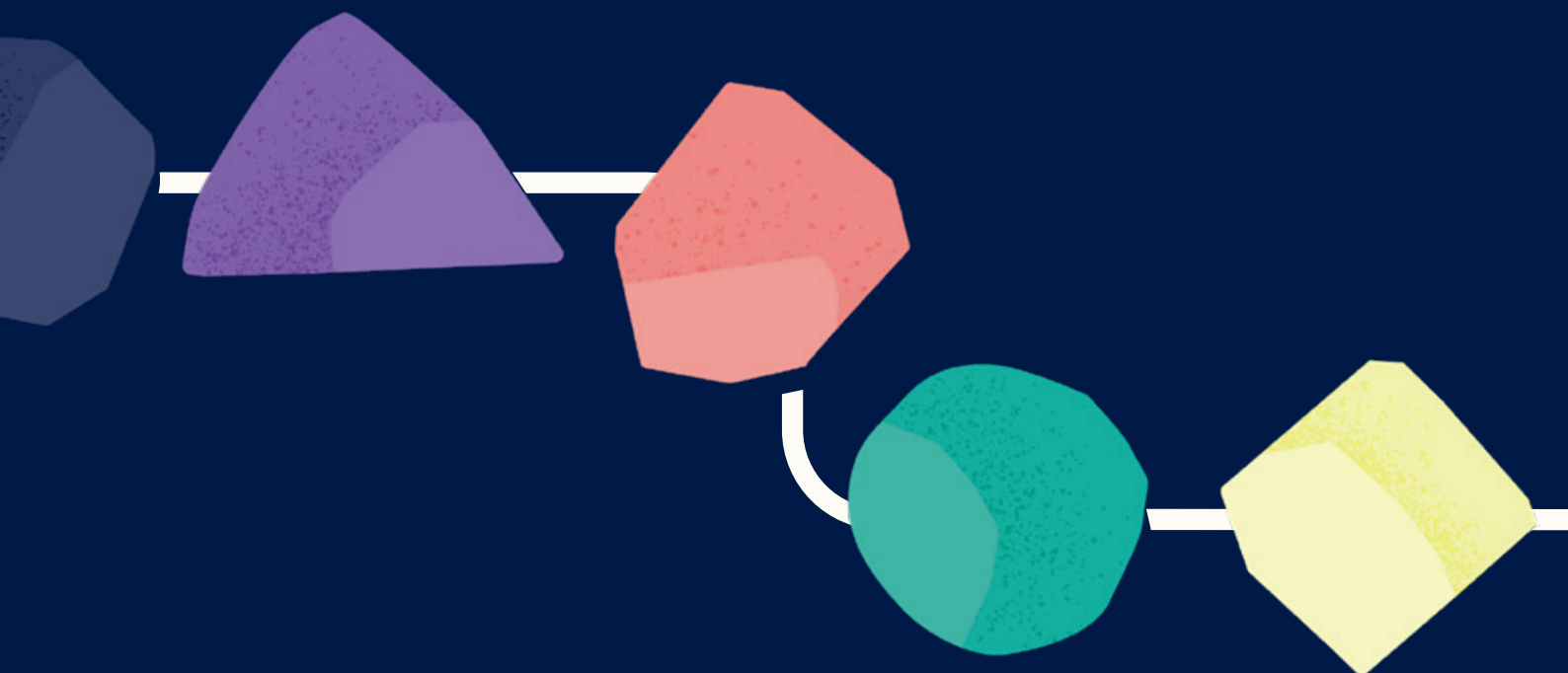


DECEMBER 2024

Keeping Kids Safe in Detention Action Plan

2024–2026

A roadmap for actions being taken to increase the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in detention as we transition to a new, secure therapeutic facility.



Contents

Acknowledgements	1	Action 1 – Safety and security	10	Action 4 – Child-centred services	23
Acknowledgement of Aboriginal People and Country	1	1.1 Continue to enhance electronic surveillance in youth detention	11	4.1 Implement the Youth Justice Model of Care and practice framework in youth detention	24
Acknowledgement of victim survivors	1	1.2 Develop and operationalise a business continuity plan to proactively manage significant risk	12	4.2 Establish clear processes and guidelines for the case management of children and young people in detention	25
Reporting child abuse	1	1.3 Develop and operationalise an emergency response system	13	4.3 Facilitate connection to family and community for children and young people in detention	26
Child abuse trauma support	2			4.4 Ensure youth detention is culturally safe for Aboriginal children and young people	28
About this action plan	3	Action 2 – Leadership and culture	14	4.5 Develop best practice to prevent and proactively respond to harmful sexual behaviours in youth detention	29
Accountability	5	2.1 Strengthen leadership roles and structures in youth detention	15	Action 5 – Reforming practice	30
Monitoring and evaluation	6	2.2 Establish dedicated roles, policies and process for driving cultural change in detention	16	5.1 Develop and refine models and procedures for personal searches, isolation and use of force in youth detention	31
Annual review of the action plan	6	2.3 Develop and implement a participation and empowerment strategy for children and young people in detention	17	5.2 Develop and implement a new complaints management model for youth detention	32
Key terms	7	2.4 Develop and implement a professional conduct policy for youth detention	18	5.3 Improve transfer processes from youth detention to adult facilities	33
Actions at a glance	8	Action 3 – Capable workforce	19	5.4 Improve record keeping processes in youth detention	34
		3.1 Develop a workforce strategy for youth justice services across Tasmania and commence implementation	20		
		3.2 Provide training in Certificate IV in Youth Justice for all staff in custodial youth justice	21		
		3.3 Provide training to staff on new personal searches, isolation and use of force procedures	22		

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Aboriginal People and Country

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this island, we acknowledge and pay our respects to Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the traditional Owners and ongoing Custodians of Tasmania. We recognise Tasmanian Aboriginal people's continuing connection to Land, Sea, Waterways, Sky and Culture and extend our respects to Elders, past and present.

We are committed to working in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system, ensuring they are safe and supported to live culturally rich and thriving lives.

Acknowledgement of victim survivors

The Department for Education, Children and Young People acknowledges the trauma that continues to affect people with lived experience of child abuse.

We are committed to being sensitive to this trauma as we use the learnings from past wrongs to protect the rights of current and future generations of children and young people and keep them safe from harm.

Please be aware that the information in this document could be distressing. Please seek support as you need to.

Reporting child abuse

We all have a responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe.

If you have ANY concerns about the safety of a child, you must report it.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact 000 for urgent police or medical help.

Visit the *Tell Someone* website for more information about spotting the signs of child abuse: www.tellsomeone.tas.gov.au

People working for and with children in the Department for Education, Children and Young People must promptly report beliefs or suspicion, on reasonable grounds, that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to suffer abuse. You must:

- **Step 1** – Provide immediate safety.
- **Step 2** – Provide support, seek advice.
- **Step 3** – Report and record.
- **Step 4** – Support yourselves and others.

Acknowledgements

Child abuse trauma support

The content of this Action Plan may raise issues of concern for some readers.

We encourage readers to exercise self-care in their engagement with this content and seek support and care if required.

If you need support, a range of completely free and confidential support services are available by phone and/or face to face.

If you need to talk to someone, you can contact:

Statewide Sexual Assault Support Line

24-hour support from local specialist counsellors provided by the **Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS)** and **Laurel House: 1800 697 877 (1800 MY SUPPORT)**.

Lifeline – 24/7 Crisis Support: 13 11 14

A Tasmanian Lifeline: 8:00am–8:00pm, 365 days a year: 1800 98 44 34 for support and referral.

13 Yarn – 24/7: 13 92 76.

Relationships Australia Tasmania

Specialist complex trauma counselling, trauma-informed counselling, wellbeing information and referral. 9:00am–5:00pm, Monday to Friday: 1300 364 277.

Kids Helpline

24-hour support for children and young people provided by specialist counsellors: 1800 55 1800.



About this action plan


The Tasmanian Government is committed to creating a Youth Justice System that delivers improved outcomes for children, young people and their families, and keeping our community safe.

It is the highest priority of the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) to uphold and champion the rights of children and young people, as outlined in Article 3 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

This plan outlines the actions being taken to safeguard children and young people at Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) as we transition to the therapeutic Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility, in the South, paving the way for broader reforms within the Youth Justice System. The Tasmanian Government has committed to implementing all the recommendations made by the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings* including recommendations relating to keeping children safe in detention in Chapter 12 of the Report. The recommendations are aligned with the *Youth Justice Blueprint 2024–2034*, which outlines the strategic direction for Tasmania's youth justice system for the next ten years, with the aim of improving the wellbeing of children, young people and their families while addressing the underlying drivers of offending behaviours, reducing offending and increasing community safety.

The *Keeping Kids Safe in Detention Action Plan (2024–2026)* complements this strategic direction by documenting the immediate and tangible actions being taken at Ashley Youth Detention Centre towards a contemporary, evidence-informed and connected youth justice system for Tasmania. These actions will be progressed alongside a *Youth Justice Reform Taskforce Action Plan (2024–2025)*, and the Tasmanian Government's 10-year *Change for Children Strategy* for upholding the rights of children by preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse.

This action plan replaces the *Keeping Kids Safe at Ashley Youth Detention Centre until its Closure Plan* which was developed and provided to the Commission of Inquiry at its request for an interim plan on how children and young people are being kept safe at Ashley Youth Detention Centre until its intended closure.



The *Keeping Kids Safe in Detention Action Plan (2024-2026)* will be updated yearly as actions are progressed to keep children and young people safe in detention. This reflects DECYP's ongoing commitment to constantly strive to deliver better outcomes for children and young people at Ashley Youth Detention Centre, until its closure.

As stated by a victim-survivor of child sexual abuse in a Tasmanian institution,
“Reviewing and improving is going to mean it’s always getting better, and we need to do that because society changes all the time. It’s about staying relevant.”

Accountability

DECYP is responsible for implementing 70 of the 191 recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry and oversees service settings that directly engage with our most vulnerable children and young people. As such, accountability must be the foundation of all our efforts toward meaningful change.

At the heart of this commitment is the whole-of-government *Change for Children Strategy and Action Plan*, which serves as the primary mechanism for ensuring transparency in implementing the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. It details accountability mechanisms to be applied across government, including structured reporting protocols, inter-agency collaboration, and regular oversight by dedicated governance bodies.

Given the alignment between the actions outlined in this Action Plan and the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, progress is continuously measured against the broader *Change for Children Strategy and Action Plan*. This approach ensures a cohesive and unified reform effort, with each action directly contributing to the overarching goal of safeguarding children and young people.



Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of this action plan will be embedded within the broader whole-of-government reporting framework, which will be periodically assessed to ensure alignment with the evolving needs of the children and young people under our care.

The Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor will play a pivotal role in this process, providing an independent and objective review of the progress made under the *Change for Children Strategy* and Action Plan. The Implementation Monitor will ensure that all stakeholders remain accountable for their roles in implementing the reforms and that any emerging risks or challenges are promptly addressed.

All actions in this Action Plan will be evaluated against effectiveness, relevance, and alignment with the overarching goals of the Youth Justice Blueprint. This culture of continuous improvement will allow us to adapt and refine our approach as necessary, ensuring that our efforts remain responsive to the evolving needs of those we serve.

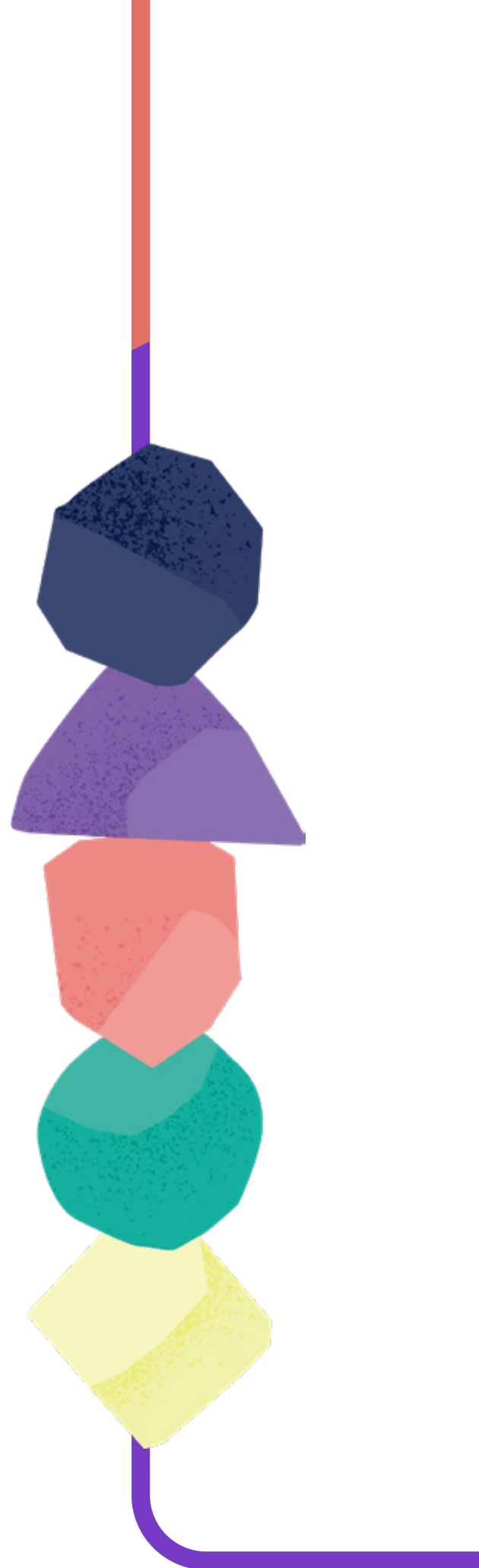
Annual review of the action plan

To maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the *Keeping Kids Safe in Detention Action Plan (2024-2026)*, it will undergo an annual review process.

These reviews, scheduled for May 2025 and May 2026, will evaluate the progress of actions, identify areas requiring adjustment, and ensure that the strategies remain responsive to the needs of children and young people in detention.

The annual review will involve consultation with key stakeholders, including frontline workers, child advocates, and representatives from the communities affected by the reforms.

The outcomes of these reviews will inform any necessary revisions to the Action Plan, ensuring that it remains a living document that adapts to new challenges and opportunities.



Key terms

Ashley Youth Detention Centre

The physical location which currently provides secure care and custody for children and young people in Tasmania who are detained or remanded by the courts.

Case management

Aims to improve children and young people's outcomes and reduce offending. It involves coordinating services and interventions to help children and young people build positive life outcomes and participate in communities.

Children and young people

A person or people under the age of 18. In the context of youth justice, this refers to a person who is 10 or more years old but less than 18 years old in line with the current age of criminal responsibility in Tasmania.

Community Youth Justice

Refers to the arm of the youth justice system that supervises children and young people on community-based court orders. Community Youth Justice works alongside children and young people over the course of their court order to reduce their risk of re-offending.

Custodial Youth Justice

Refers to the arm of the youth justice system that provides supervision and rehabilitation of children and young people in detention. When young people are in Ashley Youth Detention Centre, they are supported by trained youth workers, they attend Ashley School, and are supported by Professional Services staff as well as Health staff.

Harmful sexual behaviours

Children and young people who have displayed sexual behaviours that fall outside what may be considered developmentally expected or socially appropriate, cause harm to themselves or others, and occur either face to face and/or via technology. When these behaviours involve others, they may include a lack of consent, reciprocity, mutuality, and may involve the use of coercion, force, or a misuse of power.

Youth Justice Model of Care

Broadly defines the way services are delivered. In this context referring to the delivery of Youth Justice Services.

Youth Justice Practice Framework

A conceptual map that integrates research, practice theories, ethical principles and experiential knowledge to provide a rationale for practice.

Therapeutic approach

In relation to the youth justice system and settings, a therapeutic approach frames children and young people as vulnerable and in need of support and healing, as opposed to punishment or fear.

Youth detention

A legal arrangement that requires a young person to be detained in a youth justice facility. This comprises both sentenced and unsentenced detention.

Key terms

Youth Justice Services

Youth Justice Services, includes both Community and Custodial Youth Justice. Services for Youth Justice, as part of the Department for Education, Children and Young People provide services to children and young people from the point of engagement with police if they are referred for a community conference, through the court process and any subsequent orders.

These services include:

- coordination and management of community conferencing as referred by police or the court
- support for court processes, including the provision of pre-sentencing reports
- supervision and case management of children and young people on court orders
- custodial services for children and young people remanded or sentenced to a period of detention

Youth justice system

The set of processes and practices for supporting children and young people who have committed or allegedly committed an offence.

Actions at a glance

Actions



Action 1

Safety and security

Create a safer and more secure physical environment for young people in detention



Action 2

Leadership and culture

Strengthen leadership and culture in youth detention



Action 3

Capable workforce

Ensure that staff in youth detention are properly equipped and qualified to undertake their roles now and into the future



Action 4

Child-centred services

Provide caring, compassionate, therapeutic, child-centred services in youth detention



Action 5

Reforming practice

Improve processes to champion wellbeing and safety of children and young people in youth detention

Output

		Commission of Inquiry Recommendations	Commission of Inquiry Deadline
1.1	Continue to enhance electronic surveillance in youth detention	12.17	July 2026
1.2	Develop and operationalise a business continuity plan to proactively manage significant risk		
1.3	Develop and operationalise a model to actively manage emergencies		
2.1	Strengthen leadership roles and structures in youth detention	12.6	July 2026
2.2	Establish dedicated roles, policies and processes for driving cultural change in detention	12.7	July 2026
2.3	Develop and implement a participation and empowerment strategy for children and young people in detention	12.8	July 2026
2.4	Develop and implement a professional conduct policy for youth detention	12.10	July 2024 ¹
3.1	Develop and implement a workforce strategy for Youth Justice services across Tasmania and commence implementation	12.9	July 2029
3.2	Provide training in Certificate IV in Youth Justice for all staff in custodial youth justice		
3.3	Provide training to staff on new personal searches, isolation and use of force procedures	12.34	July 2026
4.1	Implement the youth justice model of care and practice framework in youth detention	12.18	July 2026
4.2	Establish clear processes and guidelines for the case management of children and young people in detention	12.19	July 2026
4.3	Facilitate connection to family and community for children and young people in detention	12.23	July 2024
4.4	Ensure youth detention is culturally safe for Aboriginal children and young people	12.29	July 2026
4.5	Develop best practice, prevent and proactively respond to harmful sexual behaviours	12.30	July 2026
5.1	Develop and refine models and procedures for personal searches, isolation and use of force	12.31-12.33	July 2026
5.2	Develop and implement a new complaints management model for youth detention	12.35	July 2026
5.3	Improve transfer processes from youth detention to adult facilities	12.25	July 2026
5.4	Improve record keeping processes in youth detention	12.4	July 2026

¹ Outputs with a July 2024 COI deadline listed against them represent ongoing implementation efforts to fully embed changes in practice.



Action 1

Safety and security

Creating a safer and more secure physical environment for children and young people in detention

To ensure that a therapeutic approach is truly effective, it is essential that children and young people in detention feel safe, secure, and supported.

A sense of safety is fundamental for these supports to have a meaningful impact, as children and young people need to trust their environment and the people within it. This action is focused on creating a safer and more secure environment for both children and young people and staff in youth detention facilities, recognising that a stable and supportive setting is key to positive outcomes.

This will be achieved by enhancing and refining security measures at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, which will also inform future youth justice facilities. This involves reviewing current practices and infrastructure to address the unique needs of children and young people in these environments. By aligning security risk management strategies with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, the aim is to promote safety, reduce opportunities for harm, and foster a therapeutic environment where children and young people can engage with the support they need.

Motivator

Organisations can show young people they're safe *"by being a safe space, not judging, being kind, listening and helping you when you need it."*

- ARIAL, A YOUNG TASMANIAN.

Outputs 2024-2026

Outputs	COI Rec.	Completion date
1.1 Continue to improve electronic surveillance at Ashley Youth Detention Centre	12.17	July 2026
1.2 Develop and operationalise a business continuity plan to proactively manage significant risk	12.17	July 2026
1.3 Develop and operationalise an emergency response system	12.17	July 2026

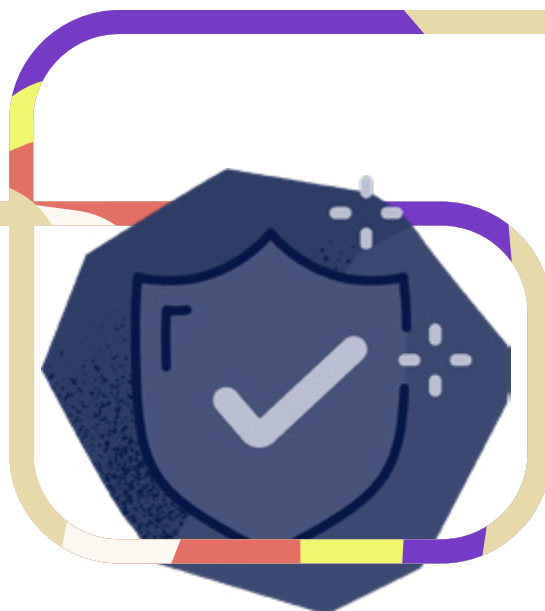
Outcomes

- **Youth detention environments are consistently safe, secure, and supportive, ensuring that children and young people feel protected and able to engage in therapeutic interventions effectively.**
- **Security measures at Ashley Youth Detention Centre and the future youth justice facility are continuously improved and aligned with best practices, exceeding safety standards and addressing the unique needs of children and young people in detention.**
- **Security risk management is improved, ensuring that safety protocols are robust, regularly reviewed, and responsive to the evolving needs of youth justice.**
- **Children and young people in detention consistently benefit from a stable environment, where safety is prioritised, allowing for meaningful therapeutic engagement and positive long-term outcomes.**

1.1

Continue to enhance electronic surveillance in youth detention

COI Recommendation
12.17



Why we are doing this

Enhancing electronic surveillance is one way to ensure that the risk of harm to children and young people in detention is reduced. It enables internal and external oversight of interactions, improves accountability and helps to prevent potential abuse of power. It is what victim-survivors have strongly advocated for to keep children and young people safe in detention.

What we have done so far

We have introduced body-worn cameras and installed more than 170 Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras to ensure that all communal and public areas at Ashley Youth Detention Centre are subject to electronic surveillance.

Implementation of the electronic access control re-keying system on all bathroom viewing panels has been completed, supporting the safety and dignity of children and young people in detention.

The technology solution uses a smart key that is programmed to the individual locks, to control and monitor access.

What we will do next

An integrated control system, including the installation of a control room is underway. The control room will provide live management of site operations to support safety for children, young people, staff and visitors to ensure safety and optimal wellbeing.

We will continue to monitor, evaluate and improve the use of body-worn cameras and CCTV cameras.

All the above safety measures will be considered in the design of the Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility, replacing Ashley Youth Detention Centre.



1.2

Develop and operationalise a business continuity plan to proactively manage significant risk

COI Recommendation
12.17

Why we are doing this

Ensuring that security risk management in youth detention settings is fit for purpose and aligns with the Commission of Inquiry's final report is important for the safety and security of children and young people and youth justice staff.

What we have done so far

We have developed a comprehensive risk register which identifies risks along with controls and treatment plans. This is an active document that forms a basis for sound decision making and is subject to the changing risks and challenges in custodial youth justice.

We have developed a draft Business Continuity Plan to address the specific risks of children and young people in a youth detention setting. This plan addresses the escalation of events that may occur and how they are to be managed.

What we will do next

We will review and update the risk register in line with governance arrangements and in the custodial youth justice operational context. We will also further improve the risk register to include both inherent and target risk ratings.

The draft Business Continuity Plan will be reviewed by an expert consultant to ensure it is consistent with the emergency management framework and fit for purpose. This will include stakeholder engagement and training and testing, including refresher training for youth justice staff.

1.3

Develop and operationalise an emergency response system

COI Recommendation
12.17



Why we are doing this

The current custodial youth justice emergency management system is no longer fully aligned to best-practice procedures used by local emergency services. While procedures for responding to incidents (fire, requests for assistance, medical emergency) exist, the current system requires review to ensure it is contemporary and fit for purpose.

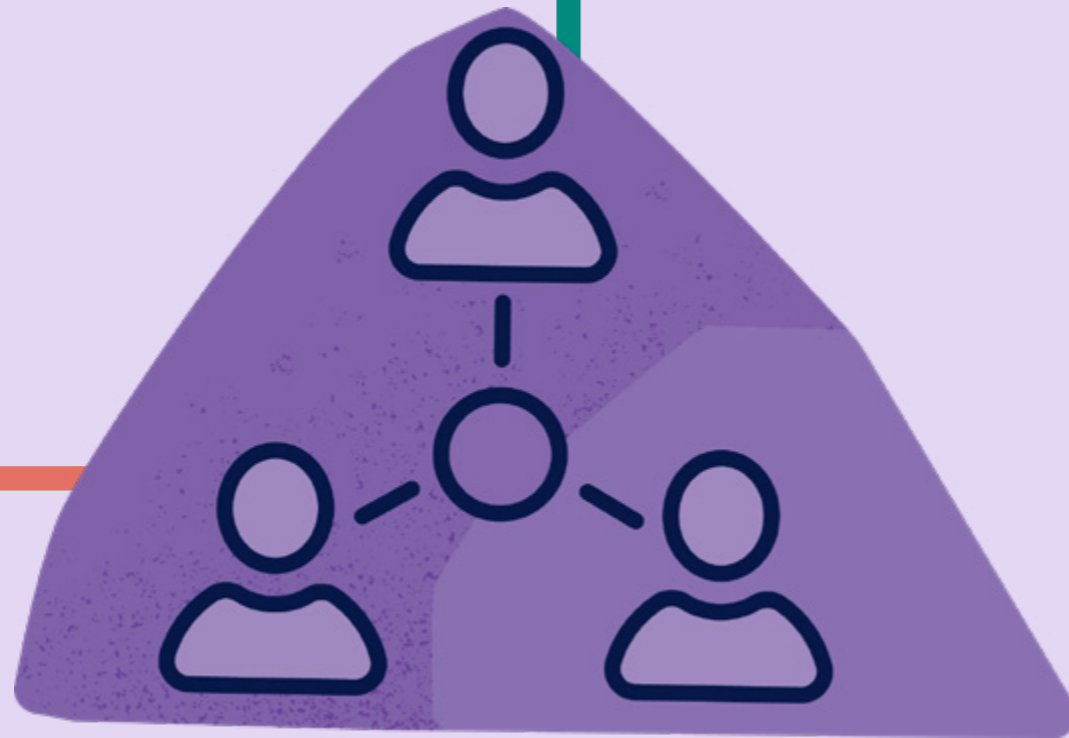
What we have done so far

We have developed a new Emergency Response (ER) System, including procedures, drills and training to support custodial youth justice staff to effectively respond to a wide range of incidents. A consultant with considerable youth justice, training and ER procedural expertise is engaged to develop and deliver the new ER System and training package.

What we will do next

We will implement the ER System to support custodial youth justice staff to effectively respond to a wide range of incidents, including training drills.

Establishment of a Safety Incident and Response Team six-month trial will support the emergency response model implementation.



Action 2 Leadership and culture

Strengthening leadership and culture in youth detention

This action is dedicated to driving transformative cultural change within the youth justice system, ensuring that children and young people are at the centre of all decisions and actions that affect their lives. This focus extends beyond simply prioritising their voices – it involves embedding a child-centred approach across youth detention operations.

A critical component of this effort is strengthening leadership in custodial youth services. By fostering strong, compassionate leadership, we aim to create an environment where the needs and perspectives of children and young people are not only heard but actively shape the direction and policies of the system.

This commitment to leadership development will cultivate a culture of accountability, respect, and continuous improvement, where leaders are equipped to advocate for and support the well-being of every young person in their care.

Motivator

“Organisations should listen to children and young people’s ideas and take them on board.”

– NICOLE, A YOUNG TASMANIAN.

Outputs 2024-2026

Outputs	COI Rec.	Completion date
2.1 Strengthen leadership roles and structures in youth detention	12.6	July 2026
2.2 Establish dedicated roles, policies and processes for driving cultural change in detention	12.7	July 2026
2.3 Develop and implement a participation and empowerment strategy for children and young people in detention	12.8	July 2026
2.4 Develop and implement a professional conduct policy for youth detention	12.10	July 2024

Outcomes

- **Leaders and operational staff in youth justice settings demonstrate values and behaviours that create a positive and psychologically safe culture.**
- **There is zero tolerance for the abuse or endangerment of children and young people.**
- **Executive and team leadership across youth justice services that demonstrates the skills, aptitudes and capabilities required to lead a child safe organisation.**
- **Clear conduct and behaviour standards protect children and young people and ensure staff accountability.**
- **Children and young people are empowered to have a say and influence decisions that affect their lives.**

2.1

Strengthen leadership roles and structures in youth detention

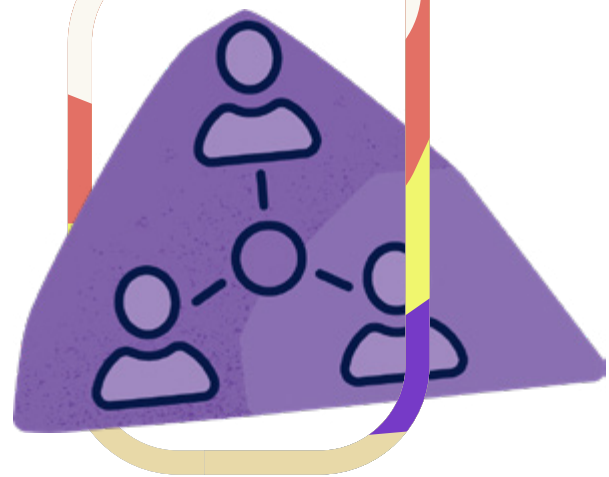
COI Recommendation
12.6

Why we are doing this

Strengthening leadership in youth detention will assist to drive and support cultural change. This includes improving governance arrangements and establishing accountability for cultural change and links to the DECYP strategic direction.

What we have done so far

We have strengthened leadership in youth justice with the addition of several senior leadership roles: a Director Youth Detention, a Director Clinical Services and a Director Community and Custodial Youth Justice. In addition, an Assistant Principal at the Ashley School has been employed to enable the Principal to have a greater role in leadership across the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. Leaders in youth justice are engaging in a continuous cycle of cultural improvement.



What we will do next

We have strengthened leadership to provide greater support for cultural change and will continue this work to ensure leaders have experience and knowledge in therapeutic models of care and skills to provide strategic leadership and drive cultural change. This includes key performance indicators and a governance structure to deliver improvements to service quality and clinical practice.



2.2

Establish dedicated roles, policies and process for driving cultural change in detention

COI Recommendation
12.7

Why we are doing this

The Government recognises that strengthening leadership in youth justice and monitoring and evaluating our progress towards cultural change is critical.

It is a vital part of ensuring children and young people in youth detention are supported by a skilled, capable and supported workforce that demonstrates the attitudes and behaviours required for a safe and youth-centred practice.

What we have done so far

The recent staffing changes have resulted in a shift in the staffing demographic in cultural diversity, age, gender, qualifications, and experience in youth detention.

Youth justice leaders have developed a set of cultural drivers for custodial youth detention. From these, leaders have worked with staff and children and young people to develop positive centre-wide behavioural expectations aligned with the department's values. This work is foundational to establishing a child-safe culture.

What we will do next

We will recruit and onboard a cultural change lead for youth justice. This position will support leaders to facilitate cultural change, and ensure leaders and staff have the appropriate skills and core capabilities required to enable change.

We will develop a targeted action plan to support cultural change in youth justice which will be aligned to the broader cultural change roadmap for DECYP and commence implementation of the action plan.

2.3

Develop and implement a empowerment and participation strategy for children and young people in detention

COI Recommendation
12.8

Why we are doing this

Young people in detention have the right to be heard and to influence decisions that directly affect their lives. Empowering them to participate in these decisions not only supports their safety and wellbeing but also fosters a culture where their voices are valued and acted upon.

By developing an Empowerment and Participation Strategy, we aim to create an environment where children and young people in detention can safely share their views on policies, programs, and practices, ensuring that their perspectives lead to meaningful change.

What we have done so far

We have begun co-designing the Empowerment and Participation Strategy with input from key stakeholders, including children and young people in detention.

In March 2024, we reviewed recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry related to empowering children and young people and incorporated these into our broader reform efforts. We have also reactivated the Young People Consultation Group, updating its procedures and terms of reference with contributions from children and young people, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, and the Custodial Inspector.

What we will do next

The next step is to fully develop the Empowerment and Participation Strategy, ensuring it creates a safe space for children and young people in detention to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making.

We will establish ongoing advisory groups that include children and young people with lived experience of detention, ensuring that their participation is meaningful and leads to real changes in the system.

Additionally, we will make sure that all children and young people in detention are informed of their rights and have opportunities to engage in regular consultations.

The effectiveness of the strategy will be monitored and evaluated to ensure it continually improves and meets the needs of the children and young people it serves.

2.4

Develop and implement a professional conduct policy for youth detention

COI Recommendation
12.10

Why we are doing this

We are committed to creating a culture in custodial youth justice settings which is safe for children and young people by establishing clear conduct and behaviour standards for all staff. The conduct and behaviour policy, along with supporting conduct standards, is designed to protect children and young people from harm by setting out explicit expectations for staff behaviour and outlining processes for addressing misconduct.

This work aligns with the Department for Education, Children and Young People's framework for safeguarding children and young people and addresses the increased risk of institutional child sexual abuse when conduct expectations are unclear or inconsistently enforced. By implementing these standards, we aim to prevent boundary violations, misconduct, and child abuse, ensuring that all workers, volunteers, contractors, and sub-contractors adhere to a professional code of conduct that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

What we have done so far

We have drafted the conduct and behaviour policy and supporting conduct standards through a consultation process involving staff and union representatives.

This policy defines unacceptable behaviours, including misconduct and criminal conduct, and provides guidance on maintaining

professional boundaries, particularly in small communities. It also outlines the procedures for reporting concerning behaviours and the consequences of failing to adhere to the standards. This work ensures that all staff, including those in youth detention, understand the expectations for their conduct and the repercussions of non-compliance.

What we will do next

The next steps involve continuous improvement of the policy and standards including mandatory training sessions for all staff, regular refresher training, and clear communication of the policy to young people and their families. We will also establish mechanisms to ensure that volunteers, contractors, and sub-contractors comply with the professional conduct policy, including monitoring and enforcement processes.

Additionally, we will integrate these conduct standards with other relevant custodial policies, such as those related to the use of force, isolation, and personal searches.

By embedding these standards across all levels of the organisation, we aim to foster a culture of accountability and safety, ensuring that all individuals working with children and young people in youth justice settings are held to the highest standards of conduct.



Action 3 Capable workforce

Ensure that staff in youth detention are properly equipped and qualified to undertake their roles now and into the future

This action is centred on addressing the complex needs of children and young people in detention by ensuring that staff are appropriately qualified, skilled, and capable of fostering a safe culture for children and young people. Meaningful change in youth detention requires a thorough review of staffing qualifications, aptitudes, and training.

The focus is on recruiting staff who demonstrate empathy, relationship-building skills, and a commitment to therapeutic practices.

Ongoing professional development, reflective practice, and supervision from qualified professionals are emphasised to ensure staff can effectively support children and young people. Additionally, maintaining adequate staffing levels is crucial to prevent operational challenges which may impact on the rights and wellbeing of those in detention.

Motivator

“Proper training is so important because without the proper training you can’t connect with the young person, and you won’t know how to help them properly.”

– ELISE, A YOUNG TASMANIAN.

Outputs 2024-2026

Outputs	COI Rec.	Completion date
3.1 Develop a workforce strategy for youth justice services across Tasmania and commence implementation	12.9	July 2029
3.2 Provide training in Certificate IV in Youth Justice for all staff in custodial youth justice		July 2029
3.3 Provide training to staff on new personal searches, isolation, and use of force procedures	12.35	July 2026

Long-term outcomes

- **Support cultural change to create a child safe environment for children and young people in the youth justice system.**
- **Build capacity within the workforce so that all staff have the required dispositions, skills and capabilities for their role.**
- **Strengthen professional learning opportunities in trauma-informed and therapeutic approaches to practice for professionals and other workers in the youth justice service system.**
- **Increase cultural competence across the youth justice system to enable staff to identify and work in culturally appropriate ways.**
- **Develop an ongoing culture of learning, inquiry and continuous improvement, including collaborative opportunities for professional development, supervision and support, and opportunities for best practice to be shared and supported.**

3.1

Develop a workforce strategy for youth justice services across Tasmania and commence implementation

COI Recommendation
12.9

Why we are doing this

Working in a custodial environment requires competent, supported and well-trained staff. A priority of ongoing professional development for youth Justice staff ensures workers have the contemporary skills they need to support our objective of being a child-safe organisation.

The plan will include immediate actions being undertaken to ensure Services for Youth Justice has the right people with the right skills to support children and young people on the youth justice service continuum. This includes induction processes, on-the-job training, leadership training, and implementation of the culture change program.

What we have done so far

We have implemented a comprehensive staff wellbeing support package at Ashley Youth Detention Centre, including the availability of critical incident debriefing through the Employee Assistance Program. This is supplemented by proactive supervision and clinical support for youth workers, which assists them to support the children and young people with intensive needs. A dedicated Work Health and Safety consultant coordinates responses and provides ongoing supervision for staff, while leaders receive coaching to build their capability in supporting teams following critical incidents or allegations of sexual abuse.

Improvements to the youth worker onboarding program, along with the ongoing implementation of robust policies and procedures, are already in place. The Ashley Youth Detention Centre's commitment to strong leadership and governance, as well as the introduction of appropriate qualifications, training, and support for youth workers, is critical to drive cultural change. These measures, combined with the enhanced wellbeing supports, will lead to a safe and supportive environment for both staff and children and young people at Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

What we will do next

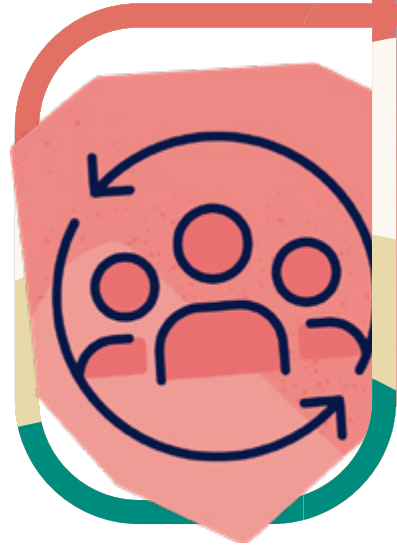
We will develop a Youth Justice Services Workforce Strategy and Action Plan for staffing Custodial and Community Youth Justice. The Strategy and Action Plan will address immediate operational needs at Ashley Youth Detention Centre and align to the broader DECYP Workforce Strategy.

The workforce strategy for the youth justice sector will be developed in line with the Commission of Inquiry recommendations and is a long-term plan for ensuring youth justice services across Tasmania have a valued and capable workforce. The strategy will have a strong leadership and values and capability-based recruitment and retention focus and include clinical supervision.

3.2

Provide training in Certificate IV in Youth Justice for all staff in custodial youth justice

COI Recommendation
12.9



Why we are doing this

Working in a custodial youth justice environment requires competent and well-trained staff.

A priority of ongoing professional development for Youth Justice staff ensures workers have the contemporary skills they need to support our objective of being a child-safe organisation.

This action links to the Youth Justice Workforce Strategy.

What we have done so far

All new youth workers undertake a six-week youth worker induction course which includes the expected standards of behaviour and training in policies and procedures with a focus on children and young people's rights, followed by dedicated 'buddy shifts' to apply their learnings under supervision.

The custodial youth justice Learning and Development Framework is currently being reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose as we move towards a more therapeutic approach.

What we will do next

We are currently procuring a Certificate IV in Youth Justice training package, tailored to custodial youth justice operations and delivered face-to-face.

The intent is that all youth workers have appropriate qualifications for the roles they are undertaking, underpinned by a trauma-informed therapeutic approach.

3.3



Provide training to staff on new personal searches, isolation and use of force procedures

COI Recommendation
12.35

Why we are doing this

Ongoing training and professional development for youth detention centre staff on legislation, policies and procedures on searches, isolation and the use of force will ensure consistency of understanding across the Department for Education, Children and Young People, strengthen internal oversight of restrictive practices in detention and improve those practices.

The training and professional development will support DECYP to achieve broader cultural change in youth detention.

What we have done so far

The current trainer has been made permanent, and recruitment has commenced for a second trainer role that will also support community youth justice.

We are currently updating the Use of Isolation procedure.

We have engaged a suitably qualified external supplier to develop a new use of force model and training package, founded on relational security principles and therapeutic practices.

What we will do next

We will make updates to procedures and practice for the use of mechanical restraints, use of force, isolation and searches. This will include updates to the associated training, including the provision for regular refresher training to ensure skills remain up to date.

A review and update of the youth worker induction program will take place, along with the implementation of a 12-hour staff roster which allows time for dedicated training days.



Action 4 Child-centred services

Provide caring, compassionate, therapeutic, child-centred services in youth detention

Our child-centred approach in youth justice focuses on providing therapeutic care and support to children and young people in detention.

This includes specialised clinical services, a case management framework, and maintaining strong connections with family and community, particularly for Aboriginal children and young people.

We aim to create a culturally safe environment, address complex behaviours through positive support programs, and establish best practices for preventing and responding to harmful behaviours.

Our goal is to help children and young people rehabilitate and build a positive future within a supportive and respectful framework.

Motivator

“I know an adult is taking me seriously when they remain focused on listening to me and actually take action not just tell me stuff and not do it.”

– K, A YOUNG ABORIGINAL TASMANIAN.

Outputs 2024-2026

Outputs	COI Rec.	Completion date
4.1 Implement the youth justice model of care and practice framework in youth detention	12.18	July 2026
4.2 Establish clear processes and guidelines for the case management of children and young people in detention	12.19	July 2026
4.3 Facilitate connection to family and community for children and young people in detention	12.23	July 2024
4.4 Ensure youth detention is culturally safe for Aboriginal children and young people	12.29	July 2026
4.5 Develop best practice, prevent, and proactively respond to harmful sexual behaviours	12.30	July 2026

Outcomes

- Youth justice practices are non-punitive, child-centred, trauma-informed, evidence-based and culturally safe.
- The complex behaviours and multifaceted needs of children and young people in detention are addressed by clear case management processes and guidelines.
- Connections between children and young people and their family and communities are maintained while in detention.
- Tasmanian Aboriginal children and young people are culturally safe while in youth detention.

4.1

Implement the Youth Justice Model of Care and practice framework in youth detention

COI Recommendation
12.18

Why we are doing this

We are committed to transforming youth justice practices to ensure that detention facilities are non-punitive, child-centred, trauma-informed, evidence based and culturally safe. To achieve this, we have identified the need for a Clinical Services Team within custodial youth justice. This team will provide essential services, including speech therapy, psychology, and counselling to support the complex needs of children and young people in detention.

The intent is to adopt national and international best practices that equip staff and children and young people with the skills needed to manage behaviours of concern effectively, without resorting to force or restrictive practices, while ensuring children and young people receive high-quality therapeutic care.

What we have done so far

We are continually revising the Behaviour Development Plan and aligning the principles of positive behaviour support to ensure it is grounded in trauma-informed and therapeutic practice principles.

The Youth Justice Model of Care is being finalised and focuses on creating a supportive operating philosophy and service standards aligned with child-centred and trauma-informed principles.

The Director of Clinical Services has been appointed and is leading strategy planning. This role is working closely with both

community and custodial youth justice staff to ensure the new models meet operational needs and support a therapeutic approach.

Additionally, we have initiated additional staff training to equip them with the skills required for evidence-based, trauma-informed interventions.

What we will do next

Our next steps include the implementation of the Youth Justice Model of Care in Services for Youth Justice, ensuring it reflects non-punitive, evidence-based, and culturally safe practices.

We will continue to recruit key positions for the Clinical Services Team, including the Manager of Clinical Services.

Ongoing staff training will focus on enhancing their ability to anticipate and de-escalate behaviours, including the use of non-aversive response strategies, and teaching children and young people alternatives to the behaviours of concern.

We will also collaborate with inspection bodies to review and update standards and guidelines for behaviour management programs, ensuring they align with best practices for supporting children and young people with trauma backgrounds and emotional regulation challenges. Through these efforts, we aim to create a safer, more rehabilitative environment for children and young people in detention, supported by a strong clinical services framework.

4.2

Establish clear processes and guidelines for the case management of children and young people in detention

COI Recommendation
12.19

Why we are doing this

We are committed to establishing clear processes and guidelines for the case management of children and young people in detention to address the complex and multifaceted needs of this population. Many of these children and young people have experienced cognitive impairments, trauma, mental health issues, and substance misuse, compounded by involvement with the child protection system.

A collaborative, multidisciplinary approach is essential to effectively support their rehabilitation, ensuring that their health, wellbeing, and criminogenic needs are addressed through comprehensive assessments, young person-centred case planning, and individualised therapeutic services.



This approach aims to create safety, reduce offending, and improve both immediate and long-term outcomes for children and young people in detention, while also recognising the distinct cultural needs of Aboriginal children and young people who are over-represented in the system.

What we have done so far

We are currently developing a Case Management Framework to support coordinated and consistent case planning and service delivery for children and young people within the youth justice system.

This framework is being designed to bring together multidisciplinary teams, ensuring that professionals from various fields, such as justice, health, education, and social services work collaboratively to meet the needs of each child and young person.

We are addressing the ways of working between operational and professional services staff, to ensure the needs of young people remains at the centre.



4.3

What we will do next

Our next steps include finalising and implementing the Case Management Framework, which will ensure a coordinated and multidisciplinary approach to assessing and responding to the individual needs of children and young people in detention. This framework will maximise access to therapeutic and culturally safe services, addressing the complex factors contributing to offending. We will also develop clearer roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders involved in the care of children and young people, ensuring that operational concerns do not overshadow rehabilitation and therapeutic interventions.

Additionally, we will work towards creating a simpler and more effective throughcare approach to case management, ensuring that every young person can participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Through these efforts, we aim to provide comprehensive child-centred support that guides children and young people towards positive outcomes and reduces the likelihood of reoffending.

Facilitate connection to family and community for children and young people in detention

COI Recommendation
12.23

Why we are doing this

It is vital that children and young people in detention maintain connection with their family and communities. The Maintaining Connection with Family and Community action is targeted at ensuring this connection is respected, promoted and that barriers are deconstructed.

Connection to community and culture is important for Aboriginal children and young people to maintain a sense of cultural identity.



What we have done so far

To ensure connection with family and community, we have developed a policy that recognises the importance to children and young people in detention of maintaining or building connections with their family and community. The policy specifies ways to promote such connections, and clearly states that the entitlement to maintain or build such connections cannot be denied based on behaviour.

We provide reasonable assistance (including financial assistance) to members of a child or young person's family or Aboriginal community to enable them to frequently visit the child or young person, particularly where family members or Aboriginal community members have barriers to accessing the youth detention facility.

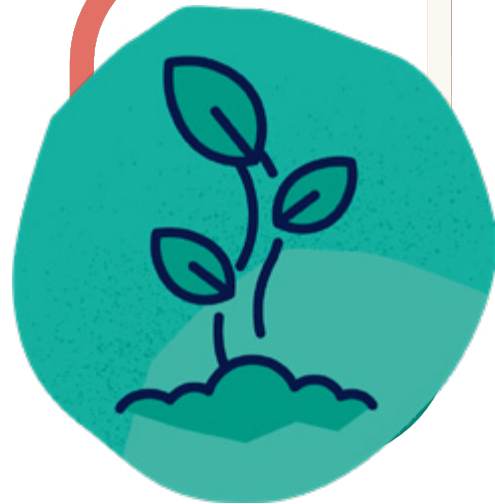
What we will do next

Evaluation of the Connection to Family and Community procedure will be completed in consultation with youth justice staff, and children and young people and their families to ensure the identified outcomes have been achieved.

4.4

Ensure youth detention is culturally safe for Aboriginal children and young people

COI Recommendation
12.29



Why we are doing this

We are committed to making youth detention culturally safe for Aboriginal children and young people. Recognising the importance of connection to family, community, and culture for their wellbeing, we aim to strengthen cultural support within the youth justice system.

What we have done so far

Connections with Aboriginal organisations are fostered through case management. Partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) have been fostered, and culturally specific programs have been implemented in collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Service and other ACCOs. There are also programs in place at Ashley School and we are working on strengthening these programs to ensure a high level of cultural support to children and young people while they are in detention.

What we will do next

We will establish the role of Aboriginal Liaison Officer at Ashley Youth Detention Centre to provide dedicated support to Aboriginal children and young people. This role will facilitate cultural support and involvement in case planning, case management, and exit planning, further embedding cultural safety within the youth detention system.

4.5

Develop best practice to prevent and proactively respond to harmful sexual behaviours in youth detention

COI Recommendation
12.30

Why we are doing this

To support best practice and prevent, and proactively respond to harmful sexual behaviours. Providing timely access to specialist therapeutic interventions will reduce the occurrence and impacts of harmful sexual behaviour toward children and young people in youth detention.

What we have done so far

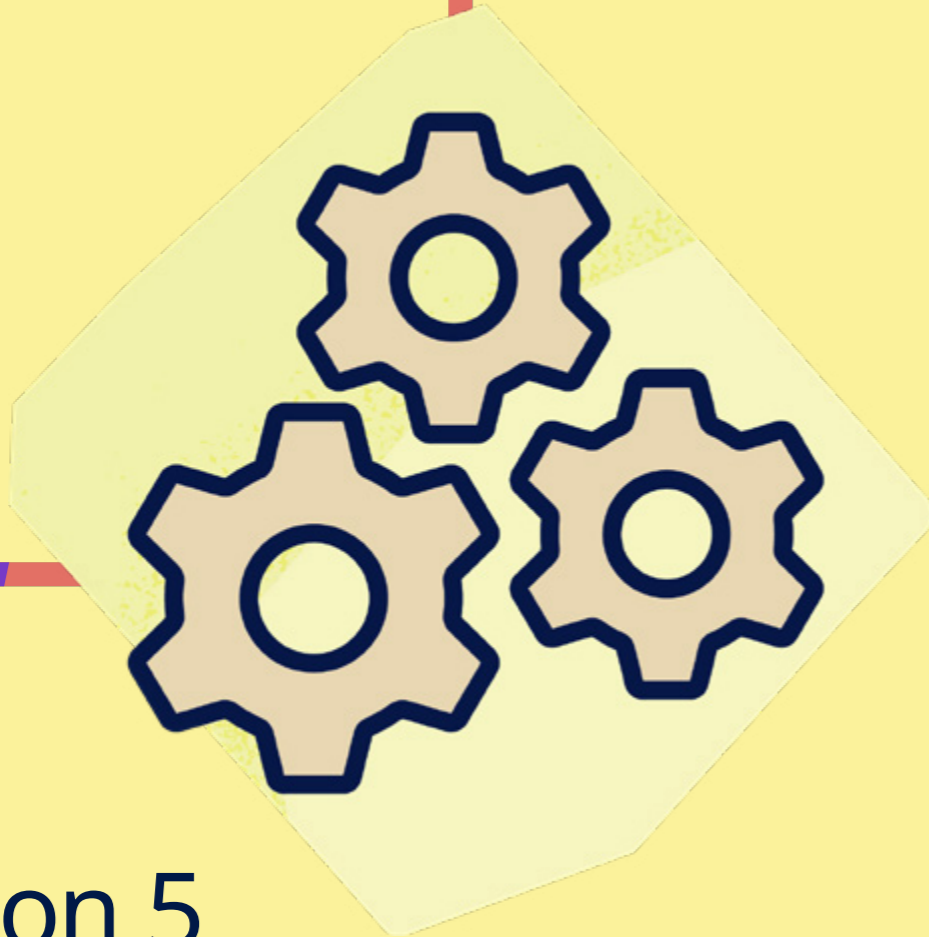
Scoping has commenced and includes proactively collaborating with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and all relevant internal Business Units in DECYP to begin the development of the Harmful Sexual Behaviours Support Unit.

What we will do next

We will establish a Harmful Sexual Behaviours Unit to support best practice responses to harmful sexual behaviours in custodial youth detention.

This includes development of youth justice specific harmful sexual behaviours policies, protocols and practice guidelines to support best practice responses to harmful sexual behaviours in custodial youth detention.

We will also implement a program as a supplementary strategy to address the heightened risk of harmful sexual behaviours in detention.



Action 5 Reforming practice

Improve processes to champion wellbeing and safety of children and young people in youth detention

The aim of this action is to transform youth detention practices to ensure they are trauma-informed, child-centred, and aligned with international legal standards.

This includes protecting children and young people from the inappropriate or excessive use of isolation, force, and invasive searches. Isolation should never be used as a form of punishment, and force must only be applied when necessary to prevent imminent harm. Our goal is to create a detention environment that prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of children and young people while maintaining necessary security.

As part of this commitment, we are reviewing and refining models and procedures for personal searches, isolation, and the use of force. This includes aligning practices with contemporary standards and the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry to ensure that all procedures safeguard children and young people and provide transparency and accountability.

We will continue to refine these procedures, making them publicly accessible and ensuring they are grounded in evidence-based, trauma-informed care.

Motivator

“Organisations that follow rules show children and young people that they are safe.”

- CHARLIE, A YOUNG TASMANIAN.

Outputs 2024-2026

Outputs	COI Rec.	Completion date
5.1 Develop and refine models and procedures for personal searches, isolation, and use of force	12.31, 12.32, 12.33	July 2026
5.2 Develop and implement a new complaints management model for youth detention	12.35	July 2026
5.3 Improve transfer processes from youth detention to adult facilities	12.25	July 2026
5.4 Improve record keeping processes in youth detention	12.4	July 2026

Outcomes

- **Children and young people at Ashley Youth Detention Centre will experience improved safety, access to therapeutic supports, and practice that includes the views of the young person, their family, and the Commissioner for Children and Young People.**
- **An increase of information management capability and maturity across youth justice, ensuring a more responsive and transparent system.**
- **Improved state recordkeeping practices through a coordinated program of business improvement and capability building.**
- **Victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts can access relevant information held in the Tasmanian Archives and DECYP, including records collected through the Commission of Inquiry.**

5.1

Develop and refine models and procedures for personal searches, isolation and use of force in youth detention

COI Recommendation
12.31, 12.32, 12.33

Why we are doing this

We are committed to ensuring that youth detention practices are trauma-informed, child-centred, and aligned with international legal standards.

It is vital to protect children and young people from inappropriate and excessive use of isolation, force, and invasive searches. Isolation must never be used as a form of punishment, and the use of force should only be permitted when strictly necessary to prevent imminent harm. Our goal is to create a detention environment that prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of children and young people, while also maintaining security.

What we have done so far

We are undertaking a broad Legislative Review Program, including substantive reviews of the *Youth Justice Act 1997* and the *Children, Young Person and Their Families Act 1997*.

These reviews aim to incorporate the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and establish a contemporary, trauma-informed approach. We have

developed a new approach of isolation, updated procedures, and improved documentation and reporting on isolation practices. Additionally, we have refined the procedure for personal searches to ensure they are conducted on reasonable grounds, with appropriate authorisation, and without the use of fully unclothed searches.

To enhance safety and security, we have operationalised a body scanner, improved CCTV coverage to eliminate blind spots, and introduced body-worn cameras for staff. These measures ensure that children and young people and staff are protected, and that detention practices are transparent and accountable.

What we will do next

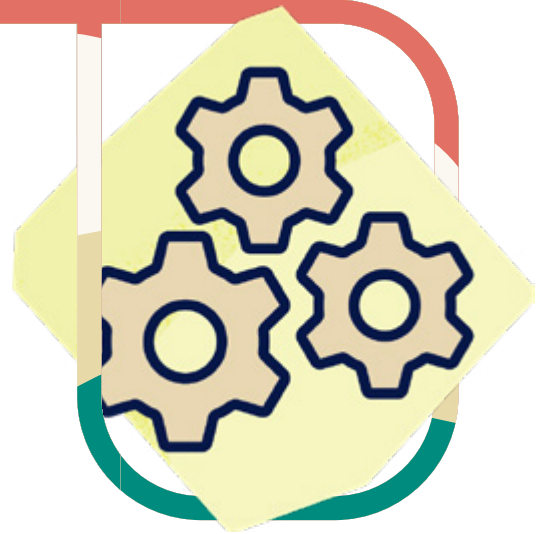
We will continue refining procedures and practices for the use of mechanical restraints, force, isolation, and searches. We will also enhance staff training to align with these updated procedures. To further improve surveillance, we are planning the installation of an integrated control room for continuous monitoring.

We will introduce legislation to amend the *Youth Justice Act 1997* to explicitly prohibit fully unclothed searches and clarify the legal boundaries around the use of isolation and force. This includes defining isolation as confinement that prevents contact with other detainees, prohibiting its use as punishment, and establishing that force must only be used as a last resort and for the minimum time necessary. Through these actions, we aim to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in detention while maintaining a secure environment.

5.2

Develop and implement a new complaints management model for youth detention

COI Recommendation
12.35



Why we are doing this

An effective complaints process is critical to creating a safe detention environment, including independent external oversight of the processes and decisions.

Children and young people must be confident that there is always a mechanism for their concerns to be heard and decisions re-visited if required.

Currently, young people in detention have a range of avenues available to raise concerns and lodge complaints. Children and young people in detention may lodge a complaint by using the help form and/or directly with the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Advocate for Young People in Detention.

What we have done so far

After a review of the complaint management practices, a Complaint Management Oversight Unit (CMO) within the Department for Education, Children and Young People was established to strengthen the complaints management process for children and young people.

We have strengthened the Custodial Youth Justice Incident Review Committee (IRC). The IRC critically reviews all serious incidents occurring in the centre in the previous week, including those that lead to complaints, to ensure compliance with policies, laws and international conventions, that there are sufficient grounds to justify actions, continuous improvement opportunities are identified, and practice feedback is provided to operational managers and youth workers.

What we will do next

We will continue to review and respond to complaints in a proactive, objective and thorough manner and focus on continuous improvement with a focus on safeguarding young people.

We will also continue to review the Custodial Youth Justice complaint management practices to strengthen investigations and communication with children and young people and other stakeholders.

5.3

Improve transfer processes from youth detention to adult facilities

COI Recommendation
12.25

Why we are doing this

We are committed to ensuring that any transfer of a young person from youth detention to an adult correctional facility is conducted with the utmost care and consideration for their wellbeing.

The decision to transfer must be made in a way that protects the young person from harm, upholds their rights, and prioritises their best interests. International human rights standards emphasise the importance of housing young people separately from adults in the criminal justice system, as young people with challenging behaviours and complex needs – especially those with cognitive disabilities – are highly vulnerable to abuse in adult prisons. Therefore, before any transfer, all alternatives must be thoroughly explored to avoid this outcome.

What we have done so far

We have initiated the development of a new approach to managing transfers of young people from youth detention to adult facilities. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Justice to ensure that the new process is comprehensive and considers all necessary factors, including the young person's safety, access to therapeutic supports, and the views of the young person, their family, and the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

What we will do next

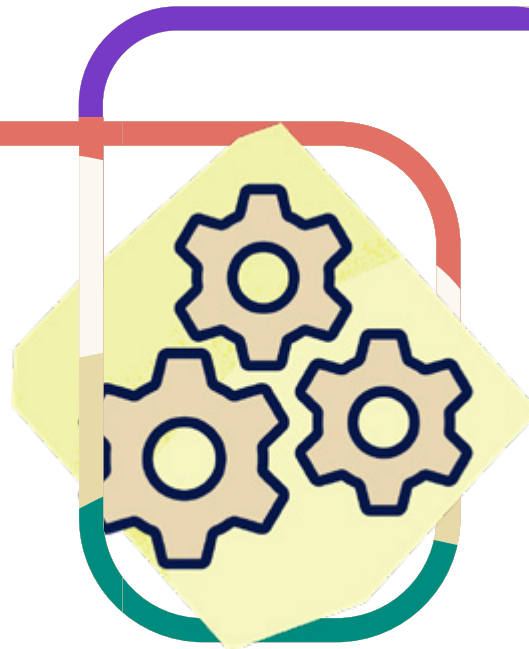
We will formalise a new process for approving transfers to adult correctional facilities, which will limit transfers to young people aged 16 or older and will require oversight from an independent body. This process will include a notification provision to the Commissioner for Children and Young People for any proposed transfer.

Additionally, the Department for Education, Children and Young People will be required to seek approval from the Magistrates Court (Youth Justice Division) or a new specialist children's division before any transfer is made. The focus will be on ensuring that all steps have been taken to avoid the transfer, that the transfer is in the young person's best interests, and that it is carried out in a way that minimises harm. Through these measures, we aim to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in detention, ensuring that transfers are a last resort and only occur under strictly necessary conditions.

5.4

Improve record keeping processes in youth detention

COI Recommendation
12.4



Why we are doing this

We are committed to ensuring that Tasmanians, especially victim-survivors, no longer face difficulties or delays in accessing their Custodial Youth Justice records or those related to any new youth detention facility.

These delays have historically caused significant distress, trauma, and frustration. The intent is to create a system where records are readily accessible, efficiently managed, and preserved in a way that supports the needs of those affected.

What we have done so far

We have conducted an extensive audit to assess the state of recordkeeping practices and the management of hardcopy records for children and young people in state care, informed by advice from the Tasmanian State Archivist. This audit revealed that over ten million pages of hardcopy files are stored across various service settings within the Department for Education, Children and Young People.

We have already begun the process of on-demand digitisation of these records, with a significant portion of Custodial Youth Justice records held in the Tasmanian Archives now digitised. Additionally, we are actively storing and retaining custodial youth justice

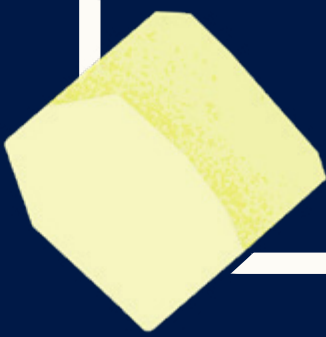
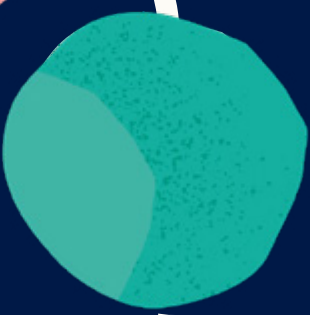
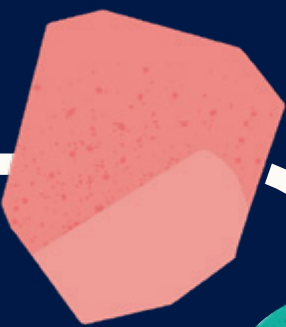
surveillance data (CCTV) in accordance with retention guidelines to ensure all records related to children and young people in care are preserved.

What we will do next

Our next steps include developing robust business systems and processes for sorting, classifying, and digitising hardcopy records related to children and young people in youth justice and state care. We will also establish a process to ensure that victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts can access relevant information held in the Tasmanian Archives and the Department for Education, Children and Young People including records collected through the Commission of Inquiry.

We will also improve state recordkeeping practices through a coordinated program of business improvement and capability building. This will improve the creation, retention, management, and access to government records, aligning our practices with the National Royal Commission's records and recordkeeping principles.

Through these efforts, we will increase information management capability and maturity across government, ensuring a more responsive and transparent custodial youth justice system.



Tasmanian
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