# 15 Child protection services

CONTENTS

15.1 Profile of child protection services 15.3

15.2 Framework of performance indicators for child protection services 15.18

15.3 Key child protection services performance indicator results 15.22

15.4 Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care services performance reporting 15.63

15.5 Jurisdictions’ comments 15.64

15.6 Definitions of key terms 15.73

15.7 List of attachment tables 15.78

15.8 References 15.81

|  |
| --- |
| Attachment tables  Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘15A’ prefix (for example, table 15A.1). A full list of attachment tables is provided at the end of this chapter, and the attachment tables are available from the Review website at www.pc.gov.au/gsp. |
|  |
|  |

This chapter reports on:

* *child protection services —* functions of government that receive and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect, and/or harm to children and young people, provide and refer clients to family support and other relevant services, and intervene to protect children
* *out-of-home care services —* care for children placed away from their primary caregivers for protective or other family welfare reasons
* *intensive family support services —* specialist services that aim to prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns and to reunify families where separation has already occurred. (Performance data for intensive family support services are not yet available, and reporting for intensive family support services is limited to expenditure data and information on the numbers of children commencing intensive family support services)
* *family support services —* activities associated with the provision of lower level (that is, non-intensive) services to families in need, including identification and assessment of family needs, provision of support and diversionary services, some counselling, and active linking and referrals to support networks. These services are typically delivered via voluntary arrangements (as distinct from court orders) between the relevant agency and family. (Performance data for family support services are not yet available, and reporting for family support services is limited to expenditure data).

Improvements to the reporting of child protection services in this edition include:

* the inclusion of case plans prepared data for five jurisdictions, compared to   
  four previously
* data quality information (DQI) documentation for a further four indicators:
* children with documented case plans
* total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation
* out-of-home care expenditure per placement night
* total expenditure on all children in residential care and non-residential care per child in residential and non-residential out-of-home care.

## 15.1 Profile of child protection services

### Service overview

#### Child protection services

Child protection services are provided to protect children and young people aged   
0–17 years who are at risk of harm within their families, or whose families do not have the capacity to protect them. These services include:

* receiving and responding to reports of concern about children and young people, including investigation and assessment where appropriate
* providing support services (directly or through referral) to strengthen the capacity of families to care safely for children
* initiating intervention where necessary, including applying for a care and protection order through a court and, in some situations, placing children or young people in out-of-home care to secure their safety
* ensuring the ongoing safety of children and young people by working with families to resolve protective concerns
* working with families to reunite children, who were removed for safety reasons, with their parents as soon as possible (in some jurisdictions, restoration may occur in voluntary placements as well)
* securing permanent out-of-home care when it is determined that a child is unable to be returned to the care of his or her parents, and working with young people to identify alternative supported living arrangements where family reunification is not possible.

Research suggests that children and families who come into contact with the child protection system often share common social and demographic characteristics. Families with a history of domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse, psychiatric disability, and families with low incomes or that are reliant on pensions and benefits are over‑represented in the families that come into contact with the child protection system (Department of Human Services 2002; The Allen Consulting Group 2008).

##### Child protection concerns and Indigenous communities

Studies have highlighted the high incidence of child abuse and neglect within some Indigenous communities, compared with non-Indigenous communities. Indigenous families across Australia have been found to experience higher levels of violence, compared with non-Indigenous families (AIHW 2006). The final report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse (2007) identified child sexual abuse as a significant issue for many of the remote NT Aboriginal communities consulted as part of the Inquiry. The final report of the WA Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities (Gordon Report 2002) also found high levels of violence and child abuse within Aboriginal communities in WA.

The Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the NT (2010) *Growing them strong, together* also observed the presence of multiple risk factors in Aboriginal communities, including lack of adequate housing, financial security and education. However, Aboriginal communities also possessed protective factors that can safeguard children and families from psychological distress, such as spirituality and connection to land, family and culture (Bamblett, Bath and Roseby 2010).

#### Out-of-home care services

Out-of-home care services provide care for children and young people aged   
0–17 years who are placed away from their parents or family home for reasons of safety or family crisis. These reasons include abuse, neglect or harm, illness of a parent and/or the inability of parents to provide adequate care. Placements may be voluntary or made in conjunction with care and protection orders.

Out-of-home care services comprise home-based care (for example, foster care, care with a child’s extended family or other home-based arrangements), facility‑based care (for example, community residential care) or independent living (which is often intensively supported) as a transition to full independence or supported placements. Across jurisdictions, there has been a shift away from the use of facility-based (or residential) care towards home-based care such as foster care and relative/kinship care.

#### Intensive family support services

Intensive family support services are an alternative to the removal of a child from his or her home for child protection reasons (box 15.1).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.1 Intensive family support services |
| Intensive family support services are specialist services that aim to:   * prevent the imminent separation of children from their primary caregivers as a result of child protection concerns * reunify families where separation has already occurred.   Intensive family support services differ from other types of child protection and family support services referred to in this chapter, in that they:   * are funded or established explicitly to prevent the separation of, or to reunify, families * provide a range of services as part of an integrated strategy focusing on improving family functioning and skills, rather than providing a single type of service * are intensive in nature, averaging at least four hours of service provision per week for a specified short term period (usually less than six months) * generally respond to referrals from a child protection service.   Intensive family support services may use some or all of the following strategies: assessment and case planning; parent education and skill development; individual and family counselling; anger management; respite and emergency care; practical and financial support; mediation, brokerage and referral services; and training in problem solving.  Child protection treatment and support services  A complementary suite of services not included in this Report, but intended for inclusion in future editions, are known as child protection treatment and support services. These services target at-risk families where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children. They may be less intensive in nature and focus on services that strengthen family relationships in response to concerns about the welfare of a child and may focus on either early intervention or reunification support.  Child protection treatment and support services include educational services, clinical services including counselling, group work and other therapeutic interventions, and domestic violence services.  State and Territory governments, with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), are considering options to implement a national data collection for child protection treatment and support services. |
| *Source*: AIHW (unpublished). |
|  |
|  |

#### Family support services

Family support services are activities typically associated with the provision of lower level (that is, non-intensive) services to families in need, including identification and assessment of family needs, provision of support and diversionary services, some counselling, and active linking and referrals to support networks. These types of services are funded by government but can be delivered by the relevant child protection agency or a non-government organisation. This suite of services does not typically involve planned follow-up by the relevant child protection agency after initial service referral or delivery. These types of services are delivered via voluntary arrangements (as distinct from court orders) between the relevant agency and family.

This Report includes expenditure information for family support services (table 15A.1). Corresponding family support service activity data (for example, numbers of clients or numbers of referrals) are not yet available nationally. The Steering Committee considers the development of a data collection to quantify the extent of family support service activity, and the effectiveness of family support service activity, an important future development.

### Roles and responsibilities

State and Territory governments fund child protection, out-of-home care, family support (including intensive family support) and other relevant services (box 15.2 identifies State and Territory government departments responsible for these services during 2012-13). These services may be delivered by the government, non‑government organisations, and in some cases, by for-profit providers. Child protection services investigate and assess reports, provide or refer families to support services, and intervene where necessary (including making court applications when an order is required to protect a child, and placing children in out-of-home care).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.2 Government agencies responsible for child protection and out-of-home care services, 2012-13 | |
| *NSW* | Department of Family and Community Services |
| *Vic* | Department of Human Services |
| *Qld* | Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services |
| *WA* | Department for Child Protection and Family Support |
| *SA* | Department for Education and Child Development |
| *Tas* | Department of Health and Human Services |
| *ACT* | Community Services Directorate |
| *NT* | Department of Children and Families |
|  | |
|  | |

Other areas of government also have roles in child protection and provide services for children who have come into contact with relevant departments for protective reasons. These include:

* education and child care services, some of which have mandatory reporting responsibilities and conduct education on protective behaviours in some jurisdictions
* health services and mental health services, which support the assessment of child protection matters and deliver general medical and dental services as well as therapeutic, counselling and other services
* police, which investigate serious allegations of child abuse and neglect, particularly criminal matters, and may also work on child protection assessments with State and Territory departments responsible for child protection
* courts, which decide whether a child will be placed on an order.

A range of appointments, schemes and charters have been introduced by jurisdictions in recent years, to provide additional protection for clients of child protection systems. Examples of these are listed in box 15.3.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.3 Initiatives to provide additional protection for child protection clients | |
| *Aus Gov* | In April 2012, the Australian Government announced the introduction of a new national Children’s Commissioner to champion the rights of Australia’s young people. The inaugural National Children’s Commissioner was appointed in February 2013. The National Children’s Commissioner sits within the Australian Human Rights Commission, Australia’s national independent statutory body dealing with human rights. |
| *NSW* | The Commission for Children and Young People works to improve the safety and wellbeing of children in NSW. The Commission conducts research into children’s issues and makes recommendations to government on policies, practices and services that may affect children. In 2013, the Commission released a discussion paper calling for ideas on the establishment of a Children’s advocate in NSW. The Office of the Children’s Guardian is an independent government agency that administers the Working With Children Check, a prerequisite for anyone undertaking child-related work, and encourages organisations to develop their capacity to be safe for children. The Office promotes the best interests and rights of children and young people in care, including accrediting and monitoring agencies that arrange, provide or supervise out-of-home care, as well as accrediting non-government adoption service providers. |
|  | (Continued on next page) |
|  | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.3 (Continued) | |
| *Vic* | The Commission for Children and Young People has been established to promote continuous improvement and innovation in policies and practices relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people generally, and in particular those who are vulnerable, including those placed in  out-of-home care. A Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People has also been established to address issues specific to Aboriginal children and young people. |
| *Qld* | The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian has a range of legislated monitoring and oversighting functions for children in the child protection system, including regular visits to children in out-of-home care, receiving and investigating complaints, monitoring child outcomes, and screening foster carers and adult members in the foster carer household through its Blue card screening system. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services has a complaints management system through which clients, family members, advocates and members of the Queensland public can raise enquiries, concerns, or complaints about their contact and interactions with the department. |
| *WA* | The Advocate for Children in Care provides advocacy and complaints management services for children and young people in care. In 2011-12, the Advocate also implemented a state-wide rollout of ‘Viewpoint’, an interactive online program for children in care aged 4 to 17 years to express their views, wishes and experiences to contribute to developing meaningful care plans. The Department's Complaints Management Unit is available to all customers. Formal monitoring of protection and care service standards by a Standards Monitoring Unit began on 1 July 2007. Seventeen districts are monitored on a two-year cycle and the monitoring regime has been extended across all placement service providers. |
| *SA* | The Office of the Guardian monitors and assesses out-of-home care arrangements, advocates for, and advises on, the circumstances and needs of children and systemic issues affecting the quality of out-of-home care. Through outreach services, the Guardian ensures all children and young people in out-of-home care receive the individual advocacy they require. Further, the Guardian works with relevant agencies to ensure children in care involved in investigations of sexual abuse have an advocate. |
| *Tas* | The Commissioner for Children’s functions include promoting the rights and wellbeing of children and young people, and examining the policies, practices, services and laws affecting the health, welfare, care, protection and development of children and young people. |
| (Continued on next page) | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.3 (Continued) | |
| *ACT* | The Public Advocate of the ACT monitors the provision of services, and protects and advocates for the rights of children and young people. Systemic issues are referred by the Public Advocate to the Commissioner for Children and Young People. The Commissioner consults with and promotes the interests of children. The Official Visitor’s role is to visit and inspect places of care, of detention or therapeutic protection, and receive and inquire about complaints made concerning the care provided to children and young people at these locations. In addition, an ACT Charter of Rights for children and young people in out-of-home care was launched in November 2009. The Charter is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004*, and the *Children and Young People Act 2008*, all of which emphasise the basic human rights to which children and young people are entitled. |
| *NT* | The Office of the Children’s Commissioner was established in 2008 to independently monitor the child protection system through the investigation of complaints and reporting against the Department of Children and Families’ administration of the Care and Protection of Children Act. In July 2011, the powers of the Children’s Commissioner were extended to allow the initiation of investigations without receiving a formal complaint. The scope of the Children’s Commission’s powers was expanded beyond children involved in the child protection system with ‘protected children’ changing to ‘vulnerable children’. An Aboriginal peak body, Stronger Aboriginal Families, Together has been established to represent Aboriginal children, young people and their families. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished). | |
|  | |

### Size and scope

#### The child protection system

Child protection legislation, policies and practices vary across jurisdictions, which has some implications for the comparability of child protection data (Holzer and Bromfield 2008). However, the broad processes in child protection systems are similar (figure 15.1).

State and Territory government departments with responsibility for child protection are advised of concerns about the wellbeing of children through reports to these agencies. Reports may be made by people mandated to report or by other members of the community. Individuals and organisations mandated to report vary across states and territories, and may include medical practitioners, police officers, school teachers and principals. These reports are assessed and classified as child protection notifications, child concern reports, or matters requiring some other kind of response. Nationally, between 2007-08 and 2011-12, police were the most common source of notifications, although proportions varied across jurisdictions (AIHW 2013 and earlier editions).

Figure 15.1 is a simplified representation of the statutory child protection system. It depicts the common pathways through the statutory system and referrals to support services, which can take place at any point along the statutory service system. Children might or might not move sequentially along these pathways and, in some instances, children might move through these pathways quite rapidly (for example, on the same day). There are a range of other services and programs which work to meet the needs of children and families that are not depicted in this diagram, including health, education and early childhood services.

Figure 15.1 The child protection service**a, b, c, d, e**

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 15.1 The child protection service  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

a Dashed lines indicate that clients may or may not receive these services, depending on need, service availability, and client willingness to participate in what are voluntary services. b Support services include family preservation and reunification services provided by government departments responsible for child protection and other agencies. Children and families move in and out of these services and the statutory child protection system, and might also be in the statutory child protection system while receiving support services. c Shaded boxes are those for which data are available. d AG = Activity Group. e AG1 = Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue; AG2 = Provision of generic family support services; AG3 = Provision of intensive family support services; AG4 = Secondary information gathering and assessment; AG5 = Provision of short term protective intervention and coordination services for children not on an order; AG6 = Seeking an order; AG7 = Provision of protective intervention, support and coordination services for children on an order; AG8 = Provision of out‑of‑home care services.

*Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

#### Notification

Notifications are reports lodged by members of the community with the appropriate statutory child protection department to signify that they have reason to believe that a child is in need of protection. Depending on the circumstances, not all reports received by child protection departments will be recorded as notifications. Most jurisdictions assess incoming reports to determine whether they meet the threshold for recording a notification. Where, for example, a determination is made that the alleged behaviour does not meet the definition of a child in need of protection, a child concern report or equivalent might be recorded instead. If the alleged behaviour does not meet the threshold for recording a notification or a child concern report, the person reporting the matter might be provided with general advice and/or a referral.

Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means the number of notifications is not strictly comparable across jurisdictions. Notifications are subsequently investigated based on the policies and practices in each jurisdiction (figure 15.1).

Prior to 2009-10, the rates of children subject to notifications, investigations and substantiations were calculated for children aged 0–16 years, while the rates of children on care and protection orders and in out-of-home care were calculated for children aged 0–17 years. From the 2009-10 period onwards, all child protection data are reported for the age range 0–17 years.

Nationally, 184 284 children aged 0–17 years were the subject of child protection notifications in 2012-13. The rate of notifications per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 35.2 in 2012-13 (table 15A.8). Nationally, 34 992 Indigenous children aged 0–17 years were the subject of child protection notifications in 2012-13. The rate of notifications per 1000 Indigenous children in the population aged 0–17 years was 143.9 in 2012-13. The total number of notifications for each jurisdiction for 2012-13 (including cases where a child was the subject of more than one child protection notification) by Indigenous status of the child is reported in table 15A.5.

Notification and investigation data are collected early in the child protection process and often before an agency has full knowledge of a child’s circumstances. This lack of information and the inherent difficulties in identifying Indigenous status mean that data on the number of notifications and investigations by Indigenous status need to be interpreted with care.

#### Investigation

An investigation is the process whereby the relevant department obtains more detailed information about a child who is the subject of a notification and makes an assessment about the harm or risk of harm to the child, and his or her protective needs. Not all notifications are investigated in all jurisdictions. For example, if a determination is made that a child and family are better served by family support services rather than a child protection response, children and families might be referred to diversionary and support services. Once it has been decided that an investigation is required, the investigation process is similar across jurisdictions.

The department responsible for child protection may obtain further information about the child and his or her family by checking information systems for any previous history, undertaking discussions with agencies and individuals, interviewing/sighting the child and/or interviewing the caregivers/parents. At a minimum, the child is sighted whenever practicable, and the child’s circumstances and needs are assessed. Where possible, an investigation determines whether a notification is substantiated or not substantiated.

Nationally, 85 455 children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a notification in 2012-13 were subsequently the subject of a finalised investigation in 2012-13 (table 15A.8). The rate per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 16.3 in 2012-13 (table 15A.8). Nationally, 20 950 Indigenous children aged 0‑17 years who were the subject of a notification in 2012-13 were subsequently the subject of an investigation in 2012‑13. This equates to a rate of 86.2 per 1000 Indigenous children in the population aged 0–17 years. The total number of notifications investigated for each jurisdiction in 2012-13, by Indigenous status, is reported in table 15A.5.

#### Substantiation

The legal definition of harm or risk of harm, abuse or risk of abuse are similar across jurisdictions. Traditionally, child protection legislation and policy focused on the identification and investigation of narrowly defined incidents that were broadly grouped as types of abuse or neglect. Across all jurisdictions, the focus has now shifted away from the actions of parents and guardians, toward the desired outcomes for the child, the identification and investigation of actual and/or likely harm or risk to the child, and the child’s needs. While the legal criteria for substantiating such matters are now similar across jurisdictions, there remain some differences in practice, including different thresholds for recording a substantiation related to risk of harm.

If an investigation results in a substantiation, intervention by child protection services might be needed to protect the child. This intervention can take a number of forms, including one or more of: referral to other services; supervision and support; an application to court; and a placement in out-of-home care.

Nationally, 40 685 children aged 0–17 years were the subject of a substantiation in 2012-13. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 7.8 (table 15A.8). The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation increased from 6.1 per 1000 children in the population aged 0-17 years in 2009-10 (table 15A.8).

Nationally, 10 956 Indigenous children, 28 035 non-Indigenous children and 1694 children of unknown Indigenous status were the subject of substantiations in 2012-13. The rate of children who were the subject of a substantiation per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–17 years was 45.1 for Indigenous children and 5.6 for non‑Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

#### Care and protection orders

Although child protection substantiations are often resolved without the need for a court order (which is usually a last resort) recourse to a court may take place at any point in the child protection investigation process. The types of orders available vary across jurisdictions and may include finalised guardianship or custody orders, finalised supervisory orders, and interim and temporary orders.

Nationally, 42 652 children aged 0–17 years were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2013. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 8.1 (table 15A.8). The number and rate of children aged 0–17 years who were the subject of a care and protection order increased from 35 409 children at 30 June 2009, which represented a rate of 7.0 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years (table 15A.8).

Nationally, 14 267 Indigenous, 28 171 non-Indigenous and 214 children of unknown Indigenous status were on care and protection orders at 30 June 2013. The rate of children on care and protection orders per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–17 years was 58.4 for Indigenous children and 5.6 for non‑Indigenous children (table 15A.8).

Further information regarding children on care and protection orders is included in the attachment tables. Table 15A.6 identifies the number of children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status for a ten year time series to 2012-13. Table 15A.7 identifies the number of children on care and protection orders by type of order and Indigenous status for a ten year time series to 2012-13.

#### Out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is one of a range of services provided to children and families where there is a need to provide safe care for a child. Children are placed in out‑of‑home care as a last resort when it is not in their best interests to remain with their family (for example, because there is no one suitable to provide care). Where children are placed in out-of-home care, placement with the extended family or community is sought where possible, particularly in the case of Indigenous children (AIHW 2006). Continued emphasis is placed on improving case planning and case management processes to facilitate the safe return home of children in out-of-home care and to maximise case workers’ contact time with children and families.

Nationally, 40 624 children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2013. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years was 7.7 (table 15A.18). The number and rate of children aged 0–17 years in out‑of‑home care has increased since 2009. At 30 June 2009, 34 069 children were in out-of-home care. This represented a rate of 6.7 per 1000 children in the population aged 0–17 years (table 15A.18).

Nationally, 13 914 Indigenous children and 26 454 non-Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2013. The rate of children in out-of-home care per 1000 children in the target population aged 0–17 years was 56.9 for Indigenous children and 5.3 for non-Indigenous children (table 15A.18).

Further information on children in out-of-home care is included in the attachment tables.

* Table 15A.19 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type at 30 June 2013.
* Table 15A.20 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether they were on a care and protection order at 30 June 2013.
* Table 15A.21 identifies the number of children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care at 30 June 2013.
* Table 15A.22 identifies the number of children who exited care during 2012-13, by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care.

### Funding

Total recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services was approximately $3.2 billion nationally in 2012-13 — a real increase of $177.5 million (5.8 per cent) from 2011-12. Of this expenditure, out-of-home care services accounted for the majority (64.3 per cent, or $2.1 billion). Nationally, annual real expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services has increased by $759.1 million from $2.5 billion since 2008-09, an average increase of 7.0 per cent per year for the past five years (table 15A.1). ‘Real’ expenditure refers to expenditure controlled for general price movements over time, so that comparisons across years are not affected by inflation.

Recurrent expenditure on intensive family support services across all jurisdictions was $304.1 million in 2012-13. Intensive family support services expenditure has fluctuated over the past five years (table 15A.30). Table 15A.1 and   
tables 15A.30–33 provide additional information about families and children who were involved with intensive family support services, including the cost of providing these services per child commencing intensive family support services.

This Report includes expenditure on family support services for all jurisdictions except South Australia. These data were introduced for the first time in the 2013 Report. Family support services are less intensive in nature and do not typically involve planned follow up and case management by child protection agencies (as is often the case with intensive family support services). Nationally, in 2012-13, expenditure on family support services amounted to $360.1 million (table 15A.1).

In 2012-13, real recurrent expenditure on child protection, out-of-home care, intensive family support services and family support services per child aged   
0–17 years in the population was $739 nationally. The family support services category was included in the Report for the first time for the 2011-12 financial year. Excluding family support services, the real recurrent expenditure on child protection, out-of-home care and intensive family support services per child aged 0‑17 years in the population was $670 nationally. Real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years increased nationally since 2008-09. In 2008-09 the real recurrent expenditure on child protection, out‑of‑home care and intensive family support services per child aged 0–17 years was $545 (table 15A.1). This represents an average increase of 5.3 per cent per year for the past five years.

Figure 15.2 depicts total real recurrent expenditure per child aged 0–17 years in the population for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13, excluding expenditure on family support services in 2011-12 and 2012-13 (for consistency across the time series). Figure 15.3 depicts expenditure on child protection services, out-of-home care services, intensive family support services and family support services per child aged 0–17 years in the population in 2012-13.

Figure 15.2 Real recurrent expenditure on child protection, out-of-home care, and intensive family support services per child (total) (2012-13 dollars)**a, b, c**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a Refer to table 15A.1 for detailed jurisdiction-specific footnotes on expenditure data and table 15A.4 for information on the comparability of expenditure data. b This figure excludes expenditure on family support services for consistency across the time series. c Time series financial data are adjusted to 2012-13 dollars using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator (2012-13 = 100) (table 2A.51). The GGFCE replaces the Gross Domestic Product implicit price deflator used in previous editions. See Chapter 2 (section 2.5) for details.

*Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.1.

Figure 15.3 Recurrent expenditure on child protection, out-of-home care, family support services and intensive family support services per child, 2012-13**a**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a Refer to table 15A.1 for detailed jurisdiction-specific footnotes on expenditure data and table 15A.4 for information on the comparability of expenditure data.

*Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.1.

It is a Steering Committee objective to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, the full range of costs to government would be determined on a comparable basis across jurisdictions. Where full costs cannot be calculated, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. However, in the area of child protection, there are differences across jurisdictions in the calculation of expenditure.

Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency across jurisdictions for a number of expenditure items. The scope of child protection systems also varies across jurisdictions, and expenditure on some services are included for some jurisdictions, but not for others.

## 15.2 Framework of performance indicators for child protection services

The framework of performance indicators for child protection and out-of-home care services is based on shared government objectives (box 15.4).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.4 Objectives for child protection and out-of-home care services |
| The aims of child protection services are to:   * protect children and young people who are at risk of harm within their families or whose families do not have the capacity to provide care and protection * assist families to protect children and young people.   The aim of out-of-home care services is to provide quality care for children and young people aged 0–17 years who cannot live with their parents for reasons of safety or family crisis.  Child protection and out-of-home care services should be provided in an efficient and effective manner. |
|  |
|  |

The performance indicator framework provides information on equity, efficiency and effectiveness, and distinguishes the outputs and outcomes of child protection services (figure 15.4). The performance indicator framework shows which data are comparable in the 2014 Report. For data that are not considered directly comparable, the text includes relevant caveats and supporting commentary. Chapter 1 discusses data comparability from a Report-wide perspective (see   
section 1.6).

Chapter 2 contains data that may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. These data cover a range of demographic and geographic characteristics, including age profile, geographic distribution of the population, income levels, education levels, tenure of dwellings and cultural heritage (including Indigenous and ethnic status). Chapter 2 also notes that the large populations of the eastern mainland states — NSW, Victoria and Queensland — have a significant effect on national averages, as approximately three quarters of Australia’s population live in these states.

Data quality information (DQI) is being progressively introduced for all indicators in the Report. The purpose of DQI is to provide structured and consistent information about quality aspects of data used to report on performance indicators. DQI in this Report cover the seven dimensions in the ABS’ data quality framework (institutional environment, relevance, timeliness, accuracy, coherence, accessibility and interpretability) in addition to dimensions that define and describe performance indicators in a consistent manner, and note key data gaps and issues identified by the Steering Committee. All DQI for the 2014 Report can be found at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014.

In previous Reports, child protection data have been sourced from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare’s (AIHW) national child protection aggregate data collection (with data having been supplied to the AIHW by State and Territory governments). However, in 2013, the AIHW was implementing a child-based unit record collection for child protection services. As a result, data could not be sourced from the AIHW in time for this Report. Instead, data were collected directly from State and Territory governments. This change might have an impact on the comparability of 2012-13 data with data for earlier years. However, it is expected that any such impact would be minimal.

Figure 15.4 Child protection services performance indicator framework

|  |
| --- |
| Figure 15.4 Child protection services performance indicator framework  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

## 15.3 Key child protection services performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and clients can affect the equity/access, effectiveness and efficiency of child protection and out-of-home care services.

### Outputs

Outputs are the services delivered (while outcomes are the impact of these services on the status of an individual or group) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

#### Equity and access

Equity and access indicators are indicators of governments’ objective to ensure that all clients have fair and equitable access to services on the basis of relative need and available resources (box 15.5).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.5 Equity and access to child protection services |
| ‘Equity and access to child protection and out-of-home care services’ is yet to be defined.  These indicators have been identified for development and reporting in future. |
|  |
|  |

#### Effectiveness

##### Child protection services — continuity of case worker

‘Continuity of case worker’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to ensure child protection services are delivered in an effective manner (box 15.6).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.6 Continuity of case worker |
| ‘Continuity of case worker’ is yet to be defined.  The turnover of workers is a frequent criticism of the quality of child protection services. Effective intervention requires a productive working relationship between the worker and the child and family.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. |
|  |
|  |

##### Child protection services — client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.7).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.7 Client satisfaction |
| ‘Client satisfaction’ is yet to be defined. It is intended that this indicator will measure client satisfaction with the statutory child protection system.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. |
|  |
|  |

Box 15.8 provides examples of steps taken across jurisdictions to monitor, assess and promote client satisfaction with child protection and out-of-home care services.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.8 Developments in client satisfaction | |
| *NSW* | An independent Brighter Futures program evaluation was completed during 2006-10 by the Social Policy Research Centre. The final Evaluation report published in September 2010 identified an overall reduction in risk of harm reports for participants in the program. The evaluation also found that families with drug and alcohol problems and where domestic violence existed demonstrated the smallest reduction in reports over time. A 2-year Aboriginal Family Study was completed by Community Services in 2011 to examine what worked for Aboriginal families participating in Brighter Futures. Key findings of this study identified a reduction in child protection reports and the number of days in care for Aboriginal families who participated in Brighter Futures. On the basis of national and international research and the evaluation findings, program reform was implemented in January 2012. Key program changes included the delivery of the program by 16 non-government agencies, streamlined referral pathways, and refocussing the program to target families with children (0-8 years of age) at high risk of entering the statutory child protection system. Furthermore, an Early Intervention Council was established with the broad aim of building the government and community collaboration needed to improve outcomes for children at risk of entering or re-entering the statutory child protection system. |
|  | (Continued on next page) |
|  | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.8 (Continued) | |
| *Vic* | Child Protection clients and families were surveyed in 2001 about their experience of child protection intervention. Findings identified areas for practice improvement and also a range of strengths in child protection practice, including that in the majority of cases, child protection intervention improved the safety and life circumstances of children and young people. A more comprehensive survey commenced in 2011 (the Child and Family Services Outcomes Survey, or CAFSOS). An independent survey of the parents and carers of children receiving child protection, out-of-home care and intensive family support services was completed in 2012. A survey of young people who are clients of these services is scheduled for 2014. Both surveys will be repeated after a 2-year interval to measure change. Client feedback is also routinely sought by Community Services Organisations as part of meeting Victorian out-of-home care service registration standards. |
| *Qld* | Children in State care are visited regularly by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian’s Community Visitors (CVs) to independently assess their safety and wellbeing. CVs work to resolve issues locally and are able to escalate more serious concerns. Children are surveyed every two years by the Commission. Several age-appropriate questionnaires are used to determine satisfaction with current placements, case workers and the child protection system. Information is also gathered on placement histories, education and health needs, participation in decision-making, and planning for transition to independent living for those aged 16 and over. Results from surveys undertaken during 2012 of children and young people in foster care and residential care are available at: http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/resources/publications/reports.html. |
| *WA* | WA's first Commissioner for Children and Young People was appointed in December 2007 and has legislative powers to consult, investigate, research, advise and report independently to the Parliament about issues that concern children and young people and those supporting them. In late 2011, the Department for Child Protection and Family Services undertook a paper-based survey of foster carers to ascertain their level of satisfaction with the Foster Care Partnership launched in March 2009. Findings have provided a basis for further development of a positive and constructive relationship with the Department’s foster carers. In summary, 60 per cent of people who became approved carers from 2009 reported that they were satisfied with the support they received from the Department. Overall, 70 per cent of carers reported they were satisfied with the level of support they received, their level of involvement in the decision making process, and that they felt acknowledged for their efforts in providing support to the children in their care. |
| (Continued on next page) | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.8 **(Continued)** | |
|  | The Department introduced new complaints policy and procedures in March 2008. Formal monitoring of service standards has continued and all districts were assessed by June 2009. A pilot standards monitoring regime for residential and non-government placement services was completed in June 2009. As a result of a positive outcome for 2009‑10, residential and placement services completed a self-assessment. External onsite monitoring commenced in July 2010. |
| *SA* | Client complaints, compliments and suggestions are reported to the Families SA client feedback system, ‘RiskMan’. This information is assessed for appropriate follow up, and is reported to the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner on a quarterly basis, and the Families SA Executive Director. In addition, Create SA is contracted as the peak body representing the voices of all children in care. Children have the opportunity to provide evaluation feedback on training and programs they are involved in through formal surveys, and are encouraged to provide feedback on their experiences with Create SA through various media. Young people also complete an annual ‘Report Card Survey’ to provide feedback on their experiences in care and with Create SA. In 2013, the Guardians Office completed a report on the experiences of children who move placements in out-of-home care. The Guardian’s Inquiry into the Impact and Experience of Moving While in Care sought children’s views about the impact of changing their care placement and what would make it a better experience. The Inquiry also sought the views of people who most influence placement moves. |
| *Tas* | An independent evaluation of the pilot Children’s Visitors scheme for children and young people in out-of-home care was completed following the completion of the pilot scheme in 2011. The evaluation of this pilot scheme confirmed that there were both strengths and weaknesses with the scheme and recommended that a new model be developed to provide ongoing, independent support to the most vulnerable children and young people in out of home care.  As such, a new youth mentoring program has been developed which is due to commence, providing long term, independent mentoring relationships for young people currently in care, preparing to leave care, and beyond. The program will be delivered across the state by Whitelion and will use volunteer mentors to build supportive relationships with clients. Major aims of the program include improving the engagement of young people with the care planning process and the associated decisions that affect them and consistently supporting clients to achieve their goals throughout their transition to independent living and beyond. |
| (Continued on next page) | |
|  | |
|  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.8 (Continued) | |
| *ACT* | The ACT has strengthened mechanisms to improve transparency and accountability in decision-making, and the provision of services to vulnerable and at risk children, young people and their families. These mechanisms include the establishment of a Decision Making Review Panel (the Panel) and a Complaints Unit in 2012. The Panel will review significant administrative decisions within the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS), Community Services Directorate. The Panel can review decisions made by staff of OCYFS, out-of-home care agencies or carers including: significant administrative decisions that have been reviewed by the line area and the senior delegate of OCYFS; decisions regarding matters of compensation or reimbursements; review of decisions directly referred to the Panel by the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General or the Executive Director, OCYFS; administrative decisions that have a significant or long term impact on the well being of children and young people, carers or agencies; matters that might proceed to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a review of an internal decision; and, matters where no decision has been reached and where it is established this delay has had a significant effect on the child or young person or their care environment. The aim of the Complaints Unit is to improve processes to record and respond to complaints and feedback, report complaints data to executive, analyse data and identify areas requiring improvement, ensure accessible information on complaints and feedback is available to service users, and provision of feedback to staff regarding individual and systemic issues. |
| *NT* | A Practice Integrity and Complaints Management Unit has been established within the Department of Children and Families. This Unit provides a clear point of contact for clients wishing to provide feedback or raise concerns. The Children’s Commissioner’s powers have also been strengthened to allow the Children’s Commissioner to investigate concerns relating to vulnerable children without having to receive a formal complaint. |
| *Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished). | |

##### Child protection services — response times

‘Response times’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to minimise the risk of harm to children by responding to notifications of possible child protection incidents and completing investigations in a timely manner (box 15.9). Notifications and investigations are defined on pages 15.11 to 15.13.

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.9 Response times |
| ‘Response times’ is defined by two measures:   * response time to commence investigations, defined as the length of time (measured in days) between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is subsequently commenced * response time to complete investigations, defined as the length of time (measured in days) between the date a child protection department records a notification and the date an investigation is completed (that is, the date an investigation outcome is determined by a department).   A short or decreasing length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation, and between recording a notification and completing an investigation, is desirable.  The length of time between recording a notification and commencing an investigation indicates a department’s promptness in effectively responding to child protection concerns. The length of time between recording a notification and completing an investigation indicates a department’s effectiveness in conducting investigations in a timely manner.  This indicator needs to be interpreted with care, as jurisdictions record notifications at different stages in response to a report, and jurisdictions have different policies and legislation outlining the time recommended for commencing investigations, based on the seriousness of the child protection concern. Furthermore, while investigations should be conducted in a timely manner, it is important that expediency does not undermine a thorough and accurate assessment of the case. In addition, a number of factors outside the control of a department can affect the timeliness of investigations, including involvement by external parties (for example, police and schools) and an inability to locate a child and/or family.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time, but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |

For most jurisdictions, and nationally, the majority of investigations were commenced within seven days of notification in 2012-13 (figure 15.5(a)). Response times to complete investigations varied across jurisdictions in 2012-13. Nationally, 36.4 per cent of investigations were completed in 28 days or less, 23.8 per cent were completed in 29 to 62 days, 13.4 per cent were completed in 63 to 90 days, and 26.4 per cent were completed in more than 90 days (figure 15.5(b)).

Figure 15.5 Proportion of investigations commenced and completed, by time taken, 2012-13**a, b**

|  |
| --- |
| **(a) Response time to commence investigations**  **(b) Response time to complete investigations** |

a For the response time to complete investigations measure, the NT’s data differ from the national counting rule — the NT counts the number of days from the start of investigations to the completion of investigations, as distinct from the number of days from recording notifications to the completion of investigations. b See source tables for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); tables 15A.15 and 15A.16.

##### Child protection services — substantiation rate

‘Substantiation rate’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to target investigations to those notifications where a substantive child abuse/neglect incident has occurred or is at risk of occurring (box 15.10).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.10 Substantiation rate |
| ‘Substantiation rate’ is defined as the proportion of finalised investigations where harm or risk of harm was confirmed.  The substantiation rate provides an indication of the extent to which government avoided the human and financial costs of an investigation where no harm had occurred or was at risk of occurring. Neither a very high nor very low substantiation rate is desirable. A very low substantiation rate might indicate that notifications and investigations are not accurately targeted to appropriate cases, with the undesirable consequence of distress to families and undermining the likelihood that families will voluntarily seek support. It might also reflect a greater propensity to substantiate abuse incidents rather than situations of risk. A very high substantiation rate might indicate that the criteria for substantiation are unnecessarily bringing ‘lower risk’ families into the statutory system.  The rate of finalised investigations that were substantiated is influenced by a range of factors and might fluctuate because of policy, funding and practice changes, such as better targeting of investigative resources, the impact of mandatory reporting or other factors such as increased community awareness and willingness to notify suspected instances of child abuse, neglect or harm.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time, but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete (subject to caveats) for the current reporting period. All required data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

The proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.6).

Figure 15.6 Proportion of finalised child protection investigations that were substantiated**a, b**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates should not be compared across jurisdictions. b See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.9.

##### Out-of-home care — safety in out-of-home care

‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide children who are under the care of the state with a safe home environment (box 15.11).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.11 Safety in out-of-home care |
| ‘Safety in out-of-home care’ is defined by two measures:   * the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect * the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care.   The scope of these measures differs. For the first measure, the person responsible can be anyone who comes into contact with the child while the child is in out-of-home care. For the second measure, the person responsible is limited to someone in the household providing out-of-home care.  A zero, low or decreasing proportion of substantiations for both measures is desirable.  The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect, assesses the overall safety of children in care. The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care assesses the extent to which authorised carers provide safe care to children in care.  Care should be taken when interpreting this indicator as the threshold for substantiating harm or risk involving children in care is generally lower than that for substantiating harm or risk involving a child in the care of his or her own parents. This is because governments assume a duty of care for children removed from the care of their parents for protective reasons.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data were not available for Victoria, which did not provide data for the number of children in  out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect; and the NT, which did not provide data for the number of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Data for the measure ‘proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect’ (table 15.1) are experimental. These data will be improved over time, but available data suggest the proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect varied across jurisdictions (table 15.1).

Table 15.1 Proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect, 2012-13**a, b, c**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Unit | NSWd | Vice | Qldf | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT |
| Children in care who were the subject of a notification, which was substantiated | no. | na | na | 237 | 41 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 12 |
| Children aged 0–17 in at least one care placement during the year | no. | 20 069 | 8 957 | 8 706 | 4 498 | 3 095 | 1 298 | 770 | 1 048 |
| Proportion | % | na | na | 2.7 | 0.9 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 1.1 |

a Data are not comparable due to differences across jurisdictions in policies, practices and reporting methods. b See source table for detailed footnotes. c As a proportion of all children in at least one care placement. d In NSW, available data for 2012-13 were not considered suitable for publication. e Data were not available for Victoria, as the Victorian Child Protection Service does not record the required data for children who are in out‑of‑home care. f Queensland’s data comprise matter of concern substantiations, which refer only to children in the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive where a breach of the standards of care is indicated. Therefore, Queensland’s data are narrower than the scope of the national counting rule and should not be compared with other jurisdictions’ data. **na** Not available.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.28.

The proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation where the person responsible was living in the household also varied across jurisdictions (table 15.2).

Table 15.2 Proportion of children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a substantiation and the person responsible was living in the household, 2012-13**a, b, c**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Unit | NSWd | Vic | Qlde | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NTf |
| Children in care who were the subject of a substantiation and the person responsible was in the household | no. | 24 | 54 | 237 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 4 | na |
| Children aged 0–17 in at least one care placement during the year | no. | 20 069 | 8 957 | 8 706 | 4 498 | 3 095 | 1 298 | 770 | 1 048 |
| Proportion | % | 0.1 | 0.6 | 2.7 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.5 | na |

a Data are not comparable due to differences across jurisdictions in policies, practices and reporting methods. b See source table for detailed footnotes. c As a proportion of all children in at least one care placement. d For NSW, the numerator provided for this measure (i.e., the number of children in care who were the subject of a substantiation and the person believed responsible was in the household providing   
out-of-home care) excludes children who are in government authorised and funded out-of-home care placements where the out-of-home care placement is facilitated by a non-government organisation (NGO). However, the denominator for this measure (i.e., all children aged 0-17 in at least one care placement during the year) encompasses all children in out-of-home care (including children in government authorised and funded out-of-home care placements where the out-of-home care placement is facilitated by an NGO). This affects the reported rate (i.e., a lower rate is derived than would be the case if the numerator and denominator aligned). In 2012-13, there were an increased number of identified victims of sustained allegations who were not known to Community Services. Also, in 2012-13, there was a subset of children who were excluded from the count because they did not adhere to national counting rules. These included victims with historical sexual allegations which were finalised in 2012-13 and cases which were finalised after children left out-of-home care. e Queensland’s data comprise matter of concern substantiations, which refer only to children in the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive. Queensland’s consideration of the ‘person believed responsible’ relates to the overall safety and risk experienced by a child in care. It includes allegations of actual harm inflicted by members of a household and also whether the carer’s action or inaction contributed to the risk or harm even if the person believed responsible did not reside in the household. Therefore, Queensland’s data are broader than the scope of the national counting rule and should not be compared with other jurisdictions’ data. f Data are not available for the NT as the NT data system does not record the person responsible. **na** Not available.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.27.

##### Out-of-home care — stability of placement

‘Stability of placement’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients on the basis of relative need and available resources (box 15.12).

Stability of placement is an important indicator of service quality for children placed away from their family for protective reasons, particularly for those who require long term placements. Data are collected on the number of different placements for children on a care and protection order who exited out-of-home care. Data are grouped according to the length of time in care (less than 12 months and 12 months or more).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.12 Stability of placement |
| ‘Stability of placement’ is defined as the proportion of children who had one or two placements during a period of continuous out-of-home care.  A low number of child placements (one or two) per period of care is desirable, but must be balanced against other placement quality indicators, such as placements in compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, local placements and placements with siblings.  Children can have multiple short term placements for appropriate reasons (for example, an initial placement followed by a longer term placement) or it may be desirable to change placements to achieve better compatibility between a child and family. It is not desirable for a child to stay in an unsatisfactory or unsupportive placement. Also, older children are more likely to have multiple placements as they move towards independence and voluntarily seek alternate placements.  Data are collected only for children who are on orders and who exit care during the reporting period. There are limitations to counting placement stability using a cohort of children on exit from care rather than longitudinally tracking a cohort of children on their entry into care: an exit cohort is biased to children who stayed a relatively short time in care and thus were more likely to have experienced fewer placements.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data were not available for WA.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Nationally, 86.6 per cent of children on a care and protection order who exited care after less than 12 months in 2012-13 experienced one or two placements. Proportions varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7 Proportion of children on an order exiting care after less than 12 months, who had one or two placements**a, b, c**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant year. b Results for Tasmania for 2011-12 and 2012‑13 should not be compared with prior years as respite placements are now excluded from the count of placements. Exclusion of this placement type was not possible in previous years due to system limitations. c NT data for 2008-09 were not available. WA data for 2010-11 to 2012-13 were not available as these data cannot be extracted from WA’s aggregate child protection data system. d See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.26.

Across jurisdictions, children who had been in out-of-home care longer tended to have had more placements. The proportion of children exiting care in 2012-13 after 12 months or more who had experienced one or two placements was 48.6 per cent nationally but varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.8).

Figure 15.8 Proportion of children on an order exiting care after 12 months or more, who had one or two placements**a, b, c, d**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a Data refer to children exiting care during the relevant financial year. b Results for Tasmania for 2011-12 and 2012‑13 should not be compared with prior years as respite placements are now excluded from the count of placements. Exclusion of this placement type was not possible in previous years due to system limitations. c NT data for 2008-09 were not available. WA data for 2010-11 to 2012-13 were not available as these data cannot be extracted from WA’s aggregate child protection data system. d See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.26.

##### Out-of-home care — children aged under 12 years in home-based care

‘Children aged under 12 years in home-based care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of recipients (box 15.13).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.13 Children aged under 12 years in home-based care |
| ‘Children aged under 12 years in home-based care’ is defined as the number of children aged under 12 years placed in home-based care divided by the total number of children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care.  A high or increasing rate for this indicator is desirable. This indicator should be interpreted in conjunction with other placement indicators.  Placing children in home-based care is generally considered to be in their best interests, particularly for younger children. Children will generally make better developmental progress (and have more ready access to normal childhood experiences) in family settings rather than in residential or institutional care environments.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Nationally, the proportion of all children aged under 12 years in care who were placed in home-based care at 30 June 2013 was 96.5 per cent. In most jurisdictions, and nationally, the proportion of Indigenous children aged under 12 years who were placed in home-based care was similar to that of non-Indigenous children (figure 15.9).

Figure 15.9 Proportion of children aged under 12 years in out‑of‑home care who were in a home-based placement, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2013**a**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.25.

##### Out-of-home care — placement with extended family

‘Placement with extended family’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.14).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.14 Placement with extended family |
| ‘Placement with extended family’ is defined as the proportion of all children in out-of-home care who are placed with relatives or kin who receive government financial assistance to care for that child.  A high or increasing rate for this indicator is desirable. Placing children with their relatives or kin is generally the preferred out-of-home care placement option. This option is generally associated with better long term outcomes due to increased continuity, familiarity and stability for the child. Relatives are more likely to have or form long term emotional bonds with the child. Placement with familiar people can help to overcome the loss of attachment and belonging that can occur when children are placed in out-of-home care.  Placement with extended family needs to be considered with other factors in the placement decision, as placements with extended family may not always be the best option. Long standing family dynamics can undermine the pursuit of case goals such as reunification, and the possibility of intergenerational abuse needs to be considered. In addition, depending on the individual circumstances of the child, it may be more important to have a local placement that enables continuity at school, for example, rather than a distant placement with relatives.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Figure 15.10 shows the proportion of children placed with relatives or kin by Indigenous status. The proportion of children placed with relatives or kin at   
30 June 2013 was greater for Indigenous children than for non-Indigenous children in most jurisdictions, and nationally (figure 15.10).

The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle gives considerable emphasis to the placement of Indigenous children with extended family. This principle is discussed in box 15.15.

Figure 15.10 Proportion of children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin, by Indigenous status, 30 June 2013**a, b**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a See source table for detailed footnotes. b Due to realignment of placement types in the NT to ensure better data integrity, 2012-13 data for the NT may not be comparable with data provided for previous financial years.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.23.

##### Out-of-home care — placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle

‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to protect the safety and welfare of Indigenous children while maintaining their cultural ties and identity (box 15.15).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.15 Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle |
| ‘Placement in accordance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle’ is defined as the number of Indigenous children placed with the child’s extended family, Indigenous community or other Indigenous people, divided by the total number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care. Data are reported separately for children placed (i) with relative/kin, (ii) with a non-relative Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care, and (iii) not placed with relative/kin, a non-relative Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care.  A high or increasing proportion of children placed in accordance with the principle is desirable. This indicator needs to be interpreted with care as it is a proxy for compliance with the principle. This indicator reports the placement outcomes of Indigenous children rather than compliance with the principle. The indicator does not reflect whether the hierarchy was followed in the consideration of the best placement for the child, nor whether appropriate Indigenous individuals or organisations were consulted.  Placing Indigenous children in circumstances consistent with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle is considered to be in their best interests. However, it is one factor among many considerations for the child’s safety and wellbeing that must be carefully considered in the placement decision. In the application of this principle, departments consult with and involve appropriate Indigenous individuals and/or organisations. If the preferred options are not available, the child may be placed (after appropriate consultation) with a non-Indigenous family or in a residential setting. The principle does not preclude the possibility that in some instances, placement in a non-Indigenous setting, where arrangements are in place for the child’s cultural identity to be preserved, might be the most appropriate placement for the child.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

According to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (NSW Law Reform Commission 1997) the following hierarchy of placement options should be pursued in protecting the safety and welfare of Indigenous children:

* placement with the child’s extended family (which includes Indigenous and non‑Indigenous relatives/kin)
* placement within the child’s Indigenous community
* placement with other Indigenous people.

All jurisdictions have adopted this principle in both legislation and policy.

Nationally, at 30 June 2013, 52.5 per cent of Indigenous children in out-of-home care were placed with relatives/kin (38.1 per cent with Indigenous relatives/kin and 14.4 per cent with non‑Indigenous relatives/kin). A further 16.3 per cent of Indigenous children in out-of-home care were placed with other Indigenous carers or in Indigenous residential care (figure 15.11). The proportion of Indigenous children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2013 who were placed with Indigenous or non-Indigenous relatives or kin or with another Indigenous carer or in Indigenous residential care varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.11).

As noted in box 15.15, the placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care is a proxy measure for compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle. The proxy measure reports the placement outcomes of Indigenous children rather than compliance with the hierarchy of placement options to be considered when finding suitable out-of-home care environments for Indigenous children. Work is underway to develop a more robust measure of compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle as part of the *National framework for protecting Australia’s children: Second three year action plan, 2012-15* (FaHCSIA 2012).

Figure 15.11 Placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, 30 June 2013**a, b, c**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Relative/Kin = Placed with relative/kin. Other Indigenous = Placed with other Indigenous carer or Indigenous residential care. Other = Not placed with relative/kin, other Indigenous carer or Indigenous residential care. a Excludes Indigenous children living independently and those whose living arrangements were unknown. b Data for Tasmania and the ACT relate to a small number of Indigenous children. c See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.24.

##### Out-of-home care — local placement

‘Local placement’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.16).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.16 Local placement |
| ‘Local placement’ is defined as the proportion of children attending the same school that they were attending before entering out-of-home care as after entering out‑of‑home care.  A high or increasing rate of local placement is desirable.  A placement close to where a child lived prior to entering out-of-home care is considered to enhance the stability, familiarity and security of the child. It enables some elements of the child’s life to remain unchanged (for example, they can continue attending the same school and retain their friendship network). It may also facilitate family contact if the child’s parents continue to live nearby.  This indicator should be balanced against other quality indicators. This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision. For example, placement with a sibling or relative might preclude a local placement. Also, a child might move from a primary school to a secondary school or to a different local school at the same level.  Data will be provided for 3 and 12 months after entering care. Data collection for this indicator is under development. Data were not available for the 2014 Report.  Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
|  |
|  |

##### Out-of-home care — placement with sibling

‘Placement with sibling’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services which meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.17).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.17 Placement with sibling |
| ‘Placement with sibling’ is defined as the proportion of children who are on orders and in out‑of‑home care at 30 June who have siblings also on orders and in out-of-home care, who are placed with at least one of their siblings.  A high or increasing rate of placement with siblings is desirable. Placement of siblings together promotes stability and continuity. It is a long standing placement principle that siblings should be placed together, where possible, in the interests of their emotional wellbeing. Children are likely to be more secure and have a sense of belonging within their family when placed with siblings.  This is one factor among many that must be considered in the placement decision. In circumstances of sibling abuse, or when a particular child in a family has been singled out as the target for abuse or neglect, keeping siblings together may not be appropriate.  Data collection for this indicator is under development. Data were not available for the 2014 Report.  Data quality information for this indicator is under development. |
|  |
|  |

##### Out-of-home care — children with documented case plans

‘Children with documented case plans’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide services that meet the needs of the recipients (box 15.18).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.18 Children with current documented case plans |
| ‘Children with current documented case plans’ is defined as the number of children who have a current documented and approved case plan as a proportion of all children who are required to have a current documented and approved case plan.  A case plan is an individualised, dynamic written plan (or support agreement) that includes information on a child in need of protection, including his or her needs, risks, health, education, living and family arrangements, goals for ongoing intervention and actions required to achieve identified goals. A case plan is usually developed between a family and an agency on the basis of an assessment process. Case planning is essential to structured and purposeful work to support children’s optimal development.  A current case plan is one that has been approved and/or reviewed within the previous 12 months. Individual jurisdictions’ timeframes for ongoing review may vary and reviews may be more frequent when young children or infants are involved, the child has just entered care, and certain orders are in place (for example, assessment orders). Reviews may also be required when circumstances have changed (for example, the death of a parent or carer and placement changes) and significant new decisions are needed.  The scope of this indicator extends to children and young people (aged 0–17 years) whose care arrangements were ordered through the Children’s Court and for whom parental responsibility has been transferred to the Minister/Chief Executive and who are required by jurisdictional policy/legislation to have a current documented and approved case plan.  A high or increasing rate of children with current documented case plans is desirable.  The quality of case plans, and the extent to which identified needs and actions are put into place, should also be taken into account when considering this indicator. The existence of a case plan does not guarantee that appropriate case work to meet a child’s needs is occurring.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time, but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required data were not available for the following jurisdictions: Victoria, SA and the NT.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

The proportion of children with current documented case plans at 30 June 2013 varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.12).

Figure 15.12 Proportion of children with current documented case plans,   
30 June 2013**a, b, c**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a Data were not available for Victoria, SA and the NT. b The large populations of the eastern mainland states have a significant effect on national averages, particularly when data are not available for all jurisdictions. c See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.17.

##### Out-of-home care — client satisfaction

‘Client satisfaction’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide high quality services that meet the needs of recipients (box 15.19).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.19 Client satisfaction |
| ‘Client satisfaction’ is yet to be defined. It is intended that this indicator will measure client satisfaction with the out-of-home care system.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. |
|  |
|  |

Some information on jurisdictions’ development of initiatives which may assist to measure client satisfaction in the future is included in box 15.8.

#### Efficiency

Understanding the efficiency of child protection systems broadly — and the different components of child protection systems, such as early intervention and out-of-home care services — enables State and Territory governments to identify key service cost drivers. Efficiency measures coupled with outcome measures ultimately enable State and Territory governments to compare the relative cost effectiveness of broad system approaches and the cost effectiveness of different components of child protection systems.

##### Challenges in reporting efficiency for child protection systems

Current efficiency data for child protection services have several limitations, including:

* *different systems and priorities across jurisdictions* — child protection systems in Australia have evolved independently under the auspices of State and Territory governments. This has resulted in variations in processes and emphases placed on different service delivery paradigms, such as different approaches to diversionary options
* *limitations of current information systems* — in most jurisdictions, it is difficult to identify resources directed specifically to child protection services, out‑of‑home care services and other support services for families. This is due in part to the historical structure of information systems and the embedding of government agencies responsible for child protection services within larger community services departments.

Table 15A.4 identifies the level of consistency in expenditure data across jurisdictions.

As a result of these limitations, cost allocations reflect the historical nature of information systems and do not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the costs involved in provision of various child protection and out-of-home care services.

In April 2002, the Steering Committee initiated a project to improve efficiency data for a national framework of child protection and family support pathways (the ‘Pathways’ project) (box 15.20). Until this can be fully implemented, reporting on efficiency has been limited to proxy indicators (boxes 15.21 and 15.23).

Experimental data relating to the proportion of expenditure across each Pathways activity group are included in table 15.3. These data are preliminary and are subject to further analysis and refinement for future Reports. Due to different internal management systems, there can be significant variation across jurisdictions in the activities or expenditures that are included in each activity group. However, for all jurisdictions, the proportion of expenditure allocated to Activity group 8 (out‑of‑home care) is the most significant and varies from 43.3 per cent to 71.3 per cent across jurisdictions (table 15.3).

These data reflect a combination of allocation of direct costs (those costs which can be clearly identified by a jurisdiction to a particular activity group) and indirect costs (which form part of the overall expenditure base, but which cannot be identified in a specific activity group). Indirect allocations have been approximated by jurisdictions across the eight activity groups.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Box 15.20 The ‘Pathways’ project | |
| The Pathways project developed and tested a model that will ultimately allow jurisdictions to calculate more meaningful, comparable and robust efficiency measures (the ‘Pathways method’). The model is based on a top-down application of the activity‑based costing method. Eight national pathways have been developed as a high level representation of the services that a child protection client could receive in any jurisdiction. Each pathway consists of common activity groups which act as the ‘building blocks’ for each of the pathways. The aggregate cost of each activity group within the pathway will allow the unit cost (including direct and indirect expenditure) of an individual pathway to be determined.  These activity groups and pathways will provide additional utility for jurisdictions in managing the business of child protection services. Implementation of the model has the potential to improve the quality of national reporting of child protection services efficiency measures. Activity-based data can also result, over time, in measures of the cost savings associated with early intervention strategies.  The activity groups are: | |
| * Activity Group 1 | Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection and support issue |
| * Activity Group 2 | Provision of generic family support services |
| * Activity Group 3 | Provision of intensive family support services |
| * Activity Group 4 | Secondary information gathering and assessment |
| * Activity Group 5 | Provision of short term protective intervention and coordination services for children not on an order |
| * Activity Group 6 | Seeking an order |
| * Activity Group 7 | Provision of protective intervention, support and coordination services for children on an order |
| * Activity Group 8 | Provision of out-of-home care services |
| Detailed definitions of activity groups are included in section 15.9 Definitions of key terms and indicators.  Before jurisdictional reporting against the activity groups can be undertaken with confidence, further refinement of activity group definitions and counting rules is required. Development work, including further data testing in these areas will continue. | |
| *Source*: SCRCSSP (2003). | |
|  | |
|  | |

Table 15.3 Proportion of total expenditure by activity group — experimental estimates (per cent), 2012-13**a, b**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Unit | NSW | Vic | Qld | WA | SAc | Tas | ACT | NT |
| AG1 | % | 4.3 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 6.3 | 5.7 | 6.8 | 6.3 | 8.8 |
| AG2d | % | 8.8 | 13.3 | 7.0 | 9.6 | na | 6.4 | 6.0 | 20.0 |
| AG3 | % | 10.6 | 9.1 | 4.9 | 7.0 | 5.0 | 9.6 | 2.1 | 0.3 |
| AG4 | % | 4.8 | 4.9 | 6.9 | 6.4 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 6.0 |
| AG5 | % | 5.7 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 4.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| AG6 | % | 6.1 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 3.8 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 3.5 |
| AG7 | % | 5.0 | 7.6 | 19.1 | 10.7 | 11.5 | 13.6 | 12.5 | 17.7 |
| AG8 | % | 54.7 | 50.6 | 50.4 | 52.1 | 71.3 | 55.9 | 66.1 | 43.3 |
| Total | **%** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

AG = Activity Group (box 15.20). a Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding. b Experimental percentage allocations are derived from total expenditure allocations which vary from totals used to derive costs presented elsewhere in this chapter. c Family support services data (AG2) are not available for SA. d Expenditure items included in calculating proportional expenditure for AG2 can vary across jurisdictions, for example the inclusion/exclusion of expenditure on services outsourced to non‑government organisations.

*Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

Table 15.4 presents experimental unit cost data for all activity groups for all jurisdictions where data are available. A more complete collection of unit cost data will be provided once all jurisdictions are able to report appropriate denominators (that is, activity counts).

Table 15.4 Activity group unit costs — experimental data, 2012-13**a, b**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Unit | NSWc | Vic | Qld | WA | SA | Tas | ACT | NT |
| AG1–Cost per report to child protection | $ | 242 | na | 172 | 285 | 317 | na | na | 1 259 |
| AG1‑Cost per notificationd | $ | 569 | 363 | 891 | 1 706 | 659 | 417 | 214 | 1 566 |
| AG2‑Cost per child commencing family support servicese | $ | na | na | na | 17 474 | na | na | na | 96 229 |
| AG3‑Cost per child commencing intensive family support services | $ | 17 398 | 11 245 | 10 875 | 34 458 | 12 056 | 3 944 | 4 781 | 3 588 |
| AG4‑Cost per notification investigatedf | $ | 1 246 | 1 914 | 2 273 | 2 382 | 1 603 | 1 731 | 846 | 2 787 |
| AG5‑Cost per child commencing protective intervention and coordination services who is not on an order | $ | 4 888 | na | na | 10 134 | na | 617 | 375 | na |
| AG6‑Cost per order issued | $ | 18 335 | 8 869 | 5 033 | 7 515 | 932 | 1 544 | 2 803 | 2 598 |
| AG7‑Cost per child commencing protective intervention and coordination services who is on an order | $ | 23 903 | na | 16 984 | 11 133 | 9 004 | 6 879 | 12 876 | 38 271 |
| AG8‑Cost per placement nightg | $ | 121 | 148 | 142 | 184 | 160 | 112 | 149 | 282 |

AG = Activity Group (box 15.20). a Data are rounded to the nearest whole number. b Experimental unit costs are based on jurisdictions’ total expenditure for each activity group. Denominators used to calculate unit costs for AG2, AG3, AG5, and AG7 are based on clients commencing service provision throughout the financial year (as distinct from total client numbers). The use of commencement numbers might inflate reported unit costs. c NSW data for AG 6 do not include children on supervisory orders. d Jurisdictions count notifications at different points in response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. This means the number of notifications and hence the unit costs for notifications are not comparable across jurisdictions. e Unit costs for AG2 have proven difficult to calculate as many jurisdictions are presently unable to capture family support service activity data (that is, the required denominator). f Jurisdictions differ in the way notifications and investigations are defined and the requirements for conducting an investigation. g Cost per placement night should be interpreted with caution due to the effect of different proportions of children in residential out-of-home care across jurisdictions. **na** Not available.

*Source*: State and Territory governments (unpublished).

##### Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation

‘Total expenditure on all child protection activities, per notification’, ‘total expenditure on all child protection activities, per investigation’, and ‘total expenditure on all child protection activities, per substantiation’ are reported as proxy indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.21).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.21 Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation |
| ‘Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, investigation and substantiation’ is defined by three measures:   * total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of notifications * total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of investigations * total expenditure on all child protection activities divided by the number of substantiations.   Low or decreasing expenditure per notification/investigation/substantiation can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower quality or different service delivery models. These indicators are proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care. Because each of these proxy indicators is based on total expenditure on child protection activities, they do not represent, and cannot be interpreted as, unit costs for notifications, investigations or substantiations. These proxy indicators cannot be added together to determine overall cost of child protection services.  More comprehensive and accurate efficiency indicators would relate expenditure on particular child protection activities to a measure of output of those activities. Work is underway to develop a national activity-based costing method, the Pathways project, which will allow this type of reporting from existing information systems (box 15.20). Experimental data using the Pathways method are included in table 15.3. The following proxy data will be replaced by Pathways unit cost data when the Pathways method is refined and implemented nationally.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Total expenditure on all child protection activities per notification, per investigation and per substantiation from 2008-09 to 2012-13 varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.13).

Figure 15.13 Child protection efficiency indicators (2012-13 dollars)**a, b**

|  |
| --- |
| Legend to Figure 15.13  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image  **(a) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per notification**  **(b) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per investigation**  **(c) Annual real recurrent expenditure on all child protection activities per substantiation** |

a Time series financial data are adjusted to 2012-13 dollars using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator (2012-13 = 100) (table 2A.51). The GGFCE replaces the Gross Domestic Product implicit price deflator used in previous editions. See Chapter 2 (section 2.5) for details. b See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.2.

##### Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night

‘Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise the availability and quality of services through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.22).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.22 Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night |
| ‘Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night’ is defined as total real recurrent expenditure on out-of-home care services divided by the total number of placement nights in out-of-home care.  Low or decreasing expenditure per placement night can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower service quality or different service delivery models. Further, in some cases, efficiencies may not be able to be realised due to remote geographic locations that limit opportunities to reduce overheads through economies of scale.  Data reported for this indicator are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data were available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.14).

Figure 15.14 Real out-of-home care expenditure per placement night (2012‑13 dollars)**a, b, c**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

a Time series financial data are adjusted to 2012-13 dollars using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator (2012-13 = 100) (table 2A.51). The GGFCE replaces the Gross Domestic Product implicit price deflator used in previous editions. See Chapter 2 (section 2.5) for details. b Caution should be used when interpreting results due to the variety of activities included in   
out-of-home care services. c See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.29.

##### Total expenditure on all children in residential and non-residential out-of-home care per child in residential and non-residential out-of-home care

‘Total expenditure on all out-of-home care services per child in out-of-home care, by residential and non-residential care’ are reported as proxy indicators of governments’ objective to maximise the benefit to the community through the efficient use of public resources (box 15.23).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.23 Total expenditure on children in residential and non‑residential out-of-home care per child in residential and non-residential out-of-home care |
| Total expenditure on children in residential and non-residential out-of-home care per child in residential and non-residential out-of-home care is defined by three measures:   * total expenditure on residential out-of-home care divided by the number of children in residential out-of-home care at 30 June * total expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care divided by the number of children in non-residential out-of-home care at 30 June * total expenditure on all out-of-home care divided by the number of children in all out-of-home care at 30 June.   Low or decreasing expenditure per child in care can suggest more efficient services but may indicate lower quality or different service delivery models. These indicators are proxy indicators and need to be interpreted with care as they do not represent a measure of unit costs. Expenditure per child in care at 30 June overstates the cost per child because significantly more children are in care during a year than at a point in time. In addition, the indicator does not reflect the length of time that a child spends in care.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within some jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required 2012-13 data were not available for all jurisdictions. The following jurisdictions were not able to disaggregate out-of-home care expenditure by residential and non-residential care: NSW, Queensland, and the NT.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Total expenditure on residential care and non-residential care for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13, per child in residential care and non-residential care at 30 June, varied across jurisdictions (figures 15.15(a) and figure 15.15(b)). Total expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in care at 30 June for 2008-09 to 2012-13 also varied across jurisdictions (figure 15.15(c)).

Figure 15.15 Out-of-home care efficiency indicators (2012-13 dollars)**a, b, c**

|  |
| --- |
| Legend to Figure 15.15   More details can be found within the text surrounding this image.  **(a) Annual real recurrent expenditure on residential out-of-home care per child in residential out‑of‑home care at 30 June**  **(b) Annual real expenditure on non-residential out-of-home care per child in non-residential out‑of‑home care at 30 June**  **(c) Annual real expenditure on all out-of-home care per child in out-of-home care at 30 June** |

a Time series financial data are adjusted to 2012-13 dollars using the General Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GGFCE) chain price deflator (2012-13 = 100) (table 2A.51). The GGFCE replaces the Gross Domestic Product implicit price deflator used in previous editions. See Chapter 2 (section 2.5) for details. b NSW, Queensland, and the NT could not disaggregate expenditure on out-of-home care. c See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); State and Territory governments (unpublished); table 15A.3.

### Outcomes

Outcomes are the impact of services on the status of an individual or group (while outputs are the services delivered) (see chapter 1, section 1.5).

##### Improved safety — substantiation rate after decision not to substantiate

‘Improved safety’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to reduce the risk of harm to children by appropriately assessing notifications of possible child protection incidents (box 15.24).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.24 Improved safety |
| ‘Improved safety’ is defined by two measures:   * substantiation rate after a decision not to substantiate, defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of an investigation in the previous financial year that led to a decision not to substantiate, and who were later the subject of a substantiation within 3 or 12 months of the initial decision not to substantiate. The year reported relates to the year of the initial decision not to substantiate * substantiation rate after a prior substantiation, defined as the proportion of children who were the subject of a substantiation in the previous financial year, who were subsequently the subject of a further substantiation within the following 3 or 12 months. The year reported relates to the year of the original substantiation.   A low or decreasing rate for these measures is desirable. However, reported results can be affected by the finalisation of investigations, factors beyond the control of child protection services, or a change in circumstances after the initial decision not to substantiate was made. A demonstrable risk of harm might not have existed in the first instance. In addition, this indicator does not distinguish between subsequent substantiations which are related to the initial notification (that is, the same source of risk of harm) and those which are unrelated to the initial notification (that is, a different source of risk of harm). This indicator partly reveals the extent to which an investigation has not succeeded in identifying the risk of harm to a child who is subsequently the subject of substantiated harm. It also provides a measure of the adequacy of interventions offered to children to protect them from further harm. This indicator should be considered with other outcome indicators.  Data reported for these measures are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) within jurisdictions over time but are not comparable across jurisdictions (see caveats in attachment tables for specific jurisdictions) * complete for the current reporting period. All required data are available for all jurisdictions.   Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

The proportion of substantiations that occurred within 3 and 12 months of a decision not to substantiate are provided in figure 15.16. The proportion of substantiations that occurred within 3 and 12 months of a prior substantiation are provided in figure 15.17.

Figure 15.16 Improved safety — substantiation rate within 3 and/or 12 months after a decision not to substantiate**a, b**

|  |
| --- |
| Legend to Figure 15.16  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. b See source tables for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.10.

Figure 15.17 Improved safety — resubstantiation rate within 3 or 12 months of a prior substantiation**a, b**

|  |
| --- |
| Legend to Figure 15.17  More details can be found within the text surrounding this image. |

a Data are not comparable across jurisdictions because definitions of substantiation vary significantly. Consequently, rates cannot be compared across jurisdictions. b See source table for detailed footnotes.

*Source*: AIHW data collection (unpublished); table 15A.11.

##### Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child

‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to maximise children’s life chances by ensuring children in care have their educational, health and wellbeing needs met (box 15.25).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.25 Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child |
| ‘Improved education, health and wellbeing of the child’ is defined as the change over time in the learning outcomes of children on guardianship or custody orders.  A high or increasing rate at which children’s educational outcomes are improving is desirable.  Factors outside the control of child protection services can also influence the educational outcomes of children on guardianship or custody orders, and care needs to be exercised when interpreting results. Change over time in the learning outcomes of children on guardianship or custody orders is a partial measure of this outcome indicator, which also includes health and wellbeing.  Data reported for this measure are:   * comparable (subject to caveats) across jurisdictions and over time * incomplete for the current reporting period. All required data were not available for the following jurisdictions: NSW, Victoria, WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT.   The health and wellbeing components of this indicator have been identified for development and reporting in future.  Data quality information for this indicator is at www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/2014. |
|  |
|  |

Tables 15A.12 to 15A.14 provide data on the proportion of children in years 3, 5 and 7 on guardianship or custody orders (attending government schools) achieving national reading and numeracy benchmarks in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 relative to all children (attending government and non-government schools). The proportion of children on guardianship or custody orders achieving national reading and numeracy benchmarks in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 varied significantly across jurisdictions. However, with few exceptions, the proportion of children on orders achieving national reading and numeracy benchmarks was less — at times significantly less — than for all students.

Data contained in tables 15A.12 to 15A.14 in this Report were sourced from a pilot study conducted by the AIHW. Data were not available for all jurisdictions. Work is underway to improve reporting for this indicator using National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data. NAPLAN testing is conducted each year for all students across Australia in years 3, 5, 7 and 9. All students in the same year level are assessed on the same test items in the assessment domains of reading, writing, language conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

In 2012, an experimental collection was commenced by the Child Protection and Youth Justice Working Group (CPYJWG) to source aggregate counts of the number of year 5 children on guardianship and custody orders who achieved at or above the national minimum standards in the NAPLAN domains ‘reading’ and ‘numeracy’, as well as the NAPLAN participation rates of children in these categories.

Experimental data for 2010 were available for Queensland and South Australia for children under custody or guardianship orders to the Chief Executive in government and non-government schools (Queensland) and children under the guardianship of the Minister in government schools (South Australia). These data were published in the 2013 RoGS. This year, equivalent experimental data for 2011 were also available for Queensland and South Australia. These data indicate that the proportion of year 5 children on orders achieving at or above the national minimum standards in the NAPLAN domains ‘reading’ and ‘numeracy’ are significantly lower than the results for all students in year 5. In 2011:

* 68.0 per cent of year 5 students on orders in Queensland and 60.0 per cent of   
  year 5 students on orders in South Australia achieved at or above the national minimum standard in the NAPLAN domain ‘reading’, compared with 91.5 per cent of all year 5 students
* 73.8 per cent of year 5 students on orders in Queensland and 54.0 per cent of   
  year 5 students on orders in South Australia achieved at or above the national minimum standard in the NAPLAN domain ‘numeracy’, compared with   
  94.4 per cent of all year 5 students (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2011; Queensland and South Australian governments unpublished).

It is important to take student participation rates into account when analysing NAPLAN data. Participation rates are calculated as all assessed and exempt students as a percentage of the total number of students in the year level, including students who were absent or withdrawn. In 2011:

* the participation rates for year 5 students on orders in the NAPLAN ‘reading’ domain was 93.4 per cent in Queensland and 89.6 per cent in South Australia, compared with 96.2 per cent of all year 5 students
* the participation rates for year 5 students on orders in the NAPLAN ‘numeracy’ domain was 94.9 per cent in Queensland and 88.7 per cent in South Australia, compared with 95.9 per cent of all year 5 students (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority 2011; Queensland and South Australian governments unpublished).

The NAPLAN results of children on orders are indicative of the high needs of children in the child protection system and the disadvantage often faced by children in the child protection system (for example, children’s experiences of trauma, mental illness, disability, and family violence). However, it is also important to note that children exempted from NAPLAN testing are recorded as being below the national minimum standard. Data from Queensland and South Australia indicate that children on guardianship and custody orders are exempted from NAPLAN testing at significantly higher rates than the general student population, which also contributes to poorer NAPLAN results for children on orders than the general student population.

The experimental collection will assist the CPYJWG to identify the type of education data that would be meaningful to include in this chapter in the future, and methodological issues that need to be accounted for in educational outcomes reporting for children on orders. Further information on NAPLAN testing generally can be found in chapter 4 School educationof this Report.

##### Safe return home

‘Safe return home’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to remove the risk of harm to the child while maintaining family cohesion (box 15.26).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.26 Safe return home |
| ‘Safe return home’ is yet to be defined.  For children who cannot be protected within their family and are removed from home, often the best outcome is when effective intervention to improve their parents’ skills or capacity to care for them enables them to return home.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. |
|  |
|  |

##### Permanent care

‘Permanent care’ is an indicator of governments’ objective to provide appropriate care for children who cannot be safely reunified with their families (box 15.27).

|  |
| --- |
| Box 15.27 Permanent care |
| ‘Permanent care’ is yet to be defined.  Appropriate services are those that minimise the length of time before stable, permanent placement is achieved.  This indicator has been identified for development and reporting in future. |
|  |
|  |

## 15.4 Future directions in child protection and out-of-home care services performance reporting

### Improving national child protection data

The Standing Council on Community and Disability Services Advisory Council is overseeing a number of national projects to address gaps in child protection reporting and to improve the comparability of child protection data. Such projects include: implementing a linked data set to measure educational outcomes for children on orders; developing a linked data collection to report on the relationships between child protection and youth justice; and the development of new carer‑related indicators, including carer retention, foster carer numbers and safe reunification. It is expected that these projects, along with the successful implementation of a child based unit‑record data collection in mid-2013, will improve child protection reporting.

### COAG developments

#### National framework for protecting Australia’s children 2009–2020

On 30 April 2009, COAG endorsed *Protecting Children is Everyone’s Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009–2020* (the National Framework) (FaHCSIA 2008). The National Framework is intended to deliver a more integrated response to protecting Australia’s children, and emphasises the roles of government, the non-government sector, and the community in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children. The Second Action Plan 2012–15 under the National Framework was released in 2012. It prioritises early intervention, prevention and collaboration with mental health, domestic and family violence, drug and alcohol, education, health and other services (FaHCSIA 2012).

The Report’s child protection and out-of-home care performance indicator framework already includes and reports upon several National Framework performance indicators. In addition, the Steering Committee has previously identified developments for the Report’s child protection and out-of-home care performance indicator framework which are complementary to many of the measures in the National Framework. In further developing the Report’s child protection and out-of-home care performance indicator framework, the Steering Committee will align with applicable National Framework developments.

#### National standards for out-of-home care

Under the National Framework, Australian governments have committed to implementing National Standards for Out-of-Home Care (the National Standards). The National Standards relate to areas affecting the outcomes and experiences of children in out-of-home care, including: health; education; case planning; connection to family; transitioning from care; training and support for carers; belonging and identity; and stability and safety. The Steering Committee will keep a watching brief on the development of performance indicators for the National Standards and align with applicable National Standard developments.

## 15.5 Jurisdictions’ comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | New South Wales Government comments | **”** |
| Families, not systems, are at the centre of NSW’s child protection responses. This focus is reflected in recent and future reforms to reposition the child protection system to better protect the most vulnerable members of our community and break the cycle of disadvantage. NSW 2021 commits the NSW Government to reducing the rate of children and young people reported as at risk of significant harm and in statutory out-of-home care (OOHC) by 1.5 per cent per year.  To meet this goal, a far reaching reform agenda has commenced encompassing legislative, practice and policy changes. The reform agenda includes:   * reducing the number of vulnerable children and young people by investing in earlier intervention and prevention services and improving support * increasing the range of interventions for families to better protect children at risk of significant harm * building a responsive and sustainable OOHC system to give children and young people in care a brighter future * forming innovative partnerships that fund services in new ways and draw on community resources and local expertise.   In 2012-13, as part of these reforms, the NSW Government focused on improving how we work with vulnerable families. The Care and Protection Practice Framework outlines the values and principles that underpin our approach to working with children and families. Legislative reforms that will reduce the number of children and young people in care are being pursued. By reforming child protection laws, we can strengthen our capacity to give children and young people in care a stable home through proposed measures such as increasing the emphasis on stability and permanency.  In an Australian first, we signed two agreements for social benefit bonds with Uniting Care Burnside, Newpin Program, and, with a consortium comprising The Benevolent Society, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and Westpac for the Resilient Families Program. The benefits of these agreements include new funding for services for vulnerable people, better use of government resources and stronger partnerships with the non-government sector.  Localisation reforms in the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) took effect in September 2013. The 15 FACS districts bring together the current local Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Community Services and Housing NSW client services and operations. Each district will be able to better cater to local circumstances and provide services to people in a more holistic, flexible and responsive way.  The NSW Government continues to progress the transition of statutory OOHC services to the non-government sector. As at 30 June 2013, 42 per cent of children and young people in statutory OOHC were with non-government providers, an increase from 23 per cent the previous year. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | Victorian Government comments | **”** |
| An independent inquiry into Victoria’s child protection system, Protecting Victoria’s Vulnerable Children, was tabled in February 2012. The inquiry made 90 recommendations to strengthen the child protection system.  Victoria’s Vulnerable Children directions paper (May 2012) and the subsequent Victoria’s Vulnerable Children Strategy (May 2013) outlined the Government’s resulting plans.  Achievements so far include the introduction of a new child protection operating model, which commenced implementation in November 2012. The operating model was developed on the basis of information provided by hundreds of former and current child protection staff.   * The model strengthens fundamentals in case practice, increases the number of experienced practitioners working directly with children and families, and provides greater levels of support to practitioners, including to new recruits. The model includes a revised career and pay structure for practitioners and was established as part of the Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement. * The model targets four key areas for action: valuing the work, developing the professional; more support for, and supervision of, frontline practitioners; more practitioners, with more experience, working directly with children and families; and reducing the statutory and administrative burden. * The department continues to monitor and support implementation of the new operating model and an independent 18 month evaluation commenced in June 2013.   Legislative amendments implemented on 1 December 2013 include: not requiring children to attend court unless they wish to; the adoption of less adversarial trial principles; and modernised language changes.  An independent Commission for Children and Young People was established in February 2013 and reports directly to the Victorian Parliament. The Commission provides increasing scrutiny and accountability for the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people in Victoria, including those placed in  out-of-home-care. The Commission also promotes continuous improvement and innovation in general children and youth policies and practices.  A Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People was appointed in July 2013 to address issues specific to Aboriginal children and young people.  Future plans include the development of a 5 year plan for out-of-home-care, including Aboriginal children in care, and focusing on maintaining stronger community and cultural connections. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | Queensland Government comments | **”** |
| The Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry was established on  1 July 2012 to consider how child protection services are currently delivered in Queensland and how to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. The Commission’s final report, ‘Taking Responsibility: A Roadmap for Queensland Child Protection’ was released on 1 July 2013 and delivers a 10-year roadmap for a new child protection system in Queensland. The report comprehensively recommends mechanisms to:   * divert families from the statutory system * design a new family support system for children and families * increase the role of non-government organisations (NGOs) in child protection * adopt a new statutory practice framework * improve out-of-home care placements * support children in their transition from care (through to 21 years of age) * support the child protection workforce * reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system * improve public confidence in the child protection system.   The $4 million Fostering Families initiative commenced in December 2012 to provide intensive, in-home and out-of-hours family support services to vulnerable families where a report has been made to the department that is primarily about neglect. The initiative helps address neglect issues by focusing on developing practical skills in the family home and improving parenting skills, reducing the need for ongoing departmental intervention. Fostering Families is currently being trialled in Brisbane South, Toowoomba and Maryborough/Hervey Bay. The trial will run for two years.  The Helping Out Families initiative continued in 2012-13 to provide support services to vulnerable families at risk of entering or re-entering the statutory system who do not require tertiary intervention. Preliminary evaluation findings released in January 2013 show that Helping Out Families is making a difference, with the rate of re-reporting of child safety concerns to the department for clients engaged with the initiative’s Intensive Family Support Services reduced by almost 40 per cent. A report on stage 4 of the evaluation of the Helping out Families initiative is due in late 2014.  In March 2013, the government introduced an organisation-level licencing process for NGOs licenced under the Child Protection Act (Qld) 1999. The new process enables NGOs operating across the state to spend less time making licence applications and preparing for assessment, reducing unnecessary compliance costs and duplication of work and increasing the focus on frontline services. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | Western Australian Government comments | **”** |
| In WA, 2012-13 was a year where the focus was on consolidating the last six years of reforming the child protection system. Getting the reforms right, sticking with the core service settings and growing capacity within them, while pursuing continuous improvement and innovative developments has meant the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) has developed while being stable, improved its outcomes and most essentially grown its people.  The Department has fully implemented Signs of Safety as its child protection framework. This is an approach that is rigorously focused on risk, emphasises putting families in the centre of assessment, planning and responsibility for the safety of their children, and working collaboratively with families even if children have to be removed.  Our outcome measures confirm the story of improving child protection practice. Over the past five years, child protection notifications have doubled, while a more rigorous focus on risk has seen the number of investigations triple. In this context, intensive work with families to keep children safe at home, with the active support of family and community networks as well as professional services, has also tripled, while the rate of growth in bringing children in care has reduced to 5 per cent, substantially less than half the rate five years previously.  The other critical ingredient in the work and growth of the Department is the ethos and the hard work of partnership with the community services sector, foster carers, and other government agencies. Key highlights include:   * The Department and WA Police collaborated on Operation Deagon Goldfields and Operation Reset Kalumburu which focused on working with Indigenous community leaders and members to improve and implement measures to identify children at risk of abuse and respond to incidents of child abuse. * Completion of an evaluation into the Armadale Family Support Network, an alliance of community sector agencies and the Department, which will inform the establishment of additional networks in 2013-14. * Integrated family and domestic violence response teams to provide an enhanced response through the inclusion of specialist services from dedicated community sector organisations. * Health care planning for children in the CEO’s care, including prioritised access to services, continues to be a focus area for child protection workers and health practitioners. * Revision of the Department’s Aboriginal Services Framework which has a strong focus on the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle and Aboriginal Practice Leaders providing support and guidance to all district staff in decisions to place and ongoing planning for Aboriginal children in care. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | South Australian Government comments | **”** |
| South Australia (SA) has commenced implementation of a fundamental redesign of child protection services.  At the end of 2012, SA made the decision to adopt Solution Based Casework as the practice approach for child protection case work and case management.  During the remainder of 2012-13 structured implementation commenced and progressed. All frontline service delivery managers have been trained and certified as Solution Based Casework coaches. Eighteen Department staff now certified as Solution Based Casework trainers are providing this training to Families SA supervisors, case workers, residential care, kinship care, financial counselling and support workers, as well as to administrative staff. Discussions have commenced with funded non-government service providers regarding the delivery of Solution Based Casework training to non-government family support, family preservation and reunification services and to non-government out-of-home care and residential care services in 2014.  In 2012-13, a strategic agenda for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people was finalised. The agenda provides a system-wide framework to guide shared action across the service spectrum and across government and the community sector. The headline outcomes are: resilient families and communities; better outcomes for Aboriginal children and families; effective interventions to prevent cumulative harm; integrated system capacity and improved service pathways; and enhanced workforce learning and leadership.  The framework reinforces the Every Chance for Every Child strategic priority area of the South Australian Government, to create a place where all children are safe, healthy and happy, and where they get the best chance to learn and become confident and successful adults.  Specific guidance for parents and carers concerning protecting children and young people with a disability was produced in conjunction with Disability Services with the direct involvement of parents and carers. The guidance enhances understanding of the reasons why children with a disability are at higher risk of harm, what can be done to reduce the likelihood of abuse and which services can provide assistance.  Child Safe Environments resources including community education and training packages and online resources have been comprehensively updated. These resources support organisations to adopt a preventative approach to child abuse and assist organisations to put in place appropriate processes when a child has been harmed.  Community consultation concerning the proposed child development enabling legislation highlighted areas for potential legislative reform in child protection. These proposals are being examined and developed further in collaboration with the community sector. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | Tasmanian Government comments | **”** |
| A number of initiatives during 2012-13 have been planned and/or implemented to improve practice and service provision in the Child Protection and  Out-of-Home Care areas in Tasmania.  The Signs of Safety model, supporting a consistent and comprehensive risk assessment which is child centred and family focused, was implemented within Child Protection.  The Kids Intelligence Data System, also known as KIDZ, is an integrated information solution developed in Tasmania. The KIDZ warehouse draws on linked data for children under guardianship arrangements with Child Protection Services, and supports efficient use of a multidisciplinary approach to service delivery as well as cross-sectoral analysis from a holistic perspective. Data are sourced from internal and external systems within Children and Youth Services, Department of Education, Tasmanian Public Hospitals, Oral Health Services and the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register.  A new Model of Care for the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) was launched in March 2013. The Model will allow CHaPS to further integrate into the broader Children and Youth Services portfolio and ensure a full continuum of care for the most vulnerable children. The ongoing implementation of the Child Protection Model of Care provides a restructured operating model that will deliver a more timely and targeted response to children at risk.  A new Youth Mentoring Program targeted towards some of the most vulnerable young people in the out-of-home care system has been developed and will commence in August 2013. This new program, delivered by Whitelion, will provide long term, independent mentoring relationships for young people currently in care, preparing to leave care, and beyond, up to age 25. Major aims of the program include improving the engagement of young people with the care planning process and the associated decisions that affect them and most importantly, to provide consistent support for clients to achieve their own personal goals throughout their transition to independent living and beyond.  The Out-of-Home Care Reform Project will focus on reviewing service provision across the out-of-home care continuum, with a view to realigning service delivery and out-of-home care options to better meet the needs of children. This project is due to commence in mid-2013 and will examine the interconnection of services required to support children and young people in the out-of-home care system in Tasmania.  The Legislative Amendments Review Reference Committee (LARRC) has provided advice on amendments to the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* for legislative change to achieve better outcomes for children and families. The amendments are currently being developed and will be considered by Parliament in late 2013. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | Australian Capital Territory Government comments | **”** |
| A key priority for the ACT Government is to maintain and continually improve a responsive and high performing child protection and out-of-home care system. Reforms are being progressed under the banner of Refreshing the Service Culture. The change agenda incorporates strategies to implement recommendations from reviews undertaken by the ACT Public Advocate in 2011 and 2012 and a performance audit by the ACT Auditor-General in 2013. These include:   * Progression of the development of a five year Out-of-Home Care Strategy to guide the purchase and delivery of out-of-home care services from July 2015 – June 2020. The main aim of the strategy is to ensure the supply and quality of out-of-home care placements for children and young people in the care of the Director-General. * Improved services and supports for kinship carers, including engaging specialist services to provide therapeutic services for children, young people and carers in their care environment. * Enhanced early intervention services and supports for pregnant women as well as for young people through the implementation of case conferencing. * A strengthened approach to developing Cultural Plans that is relevant and meaningful for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care. * Development of a dual referral system, the Child, Youth and Family Gateway, as a point of contact for information, initial support and engagement with vulnerable children, young people and their families. The Gateway is operated by a consortium of community sector partners and two Gateway staff are co-located with CPS. * A major change management program that will embed an Integrated Management System (IMS) in Care and Protection Services (CPS). The IMS will align the strategic direction, policies and procedures, risk management and compliance activities of CPS. * Establishment of a centralised Policy, Data and Research unit in the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS) with a mandate to improve data collection and build a greater evidence base for policy development and service delivery. * Establishment of a Complaints unit in OCYFS to streamline and improve the coordination of complaints across OCYFS and forming an OCYFS Decision Review Panel. * Establishment of an ACT Carers Roundtable and the Carer’s Consultation Group, to hear from and consult with foster, kinship and permanent carers about the issues that affect them. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | Northern Territory Government comments | **”** |
| The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is continuing to grow its capacity to deliver family support, child protection and out-of-home care services.  New information sharing provisions under the Care and Protection of Children Act were implemented at the commencement of the 2012-13 financial year. These amendments enabled people and practitioners to share information relating to the safety and wellbeing of a child without fear of criminal or civil liability. They have improved practices between DCF and other government agencies involved with protecting vulnerable and at risk children.  In 2012-13 the Northern Territory (NT) commenced a major reform project to improve the out-of-home care system. The reform recognised that DCF needed to improve decision making relating to the placement of children, increase the recruitment and support services provided to carers and improve the consistency of care provided in residential care settings. Throughout 2012-13, the reform focused on developing systems and structures to improve the standard and consistency of services provided to children and young people in care and their carers.  A number of strategies have been implemented to improve services in remote areas of the NT. The relocation of the Mobile Child Protection Team from Darwin to regional offices has increased DCF’s capacity to respond swiftly to child protection needs across the Territory. DCF also continued to roll out the Community Child Safety and Wellbeing Teams. These innovative Teams have allowed child protection professionals to live and work in remote Aboriginal communities.  Over the course of the year, there has also been a significant investment in a Learning Pathways Strategy which provides learning and career pathways from the para-professional to the professional workforce. Qualifications include Certificate III in Community Services, Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention, Diploma in Child, Youth and Family intervention and a nested Vocational Graduate Certificate in Community Services (Child Protection Practice) and Client Assessment and Case Management which have been tailored to the NT context. This strategy will see upwards of 75 Aboriginal employees gain eligibility for professional and senior child protection roles over the next three years, and will result in improved outcomes for the children of the NT.  Workforce support for first line and middle management has been enhanced through accredited programs (for example a Diploma in Management) and leadership programs to strengthen management capacity and aid in the retention of staff. |

## 15.6 Definitions of key terms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity Group 1 (pathways)**  Receipt and assessment of initial information about a potential protection or support issue | Activities that are typically associated with receipt and assessment of initial information including receipt and recording of information, review of department databases, initial assessment of information and decisions about the appropriate response. This activity can also include consultation, with possible provision of advice. Activities by non-government organisations (NGO) may be included if appropriate. |
| **Activity Group 2 (pathways)**  Provision of generic family support services | Activities that are typically associated with provision of lower level family support services at various stages including identification of family needs, provision of support services and diversionary services, some counselling and active linking of the family to support networks. Services are funded by government but can be delivered by either the relevant agency or a NGO. This bundle of services does not involve planned follow-up by the relevant agency after initial service delivery. The services will be delivered under voluntary arrangements between the relevant agency and family. Clients may receive these services more than once. |
| **Activity Group 3 (pathways)**  Provision of intensive family support services | Activities that are typically associated with provision of complex or intensive family support services including provision of therapeutic and in-home supports such as counselling and mediation, modelling of positive parenting strategies, referrals to intensive support services that may be provided by NGOs, advocacy on behalf of clients and intensive support for a family in a residential setting. This includes protection and treatment support services. These services may be provided if diversionary services are inappropriate to the case and may lead to statutory services being provided to the client. |
| **Activity Group 4 (pathways)**  Secondary information gathering and assessment | Activities that are typically associated with secondary information gathering and assessment are currently counted as ‘investigations’ in the Report on Government Services. As part of this activity group a decision may be made to substantiate or not substantiate. Information gathering activities include:   * sighting the child * contacting people with relevant information about the child or family (for example, teachers, police, support services) * interviewing the child, sibling(s) and parents * observing family interactions * obtaining assessments of the child and/or family * conducting family group conferences * liaising with agencies providing services to the child and family * recording a substantiation or non-substantiation decision * case conferences with partners and contributors in the investigation and assessment process. |
| **Activity Group 5 (pathways)**  Provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services for children not on an order | Activities that are typically associated with provision of short-term protective intervention and coordination services including:   * working with the family to address protective issues * developing networks of support for the child * monitoring and reviewing the safety of the child * monitoring and reviewing family progress against case planning goals * case conferences with agencies providing services to the child and/or family, internal discussions and reviews * specialist child-focused therapeutic support. |
| **Activity Group 6 (pathways)**  Seeking an order | Activities that are typically associated with seeking orders (court orders or voluntary/administrative orders) including:   * preparing applications for the order * preparing reports for the court * obtaining assessment reports to submit to the court * informing parties to the court proceedings, including parents, the child, and lawyers * informing and briefing legal counsel or internal court groups * going through internal pre-court review processes * attending court * conducting family group conferences. |
| **Activity Group 7 (pathways)**  Provision of protective intervention, support and coordination services for children on an order | Activities that are typically associated with provision of longer-term protective intervention and coordination services including:   * monitoring the child or young person’s progress and development (for example, social development and education progress) and undertaking activities that facilitate progress and development * meeting any specific requirements of any court order * reviewing appropriateness of the order for the circumstances of the child or young person. This usually occurs at intervals established by the court or in legislation * reporting back to court * long term cases involving out-of-home care. |
| **Activity Group 8 (pathways)**  Provision of out‑of‑home care services | Activities that are typically associated with provision of out-of-home care services including:   * finding suitable placement(s) for the child * assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with his/her family * in some cases, staff payments for recruiting and training carers * assessing suitability of potential kinship carers * assisting the child or young person to maintain contact with their family * working to return the child home * assisting the child or young person as they prepare to leave care as the end of the order approaches. |
| **Care and protection orders** | Care and protection orders are legal orders or arrangements which give child protection departments some responsibility for a child’s welfare. The scope of departmental involvement mandated by a care and protection order is dependent on the type of order, and can include:   * responsibility for overseeing the actions of the person or authority caring for the child * reporting or giving consideration to the child’s welfare (for example, regarding the child’s education, health, religion, accommodation and financial matters).   Types of care and protection orders:   * Finalised guardianship or custody orders – involve the transfer of legal guardianship to the relevant state or territory department or non-government agency. These orders involve considerable intervention in a child’s life and that of his or her family, and are sought only as a last resort. Guardianship orders convey responsibility for the welfare of a child to a guardian (for example, regarding a child’s education, health, religion, accommodation and financial matters). Guardianship orders do not necessarily grant the right to the daily care and control of a child, or the right to make decisions about the daily care and control of a child, which are granted under custody orders. Custody orders generally refer to orders that place children in the custody of the state or territory, or department responsible for child protection or non-government agency. These orders usually involve the child protection department being responsible for the daily care and requirements of a child, while his or her parent retains legal guardianship. Custody alone does not bestow any responsibility regarding the long-term welfare of the child. * Finalised third party parental responsibility orders – transfer all duties, powers, responsibilities and authority parents are entitled to by law, to a nominated person(s) considered appropriate by the court. The nominated person may be an individual such as a relative or an officer of a state or territory department. Third party parental responsibility may be ordered when a parent is unable to care for a child, and as such parental responsibility is transferred to a relative. ‘Permanent care orders’ are an example of a third party parental responsibility order and involve the transfer of guardianship to a third party carer. It can also be applied to the achievement of a stable arrangement under a long-term guardianship order to 18 years without guardianship being transferred to a third party. These orders are only applicable in some jurisdictions. * Finalised supervisory orders – give the department responsible for child protection some responsibility for a child’s welfare. Under these orders, the department supervises and/or directs the level and type of care that is to be provided to the child. Children under supervisory orders are generally under the responsibility of their parents and the guardianship or custody of the child is unaffected. Finalised supervisory orders are therefore less interventionist than finalised guardianship orders but require the child’s parent or guardian to meet specified conditions, such as medical care of the child. * Interim and temporary orders – generally cover the provision of a limited period of supervision and/or placement of a child. Parental responsibility under these orders may reside with the parents or with the department responsible for child protection. Orders that are not finalised (such as an application to a court for a care and protection order) are also included in this category, unless another finalised order is in place. * Administrative arrangements – are agreements with relevant child protection departments, which have the same effect as a court order in transferring custody or guardianship. These arrangements can also allow a child to be placed in out-of-home care without going through the courts.   Children are counted only once, even if they are on more than one care and protection order. |
| **Child** | A person aged 0–17 years (including, at times, unborn children). |
| **Child at risk** | A child for whom no abuse or neglect can be substantiated but where there are reasonable grounds to suspect the possibility of prior or future abuse or neglect, and for whom continued departmental involvement is considered warranted. |
| **Child concern reports** | Reports to departments responsible for child protection regarding concerns about a child, where there is no indication that a child may have been, or is at risk of being, harmed through abuse or neglect. This may include concerns about a child’s welfare related to the quality of his or her home environment or the standard of care that he or she is receiving. |
| **Children in out‑of‑home care during the year** | The total number of children who were in at least one out-of-home care placement at any time during the year. A child who is in more than one placement is counted only once. |
| **Dealt with by other means** | A notification that is responded to by means other than an investigation, such as the provision of advice or referral to services. This category can also include notifications where the decision to investigate has not been reached (that is, notifications ‘in process’). |
| **Exited out‑of‑home care** | Where a child does not return to care within 60 days. |
| **Family based care** | Home-based care (see ‘Out-of-home care’). |
| **Family group homes** | Family group homes are care settings that provide care to children in a departmentally or community sector agency provided home. These homes have live-in, non-salaried carers who are reimbursed and/or subsidised for the provision of care. |
| **Foster care** | Care of a child who is living apart from his or her natural or adoptive parents in a private household, by one or more adults who act as ‘foster parents’ and are paid a regular allowance by a government authority or non-government organisation for the child’s support. The authorised department or non-government organisation provides continuing supervision or support while the child remains in the care of foster parents. Foster parents are chosen from a list of people registered, licensed or approved as foster parents by an authorised department or non-government organisation. |
| **Foster parent** | Any person (or such a person’s spouse) who is being paid a foster allowance by a government or non-government organisation for the care of a child (excluding children in family group homes). |
| **Guardian** | Any person who has the legal and ongoing care and responsibility for the protection of a child. |
| **Indigenous person** | Person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she lives. |
| **Investigation** | An investigation of child abuse and neglect that involves identifying harm or risk of harm to the child, determining an outcome and assessing protective needs. It includes the interviewing or sighting of the subject child where practicable. |
| **Investigation finalised** | Where an investigation is completed and an outcome of ‘substantiated’ or ‘not substantiated’ is recorded by 31 August. |
| **Investigation in process** | Where an investigation is commenced but an outcome is not recorded by 31 August. |
| **Investigation closed – no outcome possible** | Where an investigation is commenced but is not able to be finalised in order to reach the outcome of ‘substantiated’ or ‘not substantiated’. These files would be closed for administrative purposes. This may happen in instances where the family has relocated. |
| **Length of time in continuous out‑of‑home care** | The length of time for which a child is in out-of-home care on a continuous basis. Any break of 60 days or more is considered to break the continuity of the placement. Where a child returns home for less than 60 days and then returns to the former placement or to a different placement, this does not affect the length of time in care. Holidays or authorised absences (less than 60 days) in a placement do not break the continuity of placement. |
| **Non-respite care** | Out-of-home care for children for child protection reasons. |
| **Notification** | Contact with an authorised department by persons or other bodies making allegations of child abuse or neglect, or harm to a child. Notifications can be counted at different points in the response to a report, ranging from the point of initial contact with the source of the report to the end of a screening and decision making process. |
| **Other relative** | A grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin, whether the relationship is half, full, step or through adoption, and can be traced through or to a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of the child’s birth. This category includes members of Aboriginal communities who are accepted by that community as being related to the child. |
| **Out-of-home care** | Overnight care, including placement with relatives (other than parents) where the government makes a financial payment. Includes care of children in legal and voluntary placements (that is, children on and not on a legal order) but excludes placements solely funded by disability services, psychiatric services, youth justice facilities and overnight child care services.  There are five main out-of-home care placement types:   * Residential care – where placement is in a residential building with paid staff. * Family group homes – provide care to children in a departmentally or community sector agency provided home. These homes have live-in, non-salaried carers who are reimbursed and/or subsidised for the provision of care. * Home-based care – where placement is in the home of a carer who is reimbursed (or who has been offered but declined reimbursement) for expenses for the care of the child. This is broken down into three subcategories: (1) *relative/kinship care* – where the caregiver is a relative (other than parents), considered to be family or a close friend, or is a member of the child or young person’s community (in accordance with their culture) who is reimbursed (or who has been offered but declined reimbursement) by the State/Territory for the care of the child. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a kinship carer may be another Indigenous person who is a member of their community, a compatible community or from the same language group; (2) *foster care* – where the care is authorised and carers are reimbursed (or were offered but declined reimbursement) by the state/territory and supported by an approved agency. There are varying degrees of reimbursement made to foster carers; (3) *other* – home-based care which does not fall into either of the above categories. * Independent living – including private board and lead tenant households. * Other – includes placements that do not fit into the above categories and unknown living arrangements. This includes boarding schools, hospitals, hotels/motels and defence force. |
| **Relatives/kin** | People who are family or close friends, or are members of a child or young person’s community (in accordance with their culture) who are reimbursed (or who have been offered but declined reimbursement) by the State/Territory for the care of a child. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, a kinship carer may be another Indigenous person who is a member of their community, a compatible community or from the same language group. |
| **Respite care** | Respite care is a form of out-of-home care that is used to provide short-term accommodation for children and young people where the intention is for the child to return to their prior place of residence. Respite placements include: *respite from birth family*, where a child is placed in out-of-home care on a temporary basis for reasons other than child protection (for example, the child’s parents are ill or unable to care for them on a temporary basis; or as a family support mechanism to prevent entry into full time care, as part of the reunification process, as a shared care arrangement); *respite from placement*, where a child spends regular, short and agreed periods of time with another carer other than their primary carer. |
| **Stability of placement** | Number of placements for children who exited out-of-home care and did not return within 60 days. Placements exclude respite or temporary placements lasting less than 7 days. Placements are counted separately where there is:   * a change in the placement type — for example, from a home‑based to a facility-based placement * within placement type, a change in venue or a change from one home-based placement to a different home-based placement.   Each placement should only be counted once. A return to a previous placement is not included as a different placement. A return home is not counted as a placement, although if a child returns home for 60 days or more they are considered to have exited care. |
| **Substantiation** | Notification for which an investigation concludes there is reasonable cause to believe that the child has been, is being or is likely to be abused, neglected or otherwise harmed. It does not necessarily require sufficient evidence for a successful prosecution and does not imply that treatment or case management is, or is to be, provided. |

## 15.7 List of attachment tables

Attachment tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by a ‘15A’ prefix (for example, table 15A.1). Attachment tables are available on the Review website (www.pc.gov.au/gsp).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table 15A.1** | State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection and out-of-home care services, (2012-13 dollars) |
| **Table 15A.2** | State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on child protection services, per notification, per investigation and per substantiation, (2012-13 dollars) |
| **Table 15A.3** | State and Territory Government real recurrent expenditure on out-of-home care services, (2012-13 dollars) |
| **Table 15A.4** | Comparability of government recurrent expenditure — items included, 2012-13 |
| **Table 15A.5** | Child protection notifications, investigations and substantiations by Indigenous status |
| **Table 15A.6** | Number of children admitted to and discharged from care and protection orders by Indigenous status |
| **Table 15A.7** | Number of children on care and protection orders by type of order and Indigenous status, at 30 June |
| **Table 15A.8** | Children in notifications, investigations and substantiations and children on care and protection orders: number and rate per 1000 children in the target populations by Indigenous status |
| **Table 15A.9** | Proportion of investigations substantiated |
| **Table 15A.10** | Children who were the subject of a decision not to substantiate during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2011-12 |
| **Table 15A.11** | Children who were the subject of a substantiation during the year and who were also the subject of a subsequent substantiation within 3 and/or 12 months, 2011-12 |
| **Table 15A.12** | Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 3 level (per cent) |
| **Table 15A.13** | Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 5 level (per cent) |
| **Table 15A.14** | Proportion of children on guardianship/custody orders achieving the national reading and numeracy benchmarks, Year 7 level (per cent) |
| **Table 15A.15** | Response time to commence investigation |
| **Table 15A.16** | Response time to complete investigation |
| **Table 15A.17** | Children with documented case plans, by Indigenous status, at 30 June |
| **Table 15A.18** | Children in out-of-home care: number and rate per 1000 children aged 0–17 years by Indigenous status |
| **Table 15A.19** | Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and placement type, 30 June (number) |
| **Table 15A.20** | Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and whether on a care and protection order, 30 June (number) |
| **Table 15A.21** | Children in out-of-home care by Indigenous status and length of time in continuous out-of-home care, 30 June (number) |
| **Table 15A.22** | Children who exited care during the year by Indigenous status and length of time spent in care (number) |
| **Table 15A.23** | Children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin by Indigenous status, 30 June |
| **Table 15A.24** | Indigenous children in out-of-home care by relationship of caregiver, 30 June |
| **Table 15A.25** | Children aged under 12 years in out-of-home care and in a home-based placement by Indigenous status, 30 June |
| **Table 15A.26** | Children on a care and protection order and exiting out-of-home care during the year by number of placements, by the length of time in out-of-home care (number) |
| **Table 15A.27** | Children in out-of-home care by whether they were the subject of a child protection substantiation and the person believed responsible was living in the household providing out-of-home care |
| **Table 15A.28** | Children in out-of-home care who were the subject of a notification, which was substantiated |
| **Table 15A.29** | Out-of-home care expenditure per placement night |
| **Table 15A.30** | Intensive family support services: total real recurrent expenditure, number of children aged 0-17 years commencing intensive family support services and real recurrent expenditure per child (2012-13 dollars) |
| **Table 15A.31** | Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years commencing intensive family support services by Indigenous status and gender |
| **Table 15A.32** | Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years commencing intensive family support services by age |
| **Table 15A.33** | Intensive family support services: number of children aged 0–17 years in intensive family support services by living situation at commencement of the program |
| **Table 15A.34** | Target population data used for annual data, December ('000) |
| **Table 15A.35** | Target population data used for end of financial year data, March ('000) |

## 15.8 References

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) 2011, *NAPLAN Achievement in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy: National Report for 2011*, ACARA, Sydney.

AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2013, *Child Protection Australia* *2011-12*, Child Welfare series no. 55. Cat. no. CWS 43, Canberra: AIHW.

—— 2012, *Child Protection Australia* *2010-11*, Child Welfare series no. 53. Cat. no. CWS 41, Canberra: AIHW.

—— 2011, *Child Protection Australia* *2009-10*, Child Welfare series no. 51. Cat. no. CWS 39, Canberra: AIHW.

—— 2010, *Child Protection Australia* *2008-09*, Child Welfare series no. 47. Cat. no. CWS 35, Canberra: AIHW.

—— 2009, *Child Protection Australia* *2007-08*, Child Welfare series no. 45. Cat. no. CWS 33, Canberra: AIHW.

—— 2006, *Family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*, Cat. No. IHW 17, Canberra.

Bamblett, M., Bath, H. and Roseby, R. 2010, *Growing them Strong, Together: Promoting the safety and wellbeing of the Northern Territory's children, Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory 2010*, Northern Territory Government, Darwin.

COAG (Council of Australian Governments) 2008a, *Council of Australian Governments’ Meeting 3 July 2008* www.coag.gov.au/coag\_meeting outcomes/ 2008-07-03/docs/communique20080703.pdf (accessed 9 October 2008).

—— 2008b, *Council of Australian Governments’ Meeting 29 November 2008,* www.coag.gov.au/coag\_meeting\_outcomes/2008-11-29/docs/ communiqué\_ 20081129.pdf (accessed 1 December 2008).

DHS (Department of Human Services) 2002, *An Integrated Strategy for Child Protection and Placement Services*, Government of Victoria, Melbourne.

FaHCSIA (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) 2008, Australia’s children: safe and well. A national framework for protecting Australia’s children, www.fahcsia.gov.au/family/child\_protection\_ discussion\_paper/default.htm (accessed 27 October 2008).

—— 2012, *National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children — Second Three Year Action Plan 2012-2015*. FaHCSIA, Canberra www.fahcsia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09\_2012/second\_action\_plan.pdf (accessed 13 November 2012).

Gordon Report (Commission of Inquiry into Response by Government Agencies to Complaints of Family Violence and Child Abuse in Aboriginal Communities, chaired by Mrs Sue Gordon) 2002, *Putting the Picture Together*, State Law Publishers, Perth.

Holzer, P. J., and Bromfield, L. M., 2008, *NCPASS comparability of child protection data: Project report*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.

National Framework Implementation Working Group, Community and Disability Services Ministers Advisory Council, 2010, *Draft National Standards for Out‑of-Home care,* www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Documents/working\_ doc\_dev\_nat\_stds\_for\_out\_of\_home\_care.pdf(accessed 18 November 2010).

NLRC (NSW Law Reform Commission) 1997, *The Aboriginal Child Placement Principle*, Research Report no. 7, Sydney.

Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse 2007, *Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle “Little Children are Sacred”*, Northern Territory Government.

SCRCSSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision) 2003, *Efficiency Measures for Child Protection and Support Pathways: Reforms in Government Service Provision*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.

The Allen Consulting Group 2008, *Inverting the pyramid: Enhancing systems for protecting children,* Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, Australian Capital Territory.