

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT



(Art provided by a young person in care)

CHARTER OF SERVICE

For people making a complaint to the Children’s Commissioner

The Children’s Commissioner’s role is to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable children. As part of this role the Children’s Commissioner receives and, where appropriate, investigates complaints about services required to be provided by a ‘service provider’ to vulnerable children.

A vulnerable child as defined in the *Children’s Commissioner Act 2013* (the Act), is one who:

- has been notified to or is otherwise involved with child protection or out-of-home care services provided by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and funded non-government organisations;
- is under arrest, on bail, or has an order under the *Youth Justice Act*;
- is on an order made under the *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act*;
- has a mental illness or has a disability; or
- has sought or is seeking (or for whom a family member or a designated professional has sought or is seeking) child-related services for the prevention of harm, exploitation, protection, care or support of the child.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

If you are considering making a complaint to the Children’s Commissioner about a service provider, we will:

- treat you respectfully and fairly;
- uphold your right to confidentiality and privacy as specified in the Act and only utilise information pertaining to your complaint for the purpose of carrying out the functions as specified by the Act;
- ensure you understand how the relevant processes of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner and the Act work by providing information and answering your questions, wherever possible;
- be as prompt and efficient as possible in dealing with complaints and keep you informed about the progress of a complaint; and
- make our service as accessible to you, as is reasonably possible, by providing access to an interpreter, information or support, regardless of age, cultural background or disability.



What to expect from us

The Office of the Children's Commissioner will deal with each complaint on its merits and give it careful consideration, taking into account the Commissioner's role to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable children.

Wherever possible we will keep you informed about what action we take about your complaint and will explain any decision we make in relation to it. Specifically we will:

- assist you to make a complaint in the appropriate form and detail required;
- promptly acknowledge your complaint on receipt;
- contact you regularly and update you on progress during the assessment or investigation process and inform you about relevant decisions and reasons for those decisions, particularly:
 - as to the initial assessment and the nature of the complaint; and
 - the result of the investigation and any action taken or proposed to be taken for resolving the complaint, having regard to any other privacy considerations.

If we decide the complaint should be referred to another person or agency, we will let you know. We will follow up any referral with the person or agency involved and will contact you at the conclusion of the matter.

If we cannot investigate your complaint we will explain why this is the case.

You can make an anonymous complaint or get someone to contact us on your behalf. However, if your complaint is anonymous we are not in a position to seek further information from you or provide you with information on any assessment or outcome. In many instances it will be extremely difficult to proceed to an investigation in respect of an anonymous complaint.

You are encouraged to discuss with us any concerns you may have about being identified as a complainant. We may be able to process a complaint without revealing any identifying information and will discuss with you any support or protection that can be provided.

How you can help us

You can help us to respond effectively to your complaint by:

- providing full and accurate information, including any letters or documentation you might have relevant to the complaint;
- keeping appointments or advising us if you cannot do so;
- letting us know any new and relevant information or changes to contact details; and
- responding as quickly as reasonably possible with requests for information during the complaints process



Follow-up and feedback

If you are dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been dealt with, you may ask the Commissioner to review a decision.

A review will be conducted by the Commissioner or a senior officer other than the officer who dealt with your matter. A request for a review should normally be made in writing and should explain why you are dissatisfied.

Please let the Commissioner know if you are unhappy about the way one of the Commissioner's officers has dealt with you. We welcome feedback and suggestions on how our service can be improved. To request a review or to provide feedback or suggestions to the Commissioner and the Office of the Commissioner, please write or email to:

Post: The Office of the Children's Commissioner
PO Box 40598, Casuarina NT 0811

Location: Level 5, NT House,
22 Mitchell Street, Darwin NT

Email: childrenscommissioner@nt.gov.au

