



Ombudsman
Western Australia

Improving services

Go to:

- [Administrative Improvements](#)
- [Major investigations](#)



Administrative improvements

Improvements through complaints

Complaints provide public authorities with valuable feedback about the work they undertake and how they can improve their services. Importantly, complaints received and handled with this in mind enable public authorities to identify any systemic, thematic or serious issues that may otherwise remain unknown. This allows public authorities to address problems as they arise and prevent the same problems impacting other customers and clients.

When we investigate a complaint about a public authority, we may identify issues around service delivery or decision-making. We resolve complaints by exploring ways the public authority can improve its systems and processes to improve its administrative practices.

While the Ombudsman has the power to make recommendations to public authorities following our investigations, we achieve most of our administrative improvement outcomes through our investigation and resolution processes.

These outcomes can include changes to business practices, changes to policies or procedures, staff training, improvements made to record keeping processes as well as updates to publications or websites.

In 2025-26, we achieved 64 administrative improvements through the investigation of complaints. This is a 25% increase on the number of administrative improvements achieved in 2024-25. These administrative improvements highlight the importance of the Ombudsman’s complaint resolution function and demonstrate how complaints from members of the public help public authorities improve their service delivery and decision-making practices.



Improvements through reviews

Through our [review of child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities](#), we identify ways to improve how public authorities support vulnerable children and family and domestic violence victims, and to prevent or reduce the risk of future deaths in similar circumstances.

In 2025-26, we made three recommendations to public authorities, relating to changing policies and procedures.

Improvements through the Reportable Conduct Scheme

In our administration of the [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#), we examine the systems and policies of an organisation for reporting, responding and preventing child abuse. The review of these systems may result in administrative improvements, which we then record and monitor.

In 2025-26, there were 158 improvement actions made by organisations because of our involvement.

Improvement actions by organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme in 2025-26



Improvements through guidance and publications

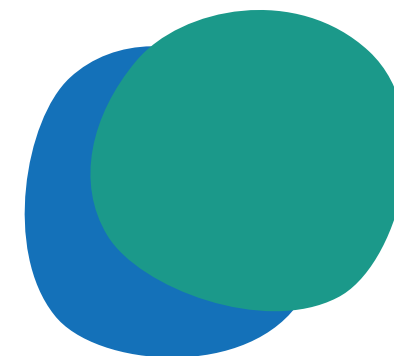
Our library of guidelines and information sheets continues to be a valuable resource for public authorities and organisations.

Our [Guidelines on Effective Complaint Handling](#) are one of the top resources downloaded from our website. We also have [Guidelines on Good Decision Making](#) and a range of [information sheets](#).

We also have a range of [information sheets and templates](#) to support organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Improvements through training

Our Child & Family Safety Team held 38 workshops and information sessions [for organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme](#).



Major investigations

Why we do major investigations

One of our key activities to improve public administration and to prevent harm to vulnerable people is to undertake major reviews and investigations of systemic issues identified across all areas of our work. This includes investigations of complaints, child deaths, family and domestic violence fatalities and allegations of child abuse notified to us under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Our goal for systemic investigations is to improve the experience citizens have with public authorities and public administration in measurable ways particularly where such improvements may save time and money, redress a significant power imbalance, prevent harm or save lives.

Investigation standards

In 2026 we introduced our '[Investigation Standards](#)' for use when conducting our systemic investigations. These standards give the community a clearer view of how we work and explain how we use discretion, what we will focus on, and how we carry out major investigations.

In particular, the standards explain how we approach systemic investigations. These are investigations into broader issues that may affect many people. They often come from patterns we see in complaints, or from our work in areas such as child safety, family and domestic violence fatalities, and oversight of public authorities.

They include fifteen standards for the five phases of a systemic investigation and provide clear guidance for staff who are undertaking a major investigation.

The standards support our goals by outlining how consistent and good quality investigative work is performed under the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*.

We will also start publishing forward guidance on the topics we plan to investigate. This will help the community understand our priorities and where we are focusing our efforts.

Our Investigation standards are available to view on our website.



Our Achievements

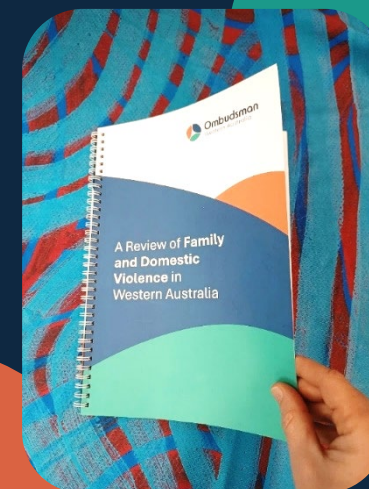
Our major reviews and investigations improve the policies and practices of organisations, reduce risk to vulnerable people and result in more consistent and accountable decision making.

On 19 March 2026, we tabled '[A Review of Family and Domestic Violence in Western Australia](#)' capturing our family and domestic violence death review work alongside a thorough point-in-time investigation of the performance of Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams (FDVRT).

We made nine recommendations to the Department of Communities and the Western Australia Police Force focused on:

- strengthening governance and oversight of the FDVRT
- improving risk assessment and data systems
- removing barriers to escalation of high risk cases
- improving support for vulnerable groups, including children
- strengthening accountability for people who use violence.

The Department of Communities and the Western Australia Police Force will report to the Ombudsman on the outcomes of this work by 1 October 2026. Both agencies have also committed to a future resample of the FDVRT data to compare results, monitor progress and support continued improvements in practice. The timing of the resample is yet to be confirmed.



Images: Top: 'A Review of Family and Domestic Violence in Western Australia' report.

Left: Justine Vassilios, Director Reviews; Alison Cameron, Principal Assistant Ombudsman Child & Family Safety; and Bevan Warner, Ombudsman, speaking to the media outside Parliament House after tabling the report



Monitoring the implementation of recommendations

Our recommendations are designed to be an evidence-based, proportionate, and practical response to the issues identified. Each of the recommendations arising from our major investigations are actively monitored to ensure they are implemented.

In 2025-26, we continued to monitor the implementation of Recommendation 8 from the ‘Investigation into family and domestic violence and suicide’.

We made nine recommendations in the report, and the following year we published ‘A report on giving effect to the recommendations arising from the Investigation into family and domestic violence and suicide’ to report on how our recommendations were being implemented. We considered that Recommendation 8 required further monitoring, so have reported on this recommendation in our annual reports.

Recommendation 8

The Mental Health Commission, in collaboration with relevant State Government departments and authorities and stakeholders, develop and disseminate a common understanding of what constitutes a trauma-informed approach for Western Australian State Government departments and authorities. Including, but not limited to:

- A definition and key principles of a trauma-informed approach;
- Domains of implementation (including, but not limited to, an organisation’s strategic leadership, policy, training for staff, and evaluation);
- Consideration of vicarious trauma in the service delivery context;
- This approach being intersectional, and elevates the voices and experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people; and
- A timeline for undertaking this work.

The Mental Health Commission established the State Government Working Group for the Development of a Trauma Informed Approach to give effect to Recommendation 8 and provided us the following update on its work.

The Mental Health Commissioner has sought endorsement from agencies represented on the State Government Working Group for the Development of a Trauma-Informed Approach (Working Group) to release the Guide...

The Guide has been finalised and is now progressing internally for final approval to release...

The Guide is anticipated to be released in August 2026. Key stakeholders will be notified of its release and the Guide will be available on the Mental Health Commission’s (Commission) website...

We continue to monitor the implementation of this recommendation.