

System review into out-of-home care (OOHC) Terms of Reference

1 Purpose

- 1.1 On 2nd of May 2024, the NSW Government announced the establishment of a system review (review) into out-of-home care (OOHC).
- 1.2 The review will examine the performance and sustainability of the current OOHC system, with a particular focus on high-cost emergency arrangements, residential care, and the effectiveness of the current hybrid model of government and non-government service delivery.
- 1.3 The purpose of the review is to identify the key issues that are impacting outcomes for children and young people and affecting value for money for taxpayers.
- 1.4 This will result in immediate and long-term recommendations to be considered as part of an overarching strategy for OOHC by the end of 2024.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The scope of the review is to inquire into, report on and make relevant findings and recommendations regarding:
 - 2.1.1 The underlying drivers of placement unavailability and the resulting need for high-cost emergency arrangements.
 - 2.1.2 The effectiveness and efficiency of the current arrangements for foster carer recruitment and support in providing sufficient, stable placements for children and young people.
 - 2.1.3 The effectiveness of foster carer utilisation by OOHC providers in meeting placement demand.
 - 2.1.4 The contractual and financial management arrangements for OOHC and how taxpayer value could be better realised, including the suitability of subcontracting, and:
 - i. Situations when subcontracting occurs and why
 - ii. Mechanisms to establish and monitor subcontracting arrangements and parameters, and how these could be improved to ensure positive outcomes and value for money
 - iii. Possible contractual and policy changes to prevent real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Not in Scope

- 2.2 The review will be conducted in the context of, and informed by, other recent reviews, inquiries and reports into relevant aspects of the child protection and OOHC systems, without duplicating previous areas of focus.

3 Deliverables

- 3.1 A final Report will be completed by 21 October 2024. The Government intends to publicly release the review, although the sensitivities and legal restrictions concerning child protection matters may necessitate de-identified or redacted information.