



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–2025

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Children, Youth and Families

Reference: HCSD

Hearing: 12 November 2025

In relation to: Chief Practitioner - Child and youth protection services

Question received: 19 November 2025

Answer Due: 27 November 2025

1. What impact has the appointment of the Chief Practitioner had on the Child Protection System in the ACT?
2. Chief Practitioner (if present) what are your views of the current system, what issues would you like the Assembly to focus on, to enable us to improve outcomes?
3. In the annual report, your role is described as driving continuous improvement.
 - a. What does that mean in practice?
 - b. How do you determine what an 'improvement' would be?
 - c. How do you implement new ideas that come from that process?
 - d. Do you have a way of reviewing individual practice over time to ensure that continuous improvement suggestions are actually embedded in ongoing practice?

Mr Michael Pettersson MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The appointment of a Chief Practitioner within the ACT and the establishment of the Clinical Services and Practice Assurance Branch (CSPA) brings the Territory in line with other states and territories. It allows for a focus on contemporary practice, continuous improvement, leadership, capability development, stakeholder engagement and support in the delivery of high level service offerings to the children, young people and families engaged with Children, Youth and Families (CYF).

Since the appointment of the Chief Practitioner in September 2024, CYF has already seen a positive impact following their work and the work of the wider CSPA Branch. This impact includes:

- Greater consistency of practice with a clear focus on the best interests of the child or young person.

- Increased engagement with service partners in working collaboratively to support children, young people and families. Particularly in embedding early support for families to reduce the need for more stringent statutory responses.
 - Introduction of a new Practice Framework – Signs of Safety.
 - Development of a Clinical Governance Framework within CSPA to aid with good decision making and information sharing.
2. This question asks for an opinion and government employees do not provide personal views.
3. Please see below information:
- a. In practice, continuous improvement means the establishment of systems and processes that support for good practice (as underpinned by a practice framework) and are supported by strong governance allowing for accountability, measures of success and identification of areas of focus and growth.
 - b. Improvements, at this early stage of the implementation of the Signs of Safety Practice Framework includes consistency in practice measured by the application of the Signs of Safety methodology (that is, the use of a suite of tools and resources in working with children, young people and their families); and ensuring children, young people and families experience consistency in practice, are heard and supported to contribute to solutions in keeping their children safe. The implementation of Signs of Safety is supported by a new Clinical Governance framework.
 - c. Clinical Governance is a framework that considers practice themes from several sources. For example, it considers practice findings from case analyses that are undertaken on very complex child protection matters. These findings inform good practice and areas for practice enhancement and are considered against the Signs of Safety Practice Framework and used to inform areas of future work across CYF.
 - d. All practitioners within CYF are required to participate in supervision sessions. These sessions can be individual and group and follow the Signs of Safety Practice Framework methodology. The role of supervision in child protection and youth justice is critical. This not only affords practitioners with an opportunity to discuss and reflect on individual children, young people and families that they are working with, but is an important part of governance within a statutory environment to ensure practice is being implemented as intended.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date: 8-12-25

By the Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Mr Michael Pettersson MLA