



# Child protection and you

New laws to keep  
you safe



Government of South Australia  
Department for Child Protection

## Introduction

New laws have been made to keep you safe and cared for by the right people.

This leaflet lists some of the important changes and what they mean for you.

More information can be found at [www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/new-laws](http://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/new-laws).

## Your guardian

If you can't live safely where you are anymore, somebody else must become your guardian. Your guardian is the person in charge of the Department for Child Protection, called the Chief Executive.



## Getting to know a carer

When your mum, dad or other person you live with cannot care for you, there are other people who will look after you. You may live with and be cared for by someone from your family or community, a foster care family or in a house supported by professional carers in residential care.

Before you move in with a foster or kinship carer, we will tell you lots of things about the people who may care for you. You will get to know who they are, where you are moving to, why they are the best person or service to care for you and other information such as where you might go to school and who else lives in the house.

If you are moving into residential care, you will be introduced to the main people who will look after you. You'll also meet any other children and young people who you might live with.

Your carer will also be given information about you such as your age, culture, family, likes, interests, schooling and health.

If there is something you don't want to share, you can let your case worker know. We will always accept your wishes unless it is something your carer needs to know to help keep you safe.



## **Listening to you**

Having your say is very important.

The new laws mean that people have to listen to you more and take your views, thoughts and feelings into account when making decisions about your life.

If this seems too hard, you can always tell your carer or someone else you trust instead, so they can share how you are feeling and what you want.

Once every year, someone from the Department for Child Protection will meet with you and your carer to talk about how you are going. This is called an 'annual review'. You will be able to talk about what you think, and what you would like to happen over the next year. If you don't want to talk, you can ask someone to speak for you.

## **Seeing your family**

While you are living with your relatives or a carer, your case worker's supervisor is now responsible for decisions about seeing your family. You can always talk to your carer or case workers about how you feel about visits.

## Staying connected to culture

If you are Aboriginal, you have a right to be supported to stay connected to your culture, community and country. The new laws make sure your case worker thinks about this.

Wherever possible, you will live with a relative or someone else from your cultural community. This is part of something called the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle'.

You also have the right to something called a 'cultural maintenance plan'. This plan could include lots of things, such as helping you to see people from your community, learning or keeping-up your culture and language, going to cultural events and celebrations and supporting your religious beliefs.



## Becoming an adult

If you are a young person leaving care, the Department for Child Protection will help you get ready to be an independent adult.

This includes helping you get important information such as your birth certificate, passport and records.

The department can also help you with other important things like finding a house, setting up a bank account, continuing your education and finding a job.



## Asking to have a decision changed

If you don't agree with a decision made about you, you can now ask for it to be looked at by the Chief Executive in charge of the Department for Child Protection.

If you are still unhappy, you might be able to ask to have the decision looked at again by what is called the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT).

If you don't agree with a decision that has been made about your contact arrangements, you can also ask for it to be looked at by a group of people called the Contact Arrangements Review Panel. They can review decisions about who you see and talk to, like your mum and dad, brothers and sisters and other people in your family and community.

Speak to your carer or case worker if you don't agree with a decision.



If you have any questions or want to find out more about the new laws, you can speak to your carer or case worker or visit

[www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/new-laws](http://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/new-laws).

## **If you need help**

If things are not going right for you, there is always someone you can talk to. This could be your case worker, a carer, a teacher or any other adult you trust.

If you don't want to talk to any of those people, you can also talk to someone from the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People.

Call 1800 275 664 or 8226 8570

Email [gcyp@gcyp.sa.gov.au](mailto:gcyp@gcyp.sa.gov.au)

## **How to make a complaint**

You have the right to make a complaint if you are unhappy about how you are being looked after or about the Department for Child Protection.

You can contact the department's Complaints Unit - a team of people who work for the Chief Executive.

[www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/complaints](http://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/complaints)

Call 1800 003 305