

## Progress against past inquiries

This document provides an update on the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's responses to our recommendations from *Lost, not forgotten: Inquiry into children who died by suicide and were known to Child Protection* and the Commission's assessment of progress made in 2023–24.

The Commission will continue to annually assess and report on progress made against these recommendations.



**Lost, not forgotten**

Inquiry into children who died by suicide and were known to Child Protection

Progress against past inquiries: *Lost not forgotten*

continued

Rec #	Recommendation Text	Department status	Department update	Commission assessment	Commission comment
1	<p>That, in line with <i>Roadmap to Reform</i>, the Victorian Government develop, resource and implement an integrated and whole-of-system investment model and strategy for the child and family system, focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• earlier intervention and prevention services to reduce risks to children and build child and family wellbeing</li> <li>• reducing the rate of entry into care</li> <li>• meeting the distinct needs of children who need to live away from the family home.</li> </ul> <p>The investment model should recognise the drivers of demand and the need for coordinated service responses. It should use client data, analytics and service evidence to identify the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resource levels needed to meet demand for safe, quality services for vulnerable children and their families</li> <li>• most efficient and effective investment options to achieve maximum impact.</li> </ul> <p>The investment strategy should increase and improve safe, quality services in line with demand, by targeting early intervention and prevention, prioritising the most vulnerable cohorts, including families with chronic and complex issues and children exposed to cumulative harm.</p>	In progress	Refer to response for recommendation 1a, CCYP 2019 report <i>In our own words</i> .	Progress made – ongoing systemic effort required	The Commission notes the further progress made against this recommendation.
2	<p>That the Department of Health and Human Services develop, resource and implement a set of standard analytical data sets for Child FIRST, The Orange Door and Integrated Family Services to monitor and report on the timeliness and effectiveness of their engagement with children and families, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time between initial assessment and commencement of case management</li> <li>• rates of unsuccessful engagement</li> <li>• referral outcomes</li> <li>• re-referrals</li> <li>• re-reports.</li> </ul>	In progress	Data from The Orange Door is now accessible. A focus report remains under development, with a revised timeline for completion in June/July 2024.	Progress made	The Commission notes the work progressed to date and welcomes efforts to strengthen linking data across services to better track referrals and engagement.

**Progress against past inquiries: *Lost not forgotten***

*continued*

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4	<p>That the Department of Health and Human Services develop practice advice in relation to children involved with Child Protection who are identified as at risk of suicide. Practice advice should confirm the importance of information gathering, information sharing and service coordination, and include requirements to gather and consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information regarding the child's involvement with different mental health services</li> <li>• a child's mental health diagnosis</li> <li>• any known history of exposure to abuse, harm or trauma</li> <li>• a child's treatment plan and (where relevant) any actions taken or planned to address any history of exposure to abuse, harm or trauma</li> <li>• the existence of any parent-related issues that may be impacting a child's ability to successfully engage in therapeutic intervention</li> <li>• the existence of any placement-related issues that may be impacting a child's ability to successfully engage in therapeutic intervention</li> <li>• identifying which service or agency involved is able to coordinate a child's access to mental health and other relevant services.</li> </ul>	In progress	<p>This recommendation remains in progress.</p> <p>To deliver on the intent of this recommendation, the department has commenced a preliminary internal review of the current practice advice. Updates to this advice will need to be informed by and aligned with the Statewide Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy, which is currently being developed by the Department of Health (DoH). Pending completion of this strategy, further review and updates to practice advice are planned to progress during the second half of 2024.</p>	Progress made	<p>The Commission welcomes the department's efforts to strengthen practice advice and looks forward to further improvements following the release of the Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy. The Department of Health released the Victorian Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy 2024–2034 on 10 September 2024.</p>
6	<p>That the Department of Health and Human Services develop and implement a suicide prevention strategy for children known to Child Protection that incorporates any relevant findings and recommendations made by the Royal Commission into the Victorian Mental Health System.</p>	In progress	<p>This recommendation remains in progress and is being addressed alongside recommendation 4.</p> <p>Please refer to the update for recommendation 4.</p>	Planned for implementation	<p>The Commission is concerned about the lack of progress on this important and urgent work. Since this inquiry was tabled, there have been 21 further suicides recorded in child death inquiries. The Commission hopes that action on this important recommendation can be prioritised.</p>