



Statement of Commitments

This statement sets out the Public Advocate's commitment to engaging with services, systems, and stakeholders in a respectful and transparent way in carrying out our statutory oversight functions, and how this will be done.

The Public Advocate:

Provides systems oversight and advocacy to protect and promote the rights and interests of people with a disability (including those with mental health concerns), and children and young people.

Our role:

The Public Advocate is an independent statutory role, given authority by division 3.7A of the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005*. There are also other ACT laws that provide the Public Advocate with powers/responsibilities and require the ACT Government and other agencies to provide the Public Advocate with certain information.

The Public Advocate is not part of the Government.

Section 100A of the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005* allows people to give the Public Advocate information about a person in good faith without it being a breach of confidence, professional etiquette, or rules of professional conduct.

We do this by:

- Supporting children, young people, and adults to better understand systems and processes they are involved in.
- Encouraging their participation in decision-making.
- Independently and impartially reviewing and responding to information received.
- Analysing available evidence to assess whether it satisfactorily complies with the law, especially when it involves actions that limit human rights (including restrictive practices, use of force, and isolation).
- Intervening to raise concerns and flag human rights considerations.
- Advocating for practice changes and reconsideration of decisions as required.
- Encouraging continuous service improvements that enhance organisational accountability, responsiveness, and transparency.



The Public Advocate will:

- 1 Work to resolve concerns identified by, or raised with, us in the most simple and efficient way possible, including by contacting the most relevant officer to access the information needed.
- 2 Carefully consider the level at which intervention is required and the approach to doing so, including whether to act informally or issue formal requests.
- 3 Provide organisations with clear details about the reason for the request and information being sought, including by referencing specific legislative provisions where relevant.
- 4 Set appropriate timeframes for requests taking into account the urgency, scope, and complexity of the matter.
- 5 Consider requests for additional time to respond on their merits and respond promptly, including by providing reasons if an extension is not agreed.
- 6 Communicate openly and transparently with stakeholders about issues requiring Public Advocate engagement and oversight.
- 7 Engage with stakeholders to minimise administrative barriers and encourage collaboration and timely information sharing.
- 8 Provide insights and constructive suggestions/recommendations about organisational practices to support continuous improvement.
- 9 Maintain up to date information about the Public Advocate and how to contact team members.
- 10 Maintain records in accordance with legislation, including privacy provisions.

