



# Policy Position Statement: **Health and Mental Health**

## Principles

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006 (WA) establishes that the Commissioner's paramount concern must be the best interests of children and young people in Western Australia (WA). The Commissioner undertakes research with children and young people to ensure their voices inform the activities and priorities of the Commissioner.

Children and young people must be informed of their rights, and their views should be given serious consideration when making decisions that affect them. Significant international evidence demonstrates the value of integrating lived experience into the development of policy, programs and services.

The Commissioner advocates to uphold the United Nations (UN) Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); the Rights of Indigenous People (DRIP); and the UN International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (UN ICERD).

## Position

In accordance with the UN CRC, children and young people have the right to enjoy the highest possible standard of health, and access to high-quality health services. They have the right to live in a safe and healthy environment, with access to clean water, nutritious food and information about their health and wellbeing.

While the best interests of a child or young person is the paramount consideration in the provision of health or mental health services, we must also engage children and young people, seek their views and include them in decision-making about their healthcare.

In line with national and international evidence, the Commissioner advocates for health and mental health approaches to be focused on the following five priorities:

- Health promotion, disease prevention and early intervention.
- Supporting child development through intervening early in life and in illness.
- Accessible, affordable evidence-based and timely services for mental health and addictions.
- Child and family focused, integrated and culturally safe health services.
- Empowering children and young people to make decisions and self-advocate about their health and wellbeing.

Children and young people's health is profoundly shaped by social determinants such as living conditions, pre-birth health of parents, family relationships and community inclusion. Effectively addressing these factors requires a whole-of-government approach that supports families, strengthens communities and prioritises the wellbeing of our young people. The Commissioner will prioritise additional issues of concern to provide evidence-informed recommendations to Government as needs arise.

