

Child Safe Organisations

Case Study Project



Overview

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) is working in close partnership with stakeholders selected from across four child-related industry sectors to develop a 'child safe' case study.

The case study will investigate current 'child safe' practices within a variety of organisations, with a view to identifying model practice and developing a self-assessment tool which may be adapted for broader application in child-related industry sectors.

Contributing organisations

To date, seven organisations that work with children have agreed to support the case study, representing sports and recreation (two organisations), emergency services (one organisation), religious services (one organisation) and education (three organisations).

Project advisors

To advise the project, The OCG has engaged Professor Stephen Smallbone; psychologist, Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Director of Griffith Youth Forensic Service, and an Australian Research Council 'Future' Fellow. Professor Smallbone's research is concerned with understanding and preventing sexual violence and abuse. His recent publications include the books *Situational Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse* (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006) and *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Evidence, Policy and Practice* (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008). Professor Smallbone was recently called to give expert testimony to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

As the case study progresses, the OCG will seek expert consultation in the fields of behavioural economics and regulatory reform.

What is a child safe organisation?

All children deserve a safe environment in which to live, learn, play and grow and organisations that work with children have an obligation to keep them safe from harm.

Often organisations rely on the Working With Children Check (WWCC) to protect children. While a WWCC is a prerequisite for child-related work in NSW, it can only evaluate a person's suitability to work with children based on previous, known records. Its purpose is to exclude people who are known to be unsuitable from child-related work; it does not predict future behaviour. Keeping children safe from harm requires much more.

For an organisation to be child safe, it must value, respect and welcome children and provide an environment that protects them from the risk of harm.

Becoming a child safe organisation takes commitment from those at the top and requires a whole-of-organisation approach. Organisational culture will also play a key role in determining success. Key elements of a child safe organisation include:

- Risk management strategy to identify and manage organisational risks of harm to children
- Policies that are child safe
- Code of conduct that clearly outlines what behaviours are acceptable
- Organisational culture that supports and promotes child-safe policies, procedures and practices.

About us

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) is an independent statutory authority. Its regulatory functions relate to out-of-home care, voluntary out-of-home care, adoption services and the new Working With Children Check in NSW. The OCG also regulates the employment of children under 15 years of age in the areas of entertainment, exhibition, still photography and door-to-door sales, and of children under 16 years of age with modelling.

The OCG encourages organisations to develop their capacity to be safe for children, and offers both half-day and full-day workshops on Child Safe Organisations.

Contact us

For more information about the Child Safe Organisations case studies project or the work of the Office of the Children's Guardian, please contact on (02) 8219 3605 or email morgan.lander@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au.