

Protocol for Police
Contact with Children
Living in Therapeutic
Residential Care

Acknowledgements

This Protocol has been developed by Territory Families and the Northern Territory Police following consultation with the following agencies.

- Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APONT)
- Alice Springs Youth Accommodation and Support Services Inc. (ASYASS)
- Anglicare NT
- ITEC Health (Safe Pathways)
- Life Without Barriers
- Lifestyle Solutions
- Community Staffing Solutions (CSS)
- North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)
- Safe Families Program – Tangentyere
- Territory Families Therapeutic Residential Care – Greater Darwin Region
- The Northern Territory Council of Social Services (NTCOSS)
- Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (NTLAC)

Note: Some Therapeutic Residential Care services in the Northern Territory are currently operating as General Residential Care and Family Group Homes and will complete the transition 2020.

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Therapeutic Residential Care in the Northern Territory

Therapeutic Residential Care is a relatively small but significant component of out of home care placements in the NT and is almost exclusively provided by non-government organisations (NGOs) funded by Territory Families. At any one time, approximately 10 percent of children and young people in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Territory Families live in Therapeutic Residential Care.

Therapeutic Residential Care is a placement option for children and young people with some of the following characteristics:

- Complex support needs;
- Sibling groups who may not otherwise be placed together in Kinship or Foster Care;
- Young people moving on to independent living; and
- Children and young people placed following a Kinship or Foster Care placement breakdown.

This may include a small number of residential placements accommodating individual young people who have specific, high or complex needs.

The placement of children and young people in Therapeutic Residential Care aims to:

- Provide safe, stable and nurturing care for children and young people;
- Resource carers to provide trauma informed, therapeutic care;
- Connect young people with safe and appropriate family;
- Provide opportunities to maintain or enhance their sense of identity and connection to culture;
- Promote children and young people's ability to recover from abuse, trauma and loss; and
- Support children and young people to avoid becoming unnecessarily involved with Police and the youth justice system.



Principles

This Protocol applies to the management and care of children and young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care in the Northern Territory. The implementation of the Protocol is to be supported by strategies and resourcing that underpin the following principles of the Protocol:

1. Effective behaviour management strategies developed by Territory Families case managers and Therapeutic Residential Care services will provide a continued focus on reducing the frequency of Police being called to respond to challenging behaviours of young people;
2. A young person who commits a criminal offence that warrants a criminal charge will be considered for and receive police diversion in accordance with provisions of the Youth Justice Act –unless otherwise excluded under legislation or by order of the Court;
3. Improved communication and information sharing between Territory Families, NT Police and Therapeutic Residential Care service providers will promote the safety and wellbeing of young people (refer to the Information Sharing Frame work at Part 5.1A of the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007);
4. A shared commitment by Territory Families, NT Police and Therapeutic Residential Care services to a collaborative, early intervention approach;
5. A commitment to ensure that appropriate responses are provided to young people who are victims of crime, or witness to serious criminal offences, within the placement; and
6. A broad range of internal, service specific after-hours support will continue to be offered to Therapeutic Residential Care staff by Territory Families and NGO Therapeutic Residential Care providers.

Consistency of practice

Each Therapeutic Residential Care service provider currently operates under a model of therapeutic approaches to support children in Therapeutic Residential Care.

MODEL OF PRACTICE

- Evidence based, therapeutically focused practice.

AFTER-HOURS SUPPORT

- A 24 hour per day, 7 day per week after-hours support system to support young people in care and staff members.
- After-hours support provided by Therapeutic Residential Care service providers, ranges from the availability of national on call supports to local managers and senior staff who respond to call requests for support by phone and in person.
- After-hours support strategies across providers includes; de-escalation and behavioural management support (phone or in person support), second or third staff or replacement staff called in when necessary, young people may be relocated temporarily to reduce crisis (when deemed appropriate), and consultation with Central Intake.

MANDATORY TRAINING

Each Therapeutic Residential Care service provider is required to provide a comprehensive range of mandatory training for staff, including:

- Online or face to face induction training, scheduled shadow shifts and peer review;
- Therapeutic approaches to challenging and complex behaviours;
- Workplace health and safety;
- Cross Cultural safety/competency;
- First Aid;
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST); and
- Mental health training (when available, and when child or young person specific).

CARE PLANNING

Young people in care must have a draft or completed My Care Plan or My Leaving Care Plan, prepared by the Territory Families Case Manager to address identified requirements and strategies to fulfil their needs across their life domains:

- Health & development;
- Education;
- Culture and identity;
- Emotional & behavioural support;
- Family relationships and connections;
- Life skills;
- Social relationships & networks; and
- Transition from care.

BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT PLANS

Territory Families works with providers, families, children and young people in care and where applicable develops individual Behavioural Support Plans (BSPs) for children and young people with complex behaviours. Refer to Policy and Guidelines - Behavioural Management of Children in Care in the Care and Protection Practice Manual on Territory Families' intranet site.

BSPs are designed in partnership with Therapeutic Residential Service providers to identify a child's expected or baseline behaviours and the conditions or situations that may trigger challenging or dangerous behaviours. BSPs should not be overly complicated and where necessary, be provided to the NT Police in advance of their attendance at the Residential Care service. The BSP should include strategies to avoid triggers, de-escalate emerging behaviours and engage effectively with the child or young person.

The BSP should be written as a strategy and be provided to clearly and quickly inform Therapeutic Residential Care staff. BSP contents should be discussed with members of the NT Police to enable them to respond to children and young people appropriately and effectively.

There should be no transfer of risk that police will respond accordingly to the BSP content, as every encounter is different (e.g. dynamic vs passive) [see page 13].

Recommendations for Change

The Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory (the Royal Commission) was announced by the Commonwealth on 28 July 2016 and established on 1 August 2016 by the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments in response to serious concerns raised about the child protection and youth justice systems in the Northern Territory.

On 12 September 2016, the Northern Territory Government established Territory Families as the agency responsible for both care and protection of children and youth justice. A 'whole of life' approach to supporting children and families positions child protection and youth justice within a broader framework of prevention and early intervention and creates an opportunity to do things differently, to empower families, share responsibility and address vulnerability.

On the 17 November 2017, the Royal Commission final report was presented. The Protocol for Police Contact with Children Living in Therapeutic Residential Care (the Protocol) has been developed in response to recommendation 35.2 - that a joint protocol be developed between Territory Families, the out of home care service sector and the NT Police to address the management and response to criminal behaviour in the out of home care environment, with an evaluation of the protocol carried out within two years; and recommendation 35.3 - that Territory Families continue to monitor the use of police callouts by out of home care providers with respect to the behaviour of children in their care.

The protocol will support the work of Territory Families, NT Police and Therapeutic Residential Care service providers to continue to improve the response to the behaviours of children and young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care – carefully balancing the needs and vulnerabilities of children with community safety for all residents of the Northern Territory.

Children living in Therapeutic Residential Care services should enjoy a high standard of care in a home-like environment. They should receive a proportionate and supportive response to their actions and behaviours informed by a trauma-responsive and therapeutic approach.

Reducing preventable police call outs to Therapeutic Residential Care services requires a consistent and collaborative approach by Territory Families, Therapeutic Residential Care service providers and the NT Police to deliver a service that is in the best interest of children and young people, and that ensures the safety of other children and worker's at the residence.



Our commitment

We are committed to working in partnership to reduce the frequency of Police involvement in responding to behaviours by children and young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care. Police will continue to partner closely with Territory Families to consider young people in the first instance for diversion, unless excluded due to legislation or an order of the Court.

The Protocol emphasises the importance of flexibility and proportionality in determining, on a case by case basis, the most appropriate response to a young person's behaviour. The service response in Therapeutic Residential Care emphasises that contact with police should only be made when required to ensure the safety of young people and staff members.

As an alternative to engaging police, Territory Families and Therapeutic Residential Care service after-hours support will continue to provide expert advice, support to staff, and the capacity to separate young people if required, with the intent to better manage challenging behaviours before they escalate and before safety issues arise.

The Protocol recognises the rights of those who may be at risk of harm, or have been harmed as a result of a child or young person's behaviour within the service.

The Protocol emphasises the importance of ensuring Therapeutic Residential Care services promptly contact Police when necessary; especially when there are immediate safety concerns for any person at the home.

The desired response to challenging behaviours, minor property damage or threats to damage property, is to develop a therapeutically informed Behavioural Support Plan (BSP), and to then respond to challenges in accordance with the BSP. The response should be equal to that experienced by any young person in the community, living at home with caring and supportive parents.

Children and young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care will:

- Receive proportionate responses to their actions and behaviours through a trauma-responsive and therapeutic approach;
- Work with Territory Families to develop BSPs, and where applicable and appropriate consult with NT Police prior to finalising BSPs, to minimise calls to police and support young people in circumstances where behavioural matters do not constitute a need to contact Police and can be safely managed by Therapeutic Residential Care staff with support from Territory Families;
- Be better supported through Territory Families and Therapeutic Residential Carers providing an after-hours response to deliver greater consistency and familiar boundaries across Therapeutic Residential Care services; and
- In order to provide necessary knowledge and skills, and to more effectively, consistently and appropriately deliver services to children and young people, all Therapeutic Residential Care workers will be provided or continue to receive training across the following areas:
 - Induction training, shift shadowing and peer support, First Aid, Mental Health, Trauma Informed practice, Cross Cultural Training, and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

Roles and responsibilities

Territory Families

As the government agency with the lead role for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the Northern Territory, Territory Families has an oversight role to develop and promote interagency practices designed to minimise the involvement of children and young people in the youth justice system. Territory Families is committed to continue working with Therapeutic Residential Care providers to ensure that they provide an effective after-hours capacity, with an aim of reducing unnecessary calls to Police.

The Territory Families Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework will be implemented across all systems, policies and practice procedures. The Framework will promote an environment for Aboriginal children, families and communities to feel safe and empowered to make decisions that affect their lives and community, and ensure Territory Families operates in a culturally secure manner.

Aboriginal cultural security embeds Aboriginal cultural values, and rights at critical points of intervention in the organisation's policy and practice.

As the funding body for Therapeutic Residential Care services, Territory Families will continue providing and contracting with Therapeutic Residential Care providers who ensure an adequately trained workforce to best meet the complex needs of children and young people. A standard of practice in the provision of services to children and young people assisted by Therapeutic Residential Care services through its ongoing management of service contracts and related performance monitoring.

Territory Families will manage Therapeutic Residential Care service contracts and ensure that there are clear expectations that aligns with the Protocol around behaviour management and the involvement of the Police, and that are focussed on reducing Police involvement in incidents where possible.

Territory Families will promote the effective implementation of the Protocol in Therapeutic Residential Care services through existing governance mechanisms, including but not limited to interagency meetings within each operational Territory Families Region.

Territory Families will work with the Therapeutic Residential Care sector to identify and promote best practice.

Territory Families Case Managers and the Central Intake Team (CIT) will support Therapeutic Residential Care staff 24 hours per day/7 days per week to improve the behaviour management of children and young people in their care. The shared therapeutic approach assists young people to develop self-control, personal responsibility, respect, empathy and consideration for others.

Territory Families will complete and submit a Reportable Incident form on each occasion the Police are requested to attend a Therapeutic Residential Care facility. The form is found in the Care and Protection Practice Manual (CPPM) on Territory Families' intranet site and under the heading 'Practice information' at the following external link.

territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/publications-and-policies/child-protection-and-out-of-home-care-policies

Therapeutic Residential Care service providers

Therapeutic Residential Care service providers are obligated to meet the requirements of their service agreements and funding provisions outlined in their individual contract documents and their response schedules.

Therapeutic Residential Care service providers will adopt a therapeutic model of Residential Care and ensure that Therapeutic Residential Care staff understand the history, relationships and current situation of young people residing with their service. All Therapeutic Residential Care staff will be provided with relevant training to provide necessary knowledge and skills to effectively, consistently and appropriately deliver services to young people. This training will equip Therapeutic Residential Care staff with skills and knowledge to better manage challenging behaviours—including the effective use of strategies outlined in BSPs.

Therapeutic Residential Care providers ensure that all staff are trained and proficient in determining whether an incident, circumstance or behaviour requires a police response, with approved processes in place, focussed to minimise police interventions in response to incidents—including managing the response to a child or young person who is absent or missing from the placement in accordance with the practice resource - Missing and Absent Factsheet in the Care and Protection Practice Manual (CPPM) on Territory Families' intranet page.

Therapeutic Residential Care after-hours support services will continue to provide Therapeutic Residential Care staff with alternative options to calling police when they are in need of expert advice or additional resourcing to better manage a young person's behaviour, with the intention of de-escalating and emerging situation, prior to a safety issue arising.

Therapeutic Residential Care providers will continue to engage and where necessary, advance their proactive relationships with the community, NT Police and Territory Families to promote safety and stability for children and young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care.

Therapeutic Residential Care staff will report young people who are in breach of police or court bail conditions to the Youth Outreach and Re-engagement Team responsible for the supervision of the young person, who will then make a report to the NT Police. Where the breach of bail conditions compromises the safety of the young person, or another person, or involves criminal offending, and an urgent response is needed, Therapeutic Residential Care staff are to report the matter directly to NT Police. Reporting a breach of bail conditions promotes accountability and ensures community safety. Early notification best supports a co-ordinated response to children and young people.

Therapeutic Residential Care providers will complete and submit a Reportable Incident Form on each occasion the Police are requested to attend a Therapeutic Residential Care facility.

NT Police

All reported incidents to NT Police will be graded in order of response priority. Where appropriate the NT Police will attend a Therapeutic Residential Care service in response to a complaint or call for assistance from:

- A member of the community;
- A young person living in Therapeutic Residential Care; or
- Staff from the Therapeutic Residential Care service.

Depending on circumstances, police will endeavour to work with Territory Families and the Therapeutic Residential Care service to ensure a co-ordinated response to children and young people—who may be an alleged offender, witness or victim of an alleged crime—to minimise disruption and trauma to the other children and young people living at the residence, and to protect the rights of victims. When NT Police attend Therapeutic Residential Care facilities, they will, wherever possible, consider the past trauma history of young people in Therapeutic Residential Care and provide a trauma informed response. Police who attend Therapeutic Residential Care facilities should, whenever possible consult with the Therapeutic Residential Care staff to enable the Police to respond appropriately to the young person.

Values and Practice

Our values and shared practice will strengthen positive outcomes for children living in Therapeutic Residential Care by ensuring our decisions are:

1. Rights based

Parties to this Protocol consciously focus on the rights and best interest of children and young people whilst balancing the needs of Therapeutic Residential Care staff, victims and community safety.

Children and young people have the right to feel safe, protected and free from harm in their place of care, and Therapeutic Residential Care services staff have the right to feel safe and be free from harm in their workplace. This protocol does not diminish the right of children or young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care, or of the staff providing care, to seek assistance from the police at any time.

It is the responsibility of the Therapeutic Residential Care service provider to manage behavioural issues within the residential care setting, where appropriate, without the involvement to Police. Police should be called to respond to incidents involving a child or young person where there is an immediate safety risk or a criminal behaviour or an allegation that warrants Police involvement. Wherever possible any criminal investigation will be dealt with through Police pre-court diversion with provision of trauma informed programs to reduce further offending.

In circumstances where a child or young person is a victim of an alleged assault, Therapeutic Residential Care service staff must ensure the matter is reported to police, and in any circumstance that a child or young person requests contact with police they must be provided advice, support and the means to do so.

If a child or young person is involved with police in regard to their alleged offending behaviour, or a witness to any incident requiring police intervention, follow-up support must be provided to them, this includes assistance to access legal services, debriefing, counselling and notifying a suitable responsible adult where practicable.

2. Trauma informed

Parties to this Protocol consciously focus on providing a trauma informed response to children and young people, which will continue to be supported through mandatory training for all Therapeutic Residential Care staff.

Trauma responsive care acknowledges the role trauma plays in a child or young person's patterns of behaviour.

It is acknowledged that the vast majority of children and young people residing in Therapeutic Residential Care have experienced harm and exploitation, and often have been exposed to domestic family violence. For many children and young people, the impact of these experiences causes an inability to regulate emotions and behaviours appropriately, and difficulties with social interactions and relationships.

3. Culturally responsive

Parties to this Protocol consciously focus on being culturally responsive to children and young people, which is reflected through mandatory cross cultural training for all residential workers.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, an absence of connection to culture can lead to cultural trauma and have a number of developmental impacts.

The Protocol promotes the safe care and connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with their families, communities and cultures;

4. Shared responsibilities

Each agency has a specific role to play in implementing the Protocol, all parties that endorse the Protocol are committed to working in partnership to:

- Act within the spirit of the Protocol when responding to incidents involving young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care.
- Implement Territory Families, Therapeutic Residential Care and Police processes that ensure the safe, appropriate and proportionate response to individual incidents in Therapeutic Residential Care.
- Ensure systems are in place to facilitate the implementation and evaluation of the Protocol, including appropriate record keeping.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of young people, in accordance with the provisions of Information Sharing Framework found in Part 5.1A of the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007, to liaise and share information between the parties to the Protocol and Information Sharing Authorities including schools, health providers and support services.
- Develop, implement and promote the delivery of appropriate training and guidance with regard to the Protocol.

Strategies

Practical strategies to translate the principles, roles and responsibilities of the Protocol have been developed to assist the implementation.

Strategies to support development, collaboration and capacity

TERRITORY FAMILIES AND THERAPEUTIC RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES HAVE SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES TO ENSURE THAT:

- Children and young people are supported to correlate their actions to impacts and consequences, and guided to learn from their experiences.
- Children and young people receive timely and proportionate responses to provide behavioural guidance that does not criminalise their behaviours.
- Therapeutic Residential Care staff have the prerequisite training, tools, capability and capacity to prevent escalation of an incident or behaviours.
- Territory Families supports Therapeutic Residential Care services to provide a holistic and responsive after-hours capability to support Therapeutic Residential Care workers and partner with Police when responses are required to reduce unnecessary police contact.

SHARED STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

- Involve children and young people in planning and decisions about their lives, including decisions to involve Police.
- Plan and consider the interpersonal dynamics of, and relationships between the children and young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care, including the views of the young people.
- When there is more than one young person living in the residence, plan and match the placements to reduce the likelihood of conflict.
- Where a young person exhibits challenging behaviours, a BSP may be prepared by a Territory Families Case Manager, a psychologist or another skilled behaviour management professional in collaboration with the Therapeutic Residential Care staff, a Case Manager from Territory Families, and the child or young person. A BSP implemented for a young person will be shared with NT Police to equip responding officers with pertinent information to enhance engagement. The BSP will include contextual information, expected behaviours, known triggers and de-escalation strategies.
- Where possible, BSP details and any additional recommendations should be provided to police by phone when they are requested to attend a Therapeutic Residential Care facility and when they arrive at the facility before engaging the child or young person.
- Ensuring cultural support plans are in place that foster connections to culture, community and family, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- Discussion and education of staff, children and young people about the expectations and behaviours that we share while living in Therapeutic Residential Care and agree how we respond if the expectations are not met.

- Develop plans to manage children who are frequently or unexpectedly absent from the service, including how to quickly establish a child's whereabouts or determine that the absent child is at risk or missing and the incident must be reported to Police in accordance with the Policy and Procedure: Child is Absent or Missing from Placement in the Care and Protection Practice Manual (CPPM) on Territory Families intranet site.
- For external reference, the documents can be located under 'Children in Care' at territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/publications-and-policies/child-protection-and-out-of-home-care-policies
- Establish connections with other Therapeutic Residential Care services to share behaviour management strategies, training opportunities, information and examples of good practice.
- Share a directory of relevant contacts, agencies and support services with staff (for example Territory Families and Therapeutic Residential Care provider's after-hours support, mental health intervention services and legal support services) to facilitate access to 'alternative to police' response mechanisms.
- Develop a checklist or series of assessment based questions that should be answered to help determine whether a crime has been committed or a requirement for police to attend (Noting if there are concerns for the safety of any child, young person, worker or a, member from the community; police should be called immediately).

Strategies during and following an incident – no police involvement

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS:

Territory Families and Therapeutic Residential Care providers will have a shared responsibilities to ensure:

- Children and young people are supported to correlate their actions to the impacts and consequences, and are guided to learn from their experiences.
- Children and young people are supported through a local response where an incident does not require police involvement.
- All relevant preliminary checks are undertaken and recorded prior to reporting absent children and young persons to police.
- A victim's right to involve Police following an incident is supported and protected. If a young person requests advice whether to report to or involve police or not, care should be taken to support the young person's choice as opposed to influencing or encouraging/discouraging a particular decision.
- An alleged assault resulting in a physical injury is to be reported to the Police.

SHARED STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT:

Implement agreed responses by Therapeutic Residential Care providers and Territory Families to quickly establish the location of a child or young person if they are absent from the placement prior to referring to Police.

SHARED STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT:

- A learning focussed reflective review of an incident may occur between Territory Families and the Therapeutic Residential Care provider for incidents requiring Police attendance. Police will determine if their attendance is necessary.

THERAPEUTIC RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICE - STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES AT THE TIME OF AN INCIDENT:

- Implement de-escalation efforts and when appropriate behaviour management responses that do not criminalise behaviours and are proportionate to the child or young person's actions and the situation at the time of the incident.

THERAPEUTIC RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICE - STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT:

- Debrief children, young people and staff separately and in a timely manner following an incident and provide appropriate supports.
- Consider the group dynamics of the Therapeutic Residential Care service, taking into account information learned from the debriefing sessions. The assessment should focus on the stability of the service and the best interests of all children and young people residing in Therapeutic Residential Care.

Strategies during and following an incident – Police involvement

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Children and young people are supported to correlate their actions to the impacts and consequences, and guided to learn from their experiences.
- Children and young people will receive timely access to legal support and responses that focus on their needs and reduce the risk of re-occurrences.
- Children and young people will live in a safe and supportive environment that uses a considered approach to managing group dynamics.

WHEN POLICE HAVE RESPONDED TO AN INCIDENT THERE ARE ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES THAT APPLY:

Therapeutic Residential Care services at the time of an incident:

- Ensure the safety of all involved before the arrival of Police.
- Where possible, when contacting Police or upon their arrival, provide members with advice about the child or young person that may inform their response, i.e. known triggers, likely response to the attending Officer and any known strategies to best approach and communicate with the child or young person.

Therapeutic Residential Care services strategies following an incident:

- Ensure an appropriate independent adult support person is available for the child or young person who is alleged to have committed an offence. This may be another member of the Therapeutic Residential Care staff, or arrangements may be made through the Territory Families Case Manager depending on the circumstances. A support person cannot be a Therapeutic Residential Care worker involved in the incident.

Shared strategies for successful outcomes following an incident:

- Provide information to children and young people about their rights and facilitate contact for them with a legal service provider immediately, or as soon as practicable after the incident.

POLICE RESPONSE

- When police receive a request for immediate (000) or non-immediate (131 444) assistance, attending Officers will initially focus on the safety of all people involved prior to determining if any criminal offences have occurred.
- At incidents attended by Police involving children and young people living in Therapeutic Residential Care, consider the most appropriate response to the situation, which will include the following:
 - o Safety and wellbeing of children, young people, staff members and victims; and
 - o Relevant legislation.
- Where a criminal investigation occurs a child or young person will be considered for pre-court diversion unless excluded by the severity of the offence or prior relevant criminal history.
- Police will work with Territory Families to determine if there may be a need for alternative options to ensure the ongoing safety of involved people. Police will take appropriate action for all parties, dependant on the circumstances.
- Where an interview is sought with a child or young person, Police will work with the Therapeutic Residential Care service provider and the Territory Families Case Manager to ensure the child is provided with legal representation and has a responsible adult present.

Governance

Regular meetings between nominated executive staff of Territory Families and the Police will support the effective implementation of the Protocol and will provide clear pathways for strategic changes, legislative changes, resolution of issues or other required alterations to the protocol that may arise.

It is preferred that local issues are attempted to be resolved as soon as practical. The aspect of Governance meetings has not been fully explored given that each Region may have different platforms and resourcing; that fine grain detail will require further development.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The review of data related to frequency of Police responses in a specific time period will utilise the information already recorded by Territory Families, NT Police and Therapeutic Residential Care services in response to incidents. A critical component of monitoring and evaluation will involve assessing each instance of police engagement to evaluate whether the engagement was warranted, and to determine whether the Therapeutic Residential Care services and Territory Families after-hours supports are being appropriately utilised.

Term and review of protocol

In accordance with the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory – Findings and Recommendations report, page 55, recommendation 35.2, the evaluation of the Protocol will be carried out within two years.

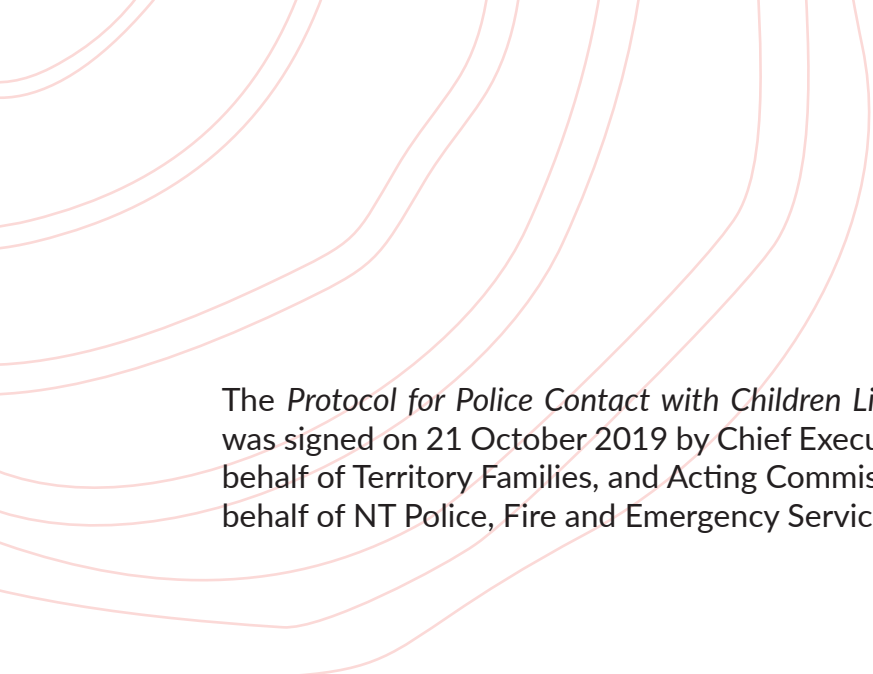
Legislation and resources

territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/publications-and-policies/child-protection-and-out-of-home-care-policies

[*Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*](#)

[*Care and Protection of Children \(Placement Arrangement\) Regulations 2010*](#)

[*Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory – Findings and Recommendations*](#)



The *Protocol for Police Contact with Children Living in Therapeutic Residential Care* was signed on 21 October 2019 by Chief Executive Officer Ken Davies, for and on behalf of Territory Families, and Acting Commissioner Michael Murphy, for and on behalf of NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services.

