity plan at the time of the Annual Review
- of the 8 in non-Aboriginal placements, 5 had an Aboriginal Life Story Book and 4 of these had a life story book specific to their clan group



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THANK YOU... ...to the many Families SA offices and staff who assisted us with the audits.

Children and Young People in Care—What we know from the annual reviews of their circumstances
Report of the 2012-13 Audit of Annual Reviews
August 2013 [link to full report]