



Audit of Annual Reviews 2013-14

Each year the circumstances of each child* in long-term state care are required to be reviewed at a meeting called for that purpose. It is a time when the adults in the child's life come together to consider the child's stability, sense of belonging, connectedness to carer and birth families, cultural identity, physical safety, emotional security, development opportunities, academic achievement and wishes now and for the future.

To be effective the review should be attended by:

- ⇒ the supervisor of the relevant care team
- ⇒ at least one other senior Families SA staff member
- ⇒ a social worker familiar with the circumstances of the child
- ⇒ others capable of contributing including
 - ⇒ the child
 - ⇒ foster, relative or residential care workers
 - ⇒ external professionals, for example from education, mental health or disability
 - ⇒ birth parents

The role of children

Children should have a voice in their Annual Reviews. They can have a voice by attending in person, via a written survey or by having their views expressed by an adult.

The Guardian's role

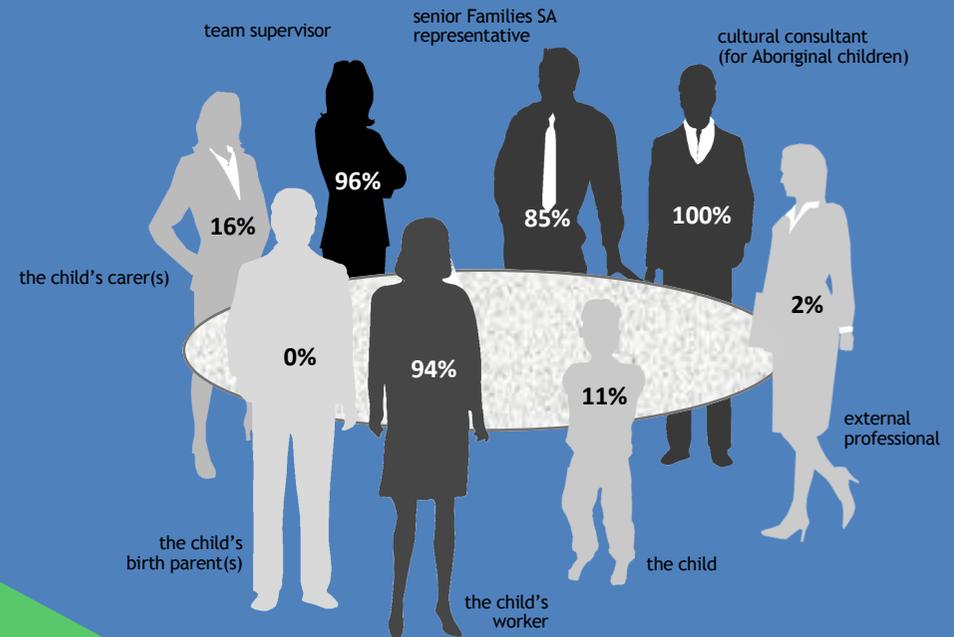
Attending some of the reviews the Senior Advocate of the Office can learn how effectively the reviews are being done, something about how children in care are faring overall and, in some cases, to advocate for the child.

The Office provides individual feedback to offices and a detailed report to Families SA.

This year the Office attended the Annual Reviews for 208 children which was 16.5% of the reviews conducted.

*In this report 'children' refers to children and young people and 'Aboriginal' refers to people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

The people who attended in 2013-14



Improving

The number of children in stable, long-term placements (81%) was higher than last year but still lower than the best figure of 87% reached in 2011-12.

82% of children were of an age and capability to attend reviews. 11% of those attended in person, 1% by teleconference and 27% via a survey form. This improvement was mainly the result of the efforts of two offices.

Growth of the creation and maintenance of Life Story Books, from 30% five years ago to 48% now.

Unchanged

94 % of the annual reviews identified at least one significant adult in the child's life.

Implementation of Individual Education Plans remains at around 80% . All children in the public school system should have a plan.

77% of children received standard health services and, where necessary, specific health and disability services to meet their needs. All children should receive these services.

75% had regular contact with the same case worker, as reported to the review panel.

74% of young people 15-17 years had transition plans. All young people in this age group should have transition plans.

Our thanks to the Families SA Offices and staff who assisted us with the 2013-14 Audit of Annual Reviews.

You can download [a copy of the full report](#) from our website.

Aboriginal children

42 cases were reviewed (20% of the total)

57% were placed with their extended family or with Aboriginal carers, down from 71% last year.

A Principal Aboriginal Consultant attended all reviews of Aboriginal children. The Senior Advocate advised reviews could not proceed without one present.

81% showed evidence of provision of information about cultural heritage

83% had opportunity to engage in activities to promote their cultural identity

64% had started an Aboriginal Life Story Book. 60% of children and young people in *non-Aboriginal* placements had an Aboriginal Life Story Book

31% (of those of an age and capacity to understand) had not been provided with information about being in care and their rights in care.

10% of children were not allocated a case worker, more than last year.

Fewer external service providers or independent panel members were present at reviews.

Many reviews were of low quality due to factors such as insufficient allocation of time, insufficient knowledge or preparation by social workers and lack of participation of a Principal Social Worker or Manager.

53% of children had annual reviews this year. Under legislation, all children should have an annual review each year.

Declining

CAUTION

Please draw only general conclusions from this data as the sample is small, reviews are not randomly selected and the profile may not exactly match that of children under long-term orders as a whole.