

2.1.7 The current training processes, promotion, management and coordination of Family Group Conferences will be reviewed and revised with a view to increasing the use of Family Group Conferences especially on a voluntary basis before matters are directed to legal intervention.

4.1.2 A plan will be developed and implemented with Disability Services to ensure that children with disabilities have access to services that may prevent them becoming involved in the child protection system.

5.1.4 A website on child protection services will be developed as a means of providing public and community education about child protection issues and providing a point of contact to available services.

5.1.5 A dedicated position in Alcohol and Drug Services will be provided that can serve as a reference point for consultation with child protection workers on clients where drug and alcohol abuse are an issue.

8.1.4 The legislation will be clear and unambiguous in requiring the Secretary to be an exemplary parent. The responsibilities of the Secretary will be set out in the legislation. The Secretary will also have the capacity to assist young adults who had been on an order in care, up to the age of 21 years.

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8.5 Improve case planning approaches and documentation

8.5.1 Steps will be taken to ensure that the *Looking After Children* (LAC) planning tool is consistently used and documented for all children in out of home care.

8.5.2 All children in care will have case plans updated every 12 months, or when there is a change of circumstances that requires new decisions to be made.

8.5.3 Case planning will involve all significant people in the child's life with the child involved to the maximum extent possible given the child's age and developmental level.

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2.10.5 It is recommended that the Department of Health and Human Services establishes and maintains a central register of approved carers in Tasmania that contains details about:

- i. type of assessment completed;
- ii. type of training completed;
- iii. date of approval;
- iv. type of care approved for;
- v. maximum number of children to be placed at any one time;
- vi. age range of children to be placed;
- vii. approved variations to the type and or level of care to be provided;
- viii. outcome of annual reviews of carers; and
- ix. any abuse in care allegations and the outcomes of any investigations.

2.10.1 It is recommended that the Department of Health and Human Services be required under legislation to provide publicly available information annually relating to allegations of abuse of children, including quality of care matters, in out of home care and that the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* be amended to provide for this legislative requirement.

5.9.3 It is recommended that the accreditation of out of home care placement providers not remain with the main provider of out of home care in Tasmania, namely the Department of

Health and Human Services. Accreditation of service providers should be undertaken independently by the Commissioner for Children exercising a Guardianship function.

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6.8.1 It is recommended that children who are entering out of home care must be informed as to why they are entering care

7.6.1 It is recommended that children are offered the option of a support person being present when they are being interviewed by Child Protection Workers about care and protection matters and during all formal decision making processes about the child.

7.6.5 It is recommended that the Commissioner for Children incorporate a Children's Guardian function which focuses on accountability in order to strengthen mechanisms for children in out of home care in Tasmania.

7.6.6 It is recommended that the introduction of a community visitor program for children who are in out of home care on long term court orders be further examined and developed as a component of the Children's Guardian function within the Commissioner for Children's office.

David K. Fanning

Commissioner for Children, Tasmania

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