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| Child Protection and Family Services |
| Quarterly incident reporting  Quarter 4 2023-24 |
| OFFICIAL |

# About incident reporting

Incident reporting data is a snapshot in time of allegations made by clients of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and includes disclosures of historic abuse. They are recorded and remain as incidents regardless of whether further information becomes available to substantiate or disprove an event.

# Client Incident Management System (CIMS)

CIMS ensures and supports consistency of understanding in managing and responding to client incidents, as well as improving the standard of responses to incidents. This quarterly incident report includes department-delivered and department-funded organisation reported incidents on CIMS.

## Incident categories

Major impact incidents are the most serious incidents. When determining the appropriate category of a client incident service providers are required to focus on the impact (level of harm) to the client rather than the incident itself, including the extent to which a client has experienced physical, emotional and/or psychological harm and the potential risk of further harm.

Table 1: Child Protection and Family Services major impact incidents Quarter 4, 2023-24\*

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| Incident type | Quarter 4  1 April – 30 June |
| Client death | 6 |
| Abuse | 310 |
| Behaviour | 114 |
| Other incident types | 237 |
| **Total incidents** | **667** |

## Incident responses

Where there is an allegation, it is met with a strong response that includes medical attention (should this be required); a report to police if it involves an allegation of physical or sexual abuse or a client is potentially a victim of a crime; and counselling and support being offered to all parties.

Each major impact incident is subject to either an investigation or a review led by the service provider. This additional requirement provides a better understanding of how and why incidents occur; how they can be prevented; and how the department and service providers can respond to, and learn from, these incidents.

All major impact incident reports involving a child or young person in out-of-home care are provided to the Commission for Children and Young People.

### Client death

All client deaths, including those occurring at home or in a hospital, must be reported as major impact incidents. Most deaths are of children less than two years of age and these deaths include premature births, sudden infant death syndrome and known medical conditions. Services provided to children who were known to child protection in the 12 months preceding their death are reviewed by the Commission for Children and Young People. Deaths reported by Family Service providers are also included.

### Abuse

Abuse incidents include allegations of physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, and financial abuse. Professional judgement is used with respect to the nature of all abuse to determine the appropriate level of categorisation of each incident.

Allegations of abuse are treated seriously. Where clients are victims, they are supported by family support services, child protection, out-of-home care and specialist services, including access to specialist victim support services and medical assistance. The Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) is also contacted in cases of alleged sexual abuse unless the client does not want contact with this service. Where a crime may have occurred the Victoria Police are contacted.

### Behaviour

While clients can display a range of dangerous and disruptive behaviours placing both themselves and others at risk, behaviours are generally well managed with a range of services being provided to support clients.

### Other incident types

Other incidents include matters such as absent client, poor quality of care, injury, and self-harm/attempted suicide.

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\* Incident reporting data undergoes routine data validation and as such is subject to minor changes over time. Total numbers contained in this report may not be directly comparable to subsequently released incident reporting information.