

This publication scheme commits the Children's Commissioner's office to make certain information held by the office available to the public as part of its normal business activities.

**Who we are and what we do**

Dame Rachel de Souza is the Children's Commissioner for England. She was appointed in March 2021. The Children's Commissioner is a corporation sole and the Accounting Officer for the Office of the Children's Commissioner, a non-departmental public body of the Department for Education.

As part of the Commissioner's work, she publishes reports, blog posts, press releases, her submissions to public consultations from government and other statutory bodies, and other material on her website and social media channels.

The Children's Commissioner's organisational structure can be seen in the Pictogram of Governance Model **(Appendix 1)**.

Further information regarding the legislative basis for the Office of the Children's Commissioner is available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/6/enacted>

**Framework Agreement Document between the Department for Education and the Children's Commissioner. (Appendix 2)**

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[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

**Audit and Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee provides a means of independent assurance and objective review of financial systems, financial information, information data security, risk management systems, governance arrangements and internal control mechanisms, thus ensuring that assets are safeguarded, the risk of illegal or improper acts is reduced and confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial reporting is increased. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/corporate-governance/audit-and-risk-committee/>

### **What we spend and how we spend it**

Information about the Children's Commissioner's annual expenditure is provided in the Annual Report and Accounts, available at: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/corporate-governance/>

### **What our priorities are and how we are doing**

Each year the Commissioner publishes an annual business plan in the [Corporate Governance](#) section of the website which sets out the work she will do in the year ahead to deliver on the strategic plan. Her Annual Report, which is laid before Parliament, and published online in the same place, explains her performance against her previous year's business plan.

### **Our policies and procedures**

#### *Safeguarding Policy*

Protecting children from harm is one of the Commissioner's strategic priorities and core to all of our work with children and young people. **(Appendix 3)**

#### *Recruiting and employing staff*

Our website includes a section on which employment opportunities are promoted.

#### *Recruitment and appointment policy*

This policy document covers the recruitment and selection of all employees, and is included in our Staff handbook **(Appendix 4)**.

#### *Equal opportunities and diversity policy*

The Children's Commissioner's equal opportunities and diversity policy is included in our Staff handbook.

### *Health and safety policy*

This policy covers the organisation's responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of staff. This policy is included in our Staff Handbook.

### *Making a complaint*

We welcome feedback on our work. Our complaints procedure is available at <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/corporate-governance/complaints-procedure/>

### *Whistleblowing policy*

The Children's Commissioner is named in the Prescribed Persons Order 2014 as someone to whom whistle-blowers can raise concerns relating to the rights, welfare and interests of children. More information is available at <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/corporate-governance/whistleblowing/>

### *Records management and personal data policies*

The Children's Commissioner's office has policies relating to information security, records retention, destruction and archiving and data protection.

### *Register of gifts and hospitality*

The Children's Commissioner's office keeps a register of gifts and hospitality given to staff which is available on request.

### *Register of interests*

The Children's Commissioner's office keeps a register of the interests of: its staff; the members of the Commissioner's Advisory Board; and the Audit and Risk Committee, at: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/corporate-governance/registration-of-interest/>

## **The services we offer**

Help at Hand is our national advice line for children and young people who are in care, leaving care, living away from home or working with children's services. Our advice line is independent of the Government and exists to make sure that young people's rights and entitlements are upheld and that their views are taken seriously.

Contacting Help at Hand

Telephone: 0800 528 0731

Email: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

Help at Hand is open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

The service is free and fully confidential, and children and young people can remain anonymous if they wish to do so.

IMO (In My Opinion) is our digital offer for teenagers in care and care leavers. A unique, peer-led website, where they can share stories, experiences, and achievements, get and give advice, and gain access to career advice, training opportunities and competition prizes. It was created by the Children's Commissioner for England in collaboration with an advisory network of teens with care experience to give a voice for teenagers in care and care leavers and provide a place for them to connect.

Website: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/imo/>

**We do not generally publish:**

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

**The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available**

For all of the classes of information above, as a rule, information is published at:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/corporate-governance>.

We adhere to our obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

**Charging regimes and policies**

Electronic documents in HTML, PDF, Word, Excel and PowerPoint formats can be accessed free of charge on the Children's Commissioner's website.

The Children's Commissioner's office will not charge for supplying a single hard copy of any information available under the scheme. However, multiple copies may be charged for. This position will be reviewed and does not apply to priced documents that are available from The Stationery Office (see below). The Children's Commissioner's publications are covered by Crown copyright. They may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated. If you wish to reproduce crown copyright material as part of a commercial project, you must obtain a licence from the Office of Public Sector Information: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation-api/developer/licence>

For requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and this Publication Scheme, there will not usually be a charge for supplying information. In some circumstances, where the costs are significant, a charge may apply. In such cases, we will notify the applicant in advance. We will follow Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) guidance on charges

### **Written requests**

Information that we hold that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Such requests should be made in writing, identifying clearly the information you require, and sent to [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk).

Requests for information are treated on a fair and equal basis and without prejudice. Information requested under the Freedom of Information Act will be treated in line with our Freedom of Information Policy, which can be found online at <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/corporate-governance/freedom-of-information-policy/>.

Data Protection Policy - [Personal data collected for research purposes | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

**Appendices**

All Appendices listed below are available on request either by post:

Children's Commissioner's Office

Sanctuary Buildings

15 Great Smith Street

London SW1P 3BT

Or email: [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk).

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Pictogram of Governance Model:

Appendix 2: Framework Agreement Document between the Department for Education and the Children's Commissioner

Appendix 3: Safeguarding Policy

Appendix 4: Staff Handbook

These are available on request.