



Out-of-Home Care in Western Australia

FACT SHEET*

Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) in WA

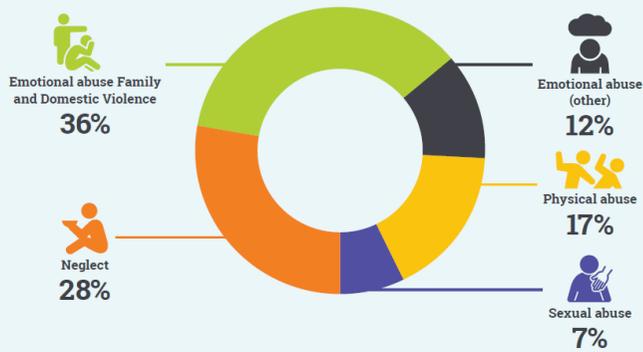
Child protection activity in WA



- In 2018-19, Aboriginal children were entered care in similar to non-Aboriginal children despite Aboriginal families making up 3.1% of the Western Australian (WA) population.
- 1.5% of contacts with the Department of Communities (Communities) resulted in a child entering OOHC.
- Communities implemented a range of Earlier Intervention and Family Support Services (EIFSS) in 2019, including the Aboriginal In-home Support Service, Intensive Family Support Services and Family Support Networks to support families, particularly Aboriginal families, to stay together and prevent children entering out-of-home care (OOHC).
- Intensive Family Support Services, and Family Care Support Services (supporting family carers and keeping children connected to kin, community and country) were provided in both metropolitan and regional WA and have a strong focus on supporting Aboriginal families and keeping them together.

*Data presented throughout this document (unless stated otherwise) was current as at 30 June 2019

Reasons why children come into care



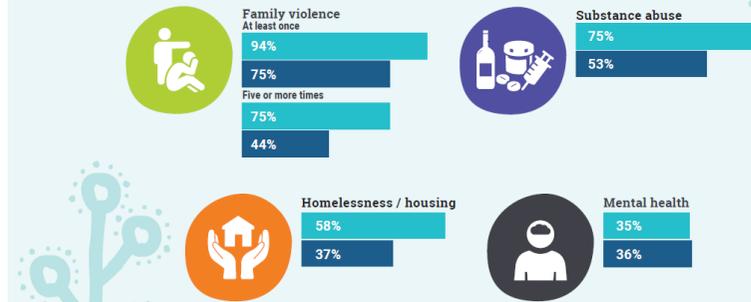
*Percentages are based on substantiated investigations.

*Emotional abuse FDV refers to: exposing a child to an act of family and domestic violence, including but not limited to; assault, causing personal injury, deprivation of liberty, damaging property, behaving in a manner that is intimidating, offensive or emotionally abusive.

*Emotional abuse (other) refers to sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill-treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement.

1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

What's happening in the home that contributes to children coming into care



Aboriginal Non-Aboriginal

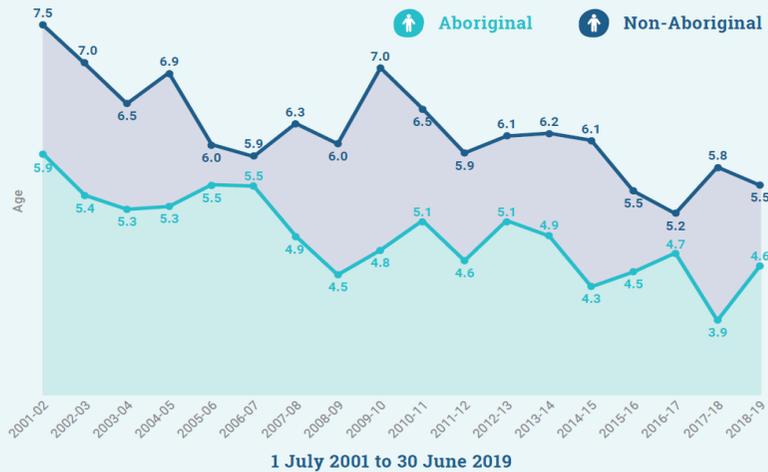
This is for parents and significant others of children entering care in 2018.

1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018

There are a variety of factors that result in a child entering OOHC and rarely is one factor the sole reason. In 2018-19, the primary reasons children entered care were neglect and emotional abuse resulting from a child being exposed to family and domestic violence.

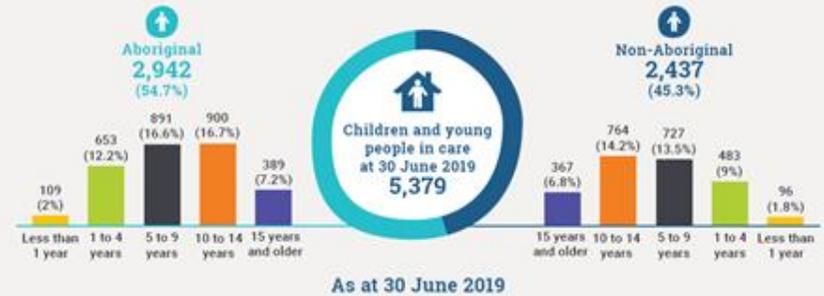
- Children entering OOHC have often experienced events within the family home that cause trauma, including violence, substance abuse, homelessness and mental health issues.
- The Building a Better Future Out-of-Home Care Reform Program (OOHC Reform) aims to strengthen care arrangements so that they include therapeutic supports to help heal the trauma experienced by children, keeping in mind the importance of staying connected to family, culture, community and country.

Average age of children when they come into care



Children in care in WA

Their age groups

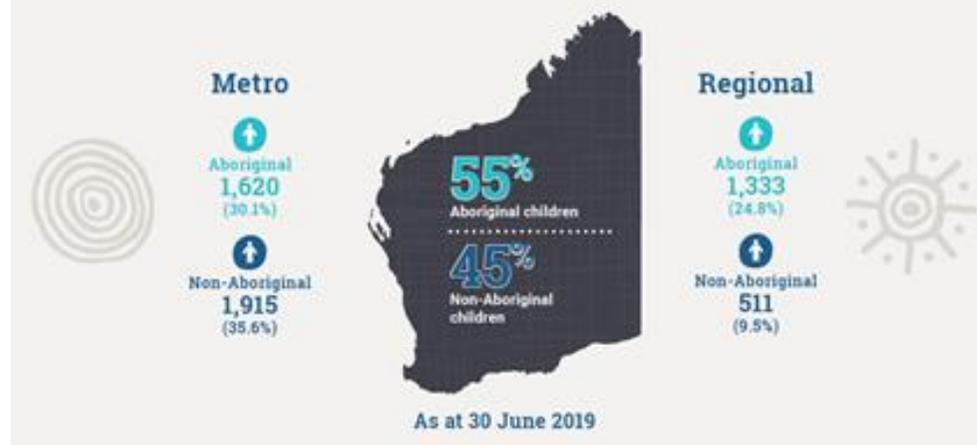


The number of children in care



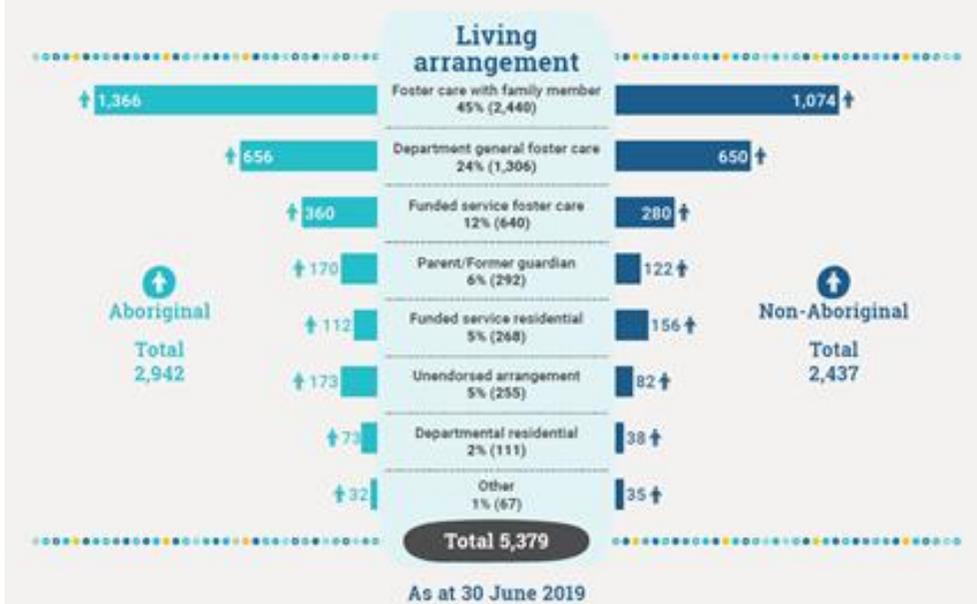
- As at 30 June 2019, there were 5,379 children in OOHC.
- Over the last decade, the age at which children have entered care has declined. Since 2001-02, Aboriginal children have consistently entered care at a younger age than non-Aboriginal children.
- There are more Aboriginal children in care represented across all age groups when compared to non-Aboriginal children.
- The aim of the EIFS services is to provide intensive support within the home environment to strengthen parenting skills and safety within the home and prevent children from entering care.

Regional v metro case management



- 55% of children in care were Aboriginal, as at June 2019.
- 72% of children in care in regional WA, were Aboriginal.
- An OOHC Reform focus is to design and implement services in collaboration with community that will meet local needs, build on community strengths and support children remaining on country staying connected to family.

Who they live with



- Communities' priority is to find care arrangements for children with family or kin, wherever possible, in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. This priority is supported is also supported by the Children and Community Services Act 2004.
- As a result, 45% of children in OOHC are in family care arrangements.
- The OOHC Reform work includes designing and providing OOHC services that are culturally safe, for all children and particularly Aboriginal children.
- This will mean improving the availability of culturally safe care arrangements and having decisions about the care of Aboriginal children being led by relevant Aboriginal family and/or community members.

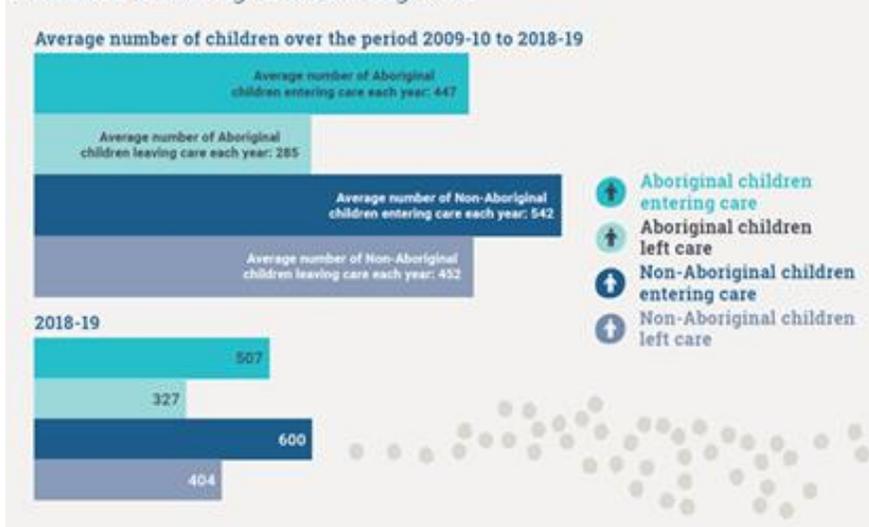


- As at 30 June 2019, the majority of Aboriginal carers were family carers.
- The majority of foster carers with community service organisations (CSOs) and non-family foster carers with the Department of Communities' were not Aboriginal.
- The OOHC Reform is focussing on increasing the number of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) providing OOHC with the aim of more Aboriginal children in OOHC being cared for by Aboriginal carers and organisations.



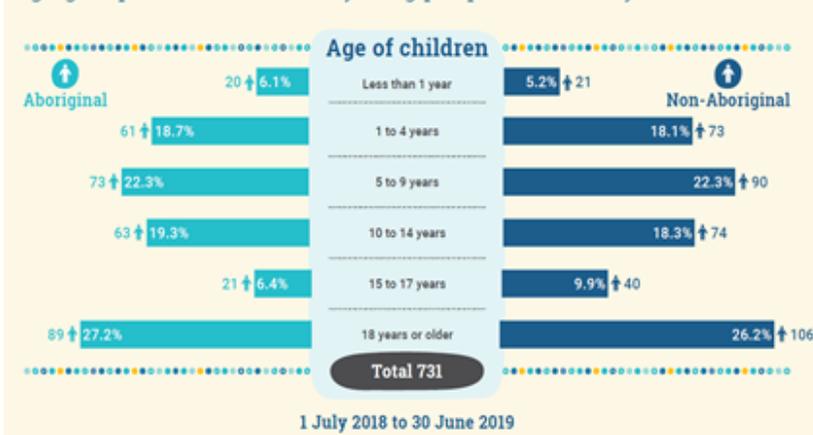
- As at 30 June 2019, the majority of all children in care were remaining in OOHC for 2 years or more. Aboriginal children remained in OOHC for longer than non-Aboriginal children.
- EIFSS prioritises and seeks to strengthen and support the reunification of Aboriginal children with their families.
- New services designed as part of the OOHC Reform will work closely with earlier intervention services to build strong pathways to return children to their parents safely.

Children entering and leaving care



- More non-Aboriginal children leave care, each year, than Aboriginal children, on average.
- This contributes to there being more Aboriginal children in care.
- The majority (70%) of children leaving care (not including those who leave due to turning 18 years old) left to return to family.
- In 11% of cases children left care on Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).
- Approximately a quarter of children left care due to turning 18 years of age.
- This is closely followed by children aged 5-9 years leaving care.
- The OOHK Reforms aim to support children to maintain meaningful connections to culture, family and country whilst in care to support the safe reunification of children to families.

Age groups of children and young people when they left care



Why children left care in 2018-19*

