



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by **Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA:**

Reference: Hearing on 15 November 2023, Annual Report of Community Services Directorate

In relation to: Children and Young People Protection Policy and Services and External Merits Review

The Annual Report states that 'Next Steps will be delivered over two 4-year action plans', and in answer to a QON from last year's Annual Report Hearings, the minister said that the first action plan was 'scheduled for public release in the first quarter of 2023' (QON no. 61).

1. How does one access the report recommending a model for external merits reviews?
2. It was said in the hearing that, whilst the legislative reforms necessary to establish external merits review should be passed before the end of the government's term, the service itself may not be operational. What steps will be necessary to implement external review following upcoming legislative changes?

Minister Stephen-Smith: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The '*ACT external merits review of child protection decisions: Model selection and implementation final report*' is published in the Document Library on the YourSay page at: <https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/changing-cyp-act-2008-stage-2>
2. Steps necessary to implement the external merits review include working with colleagues in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to:
 - finalise legislative reform through amendments to the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (expected to be introduced in 2024);
 - conduct implementation preparation including recruitment, training and development of policies and procedures; and
 - develop community awareness, education and communication materials.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:

Date:

29/11/23

By the Minister Families and Community Services, Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA