



IMPROVING CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

We are reforming child, youth and family services to ensure we strengthen families and keep children and young people safe and connected.

One part of this [plan for reform](#) is looking at the future design of our Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP).

We want to know how it can best support children, young people and families in our community whose needs are not being met through their existing support networks. This will help us ensure future services for children, young people and families effectively meet the needs of our growing population over the next 10 years to 2033.

Through different activities we wanted to hear the views and experiences of a wide range of people, including people currently accessing services, people who accessed services in the past and from frontline workers.

This listening report feeds back what we heard from young people and their families, as well as frontline workers working with young people through this process.

THE CONVERSATION

We ran workshops and surveys for young people and their families, as well as frontline workers working with young people and families.

We asked them:

- > How do young people and families find the services they need?
- > Are the services easy to access and meet their needs?
- > If a young person or family accesses one service, how easy is it to link up with other services they may need?
- > What can we do to improve people's experiences?

WHO WE ENGAGED

Surveys for young people and their families, as well as frontline workers working with young people were open via our YourSay Conversation website from 17 April 2023 to 5 July 2023.

Two 'World Cafés' were also held. A World Café is an event that brings people together to have conversations that matter and to share their experiences.

The first World Café was held on 27 April 2023 for frontline workers. The second was held on 18 May 2023 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers with lived experience of the child, youth and family service system.



In all these activities, we asked you questions about your experience with the Child, Youth and Family Service system. The questions related to 4 key topics:

- > **Referrals** – including how your referral happen, what worked well, what didn't work well and what could make a difference in the future.
- > **Access** – including if you accessed other services and supports, what worked well, what didn't work well and what could make a difference in the future.
- > **System navigation** – including how easy or hard it was to find services and supports when you needed them, what worked well, what didn't work well and what could make a difference in the future.
- > **Service experience** – including why you sought support, what worked well, what didn't work well and what could make a difference in the future.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

These are the key themes we heard from what you told us.

Make it easier to get help

- > You told us it's often hard to get the help you need because of eligibility criteria. Some criteria say when and who can get help. These criteria are not always clear and make it tough to access services.
- > You told us getting help can be confusing because of the jargon and language used. You didn't always know the words to use to get the help you needed. You also told us it is important to use words everyone can understand including providing information in different languages.
- > You told us some information about how to get help is old and not helpful. You told us old websites and documents need to be updated.

Access to good quality support for everyone who needs help

- > You want to be able to access high quality, capable support when you need it.
- > You told us sometimes the quality of support you get depends on when, where and who you get it from, and you can't always rely on the support meeting your needs or expectations and this can be a problem.

Gaps for different groups

- > Different groups including LGBTIQ+ community, people with a disability, carers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people told us how difficult it can be to find supports that meet their needs.
- > We heard some groups don't always feel welcome or safe to seek help.
- > We also heard some groups don't feel they have enough information available to them or within their communities about the help they can get.



Needing help at different times and easy to access places

- > You told us people need help at different times. You also said it is important for help to be available both during and outside normal business hours.
- > You told us the location of services can make a big difference. You said having services easily accessible nearby, or for services to come to you makes it easier for you to seek out and get help.

Waiting too long

- > Many of you told us the waiting time for help is too long and this often makes your situation harder. You said this was a big and common problem.

Common themes

We heard several common themes across discussions we had with people with lived experience. These included the need:

- > to ensure people are treated with respect when seeking or are getting help
- > to ensure the help provided to people with a disability is appropriate and adjustable to meet their needs
- > for specialised support for people experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence
- > for a faster response with specialised support for people with mental health needs
- > for specialised and culturally appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities
- > for supports and services provided to children, young people and families to have a trauma-informed lens.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We thank everyone who shared their experiences and views with us.

We are taking the information we heard from you to inform the future design of the CYFSP and we are also sharing the insights with other areas within the ACT Government looking to make reforms to how children, young people and families are supported including reforms to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) and to out of home care and child protection (Next Steps for Our Kids 2022-2030).

These activities were done as part of the commissioning of the CYFSP. You can learn more about this process by visiting our [CYFSP commissioning website](#).



KEY TIMINGS

- > **March 2023:** Cross-Government Workshops
- > **April 2023:** World Café for [frontline workers](#), Online Survey Opened
- > **May 2023:** [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience](#) World Café, Sector Workshops ([Needs and Problem framing](#), [Future Focus Workshop](#))
- > **July 2023:** Online Surveys Closed
- > **August 2023:** Government and Sector stakeholders Workshop ([Outcomes and Service Delivery](#))
- > **November 2023:** Listening report on what we heard: Lived Experience, Summary report to inform the CYFSP in 2024.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

52

We heard from 52
parents and carers

17

We heard from
17 young people

73

We heard from 73
frontline workers