



What are the key areas for action?

Rapid Response will provide for:

- **Service response**
The level of priority access to services required by children and young people in care.
- **Case management**
Collaborative and consistent case management, care planning and review that is inclusive of carers, children and young people.
- **Assessment**
An increase in the capacity of the system to provide quality psychological, developmental, health and educational assessments.
- **Information sharing and privacy**
Information sharing practices and continuity of information management relevant to the child or young persons' education, wellbeing, life opportunities and best interests.

Endorsement:

The following agencies have endorsed and support the implementation of the 'Rapid Response' Framework in WA.

Department for Child Protection and Family Support
Department of Corrective Services
Department of Local Government and Communities
Department of the Attorney General
Department of Education
Department of Education Services
Department of Health
Department of Training and Workforce Development
Department of Housing
Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Sport and Recreation
Disability Services Commission
Drug and Alcohol Office
Western Australia Police
Mental Health Commission

RAPID RESPONSE

*Prioritising services for children
and young people in care*



'For far too long young people who have been in care have been 'invisible', largely absorbed into the disadvantaged sector ... they should occupy a special place in the collective mind of 'corporate parents' who need to be sure that their young people realise their maximum potential as human beings'

- (CREATE Report 2009)

Message from the Minister



I believe that every child and young person in care deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The reality is we see children and young people entering care with a number of significant medical, psychological, developmental, educational,

disabling conditions and behavioural problems.

The State Government's Rapid Response framework allows us to provide priority access to services that will respond to the needs of vulnerable children and young people in care.

I am committed to improving access to services for children in care so that they have the best possible life outcomes for a brighter future.

Helen Morton MLC

MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH; DISABILITY SERVICES;
CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Whose responsibility is it to protect children?

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility. Parents, communities, government and business all have a role to play. A unified approach is needed that recognises that the protection of children is not simply a matter for statutory child protection bodies (National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children, 2009).

Nationally and internationally it is recognised that children and young people who require protection and are taken into care, are a more vulnerable group and experience disadvantage across a range of areas.

What is Rapid Response?

Rapid Response is a Cabinet endorsed across-government framework and action plan to help address the specific and complex health, housing, psychological, educational and employment needs of children and young people in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

Many services provided to children and young people in care (or those who have been in care) are not adequately meeting their needs. These children and young people require a high level of priority access to services and potentially the development of additional services.

Why do we need Rapid Response?

In Australia, the numbers of children being removed from their parents as a result of abuse or neglect has more than doubled in the last decade. In Western Australia, there are over 4000 children and young people in care.

Children and young people removed from their family of origin will have experienced some level of trauma. As a result of this trauma, they are more likely to have specific and complex medical, psychological, educational, behavioural, developmental and other problems.

In the long term, children who have been in care, particularly where the child has had multiple placements, may also experience poorer outcomes, including:

- Inadequate housing or homelessness;
- Poorer educational outcomes (for example, less likely to complete Year 12);
- Unemployment;
- Difficulties with life skills (for example, budgeting, self care, nutrition);
- Mental health problems; and/or
- Drug and alcohol problems.

To respond to the needs of children and young people in care and improve their life outcomes, all government agencies have a role to play.