Policy: Responding to Concerns for the Safety and Wellbeing
of Children in Care

# Policy Purpose

To provide guidance when responding to concerns for the safety and well-being of a child in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

# Policy Statement

Concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of a child in care includes all forms of physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect. All concerns for the safety and well-being of a child in the care of the CEO, regardless of their placement type, must be thoroughly assessed in order to:

* address immediate safety concerns for the child in care to mitigate risk of harm;
* establish whether harm has occurred and what appropriate actions that need to be undertaken;
* determine if the placement arrangement remains suitable for the child or if an alternative arrangement needs to be sourced;
* determine what type of response is most suitable and what actions may be required to resolve the child protection concerns.

# Section 84A Child Protection Investigations

A Child Protection Investigation must be undertaken under s84A of the [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-ACT-2007) for all reports of harm related to a child in care where:

* there is an allegation of physical, emotional, psychological or sexual harm or serious neglect, which has had a significant detrimental effect or is likely to have a significant detrimental effect on a child in care, and that harm has been perpetrated by a person connected to the Place of Care; **or**
* there is a recurrence or emerging pattern of concerns including cumulative harm about the care provided by the place of care that may have a significant detrimental impact on the child's emotional, physical and psychological development if not addressed.

# Section 83B Inquiries

A s83B Inquiry must be undertaken for all reports of concerns for the wellbeing related to a child in care where:

* the care provided to the child is not consistent with the standards of care as defined in s13 of the [*Care and Protection of Children (Placement Arrangement) Regulations 2010*](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-PLACEMENT-ARRANGEMENT-REGULATIONS-2010); and
* this is affecting or is likely to affect the child’s physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing (s14).

**or**

* there are significant concerns for the child’s physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing (s14) ; and
* the care provided to the child is not consistent with the standards of care as defined in s13 of the [*Care and Protection of Children (Placement Arrangement) Regulations 2010*](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-PLACEMENT-ARRANGEMENT-REGULATIONS-2010).

# Legislative Basis and Related Documents

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-ACT-2007)

[*Care and Protection of Children (Placement Arrangement) Regulations 2010*](https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-PLACEMENT-ARRANGEMENT-REGULATIONS-2010)

[Standards of Professional Practice](http://internal.dcf.nt.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Resource%20Manual/Standards%20of%20Professional%20Practice.pdf)

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