



Department – Child and Family Services

**Public Access to Information
Information Statement**

Name of Public Authority: The Department of Child and Family Services

Introduction:

The Department of Child and Family Services has a legal duty under the Public Access to Information Act 2010 to maintain and update annually an Information Statement. This will facilitate easy access to information by the public and increase the accountability and transparency of the Department, which will endeavor to proactively publish as much information as possible.

The purpose of this Information Statement is to outline the information held by the Department of Child and Family Services which will be readily available to the public under the PATI Act 2010. The Act requires each public authority to prepare an information statement describing the following information about the authority:

- Structure, organization, and governing legislation;
- Functions, powers, duties and obligations;
- Summary of services provided;
- Classes of records held, in order to facilitate the exercise of right of access;
- Administrative manuals;
- Policies, rules and guidelines used for decision making;
- Name and contact information of the person designated by a public authority as the person to whom requests for information are to be directed;
- Any other information that the head of the authority considers relevant, in order to facilitate the exercise of the right of access;
- Any other information that may be prescribed.

Contact Information:

Address:

The Department of Child & Family Services
Custom House
131 Front Street
Hamilton HM 12
Telephone: 441-296-7575
Facsimile: 441-296-7942

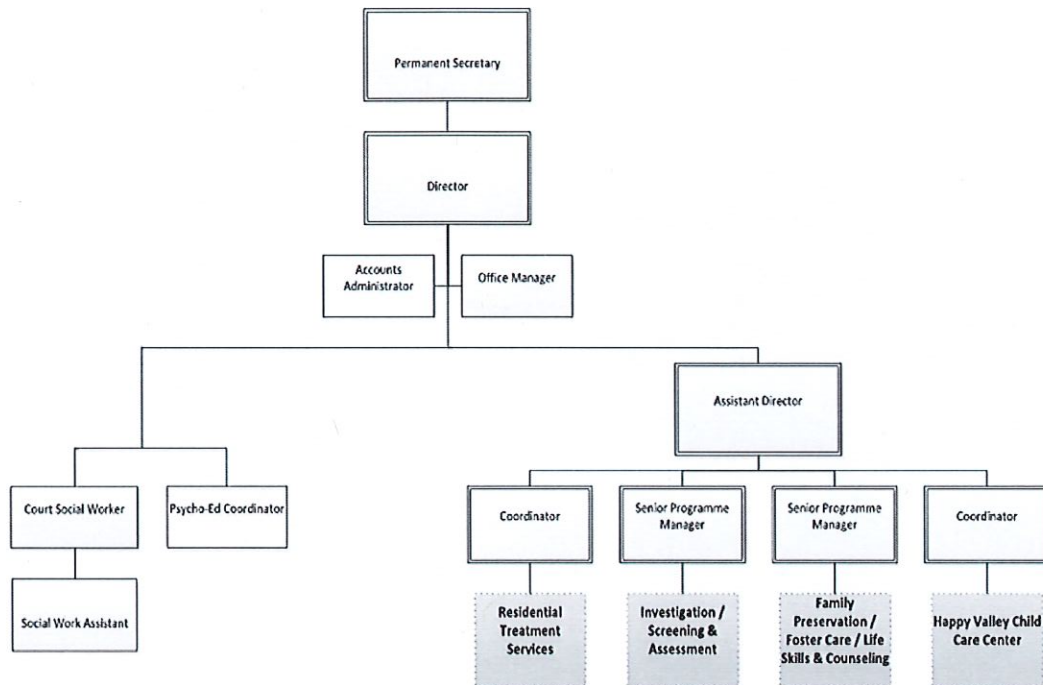


GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
 Ministry – Social Development and Seniors

Department – Child and Family Services

Section A: Structure, Organization and Legislation [s5(1)a]

The Department of Child and Family Services falls under the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors. The organizational chart for the Department is as follows:



Effective August 2022 Mirrors was transferred to the Department of Child and Family Services. Amendments to the official organizational chart to include Mirrors is pending.

The principal legislation that relates to the mandate of the Department of Child and Family Services is as follows:

- Children Act 1998
- Children Amendment Act 2002
- Adoption of Children Act 2006
- Adoption of Children Rules 2013
- Adoption of Children Regulations 2013
- Parental Responsibility Act 2010



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Section B: 1) Functions, powers, duties of the Authority [s5(1)b]

The mission of the Department of Child and Family Services is to promote and protect the best interest of children and families in order to enhance their social functioning and their quality of life.

Policy decisions are made at the ministerial level, with appropriate input and consultation from the Department. Consultation with other government stakeholders and with external stakeholders is sought as appropriate. The Department of Child and Family Services provides timely policy advice to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister of Social Development and Seniors on a wide range of policy matters regarding children and families.

The Ministry of Social Development and Seniors Headquarters is responsible for ensuring that appointments are made to Boards and committees under its remit.

Section B: 2) Obligations under PATI Act [s5(1)b]

- To provide an **information statement** for the public and promulgate it [s5],
- To provide **other information** to the public so that the public needs only to have minimum resort to the use of the Act to obtain information [s6]. This includes:
 - General information, e.g. activities of the Authority
 - Log of all information requests and their outcome
 - Quarterly expenditure (upon request) [s6(5)]
 - Contracts valued at \$50,000 or more.
- To **respond to information requests** in a timely manner [s12-16]
- To **track information requests**, and provide this data to the Information Commissioner
- To **respond to requests** from the Information Commissioner [s9]
- To **amend personal information** held by the Authority that it is wrong or misleading following a written request by the person to whom the information relates [s19]



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- To conduct an **internal review**, if formally requested [part 5]
- To give evidence for **review by the Information Commissioner** [part 6, 47(4)], or for **judicial review** [s49], if required
- To provide an **annual written report** to the Information Commissioner of the status of information requests [s58 (3)].
- **To do anything else as required** under the PATI Act and subsequent Regulations [s59, 60], including:
 - **Fees** for requests for information
 - **Management and maintenance of records**
 - **Procedures** for administering the Act
- To **train staff and make arrangements** so as to facilitate compliance with the Act [s61]
- To **designate one of its officers** to be the person to whom requests are directed [s62]

Section C: Services and Programmes [s5(1)c]

Services:

The Department of Child and Family Services is responsible for promoting and protecting the best interest of children, adolescents; adults and families in order to enhance their social functioning and their quality of life. This department provides the following services: Child Protection Assessment and Investigation Services, Family Preservation Services, Foster Care, Residential Group Home Care, Counseling and Life Skills Services for children and families, Court Social Work Services, Psycho-Educational Services, Day Care Services and the Mirrors Programme.

The Department ensures that services are administered in a manner consistent with the Financial Instructions as set by the Accountant General's Department. The Department of Child and Family Services establishes appropriate and reasonable procedures for measuring the effectiveness of delivery of services, and provides information pamphlets for dissemination to the general public. Seven programmes under the remit of the Department of Child and Family Services have achieved accreditation under the Bermuda National Standards Committee (BNSC) a local affiliate of the Council on Accreditation.



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Programmes:

The Department of Child and Family Services is responsible for the operation of the following Programmes:

Intake Services – the Intake Section is comprised of Screening, Investigations and Assessment teams. Upon receipt of a complaint from the community, the goal of the Intake process is to screen, assess and investigate a child or children’s immediate safety and risk of future harm.

Family Preservation Services - Family Preservation Services is responsible for providing intervention to monitor and ensure the safety of children at risk of abuse or neglect, assist families to improve family functioning, increase child well-being, reduce the need for placement in out of home care (foster care, residential group home care or psychoeducational services), and to enable children in out of home care to return safely to their families.

Foster Care Services - Foster Care Services provides children and youth with protection, care, and nurturance by licensed foster parents in private homes. Foster care is used for children when a Safety Assessment decision results in a placement to ensure a child’s safety. Foster care provides a safe, supportive and therapeutic environment for a child, while working towards either family reunification or an alternative permanency option.

Residential Treatment Services provides group home living, individual and group counseling, family assessments and interventions, educational groups, transitional services and aftercare. Services are provided to adolescents between the ages of twelve (12) and eighteen (18).

Counselling and Life Skills Services provides counseling, support and education for youth and families to manage situational change, improve family functioning, increase awareness of harmful risks related to youth substance misuse, and to improve functioning in daily activities at home, school and in the community. Services are administered through individual, family, and group counseling.

The Happy Valley Child Care Center provides child care and early childhood education to children from infancy to four years of age.



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Psycho-Educational Programme provides a collective response to meeting the needs of children who have exhausted the educational and therapeutic service options available in Bermuda.

Court Social Work - The purpose of the Court Social Work Office is for the Court Social Worker to assist the Supreme Court Justices, Magistrates, Department of Immigration and Overseas Social Service Agencies through the use of Social Inquiry Reports, Home Study Reports and Guardian Ad Litem Reports in making custody and/or access arrangements and Adoption orders that are deemed to be in the best interest of the child(ren).

Mirrors Programme – The mission of the Mirrors Programme is to empower young people to reach their potential through personal transformation that promotes healthy relationships. Mirrors’ primary objectives are to improve self-esteem and self-confidence, increase personal development and life skills, and to create healthy relationships between youth and adults. This is achieved through an array of services such as – Senior and Junior SuperCamp Forums, Parent Workshops, 8 Keys of Excellence School Based Programmes, Youth Drop-In Services, Out of School Suspension Support, Peer Forward and the Southland’s Community Service Project.

Section D: Records and documents held [s5(1)d]

Records are held by the Department of Child and Family Services:

General Administration

- Organizational Chart
- Job Descriptions
- Annual Reports
- Accreditation Standards
- Maintenance of Accreditation Reports
- Policy and Procedure Manuals
- Meeting agendas
- Relevant Legislation
- Grant Recipients
- Year End Submission
- Form Templates
- Brochures
- Statistical data



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The following classes of information are not accessible or are restricted:

- Information that could compromise security or confidentiality
- Information which is prohibited by law, or exempt under the Public Access to Information Act
- Information prohibited by a Court
- Information received in confidence

Section E: Administration (all public access) manuals [s5(1)e]

Administrative manuals/guidelines used by the Department of Child and Family Services include the following:

- Bermuda Government Procurement and Financial Instructions
- Department of Child & Family Services Policy and Procedures Manual/Practice Guide
- Structured Decision Making Policy and Procedures Manual

Section F: Decision-making documents [s5(1)f]

- Children Act 1998
- Children Amendment Act 2002
- Adoption of Children Act 2006
- Parental Responsibility Act 2010
- Adoption of Children Rules 2013
- Adoption of Children Regulations 2013
- Department of Child & Family Services Structured Decision Making Manual

Section G: The Department Information officer [s5(1)g]

Mrs. Renee Brown
Senior Programme Manager
Department of Child & Family Services
Custom House
131 Front Street
Hamilton HM 12

Contact Number: 441- 294-9399
Email: rnbrown@gov.bm



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Section H: Any Other Information [s5(1)h]

N/A

Section I: Information Statement: Copies and Updates [s5(2,3,4,5)]

Every public authority shall update its information statement at least once a year, and make it available for inspection by the public at reasonable times by [s5(1-5), PATI Act]:

Date Information Statement was updated: December 22nd, 2023

Locations of Information Statement:

Copies of this Information Statement are available at the following sites:

The Department of Child & Family Services: Custom House, 131 Front Street, Hamilton, HM 12

The Bermuda National Library

The Bermuda Archives

The Office of the Information Commissioner

Gov.bm

Signature: 

Date: 20/12/24