

Do you have questions about a social assessment report?

A social assessment report explained.

A separate representative may ask for a social assessment report to help them represent your child before the childrens court or the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

A social assessment report will be used when making decisions about your child's best interests.

What is a social assessment report and how is it used?

A social assessment report includes information about your child's history, living situation, views and wishes. It also provides an independent opinion on the best way to protect your child's best interests.

The court and tribunal will consider the report's recommendations when deciding whether a child protection order should be put in place for your child.

Who writes the report?

An accredited social worker, psychologist or another professional person will write the social assessment report.

They are considered by the court or tribunal to be an independent expert in child protection.

What information will the report writer use for the report?

The report writer will gather information about:

- › your child's relationship with significant people such as you (their parents), brothers and sisters, extended family and friends
- › your child's views and wishes, if they want to tell the report writer
- › your child's personal history and emotional attachments
- › your child's family history, including any significant issues which have impacted on them
- › your child's needs
- › what is currently happening in your child's life.

The report writer will also include the information the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) has presented in its case about your child.

Who will be interviewed?

Interviews may be held with:

- › your child alone
- › your child with you (their parent), the child safety officer for your child, the foster carer or another significant person
- › you, your partner or ex-partner, and any current partners, separately or together
- › the child safety officer for your child
- › other relevant professionals such as teachers, counsellors or doctors.

Interviews may be held at our office, over the phone or at the offices of other professionals involved in the case. Please contact us if you have any concerns about the report writer or how they are collecting information about your child.

How will the report writer use the information they collect?

The report writer will use their notes and interview recordings to write the social assessment report. As they have limited time to collect information and prepare the report, they will decide what is the most important information to be included in the report. All information collected by the report writer is reportable to the court or tribunal. The court, tribunal or separate representative may also ask the report writer to give evidence at your child's hearing.

The report will contain recommendations about whether a child protection order should be made, and other matters.

Who will see the social assessment report?

A copy of your child's social assessment report will be given to:

- › your child's separate representative, who will file it with the court or tribunal
- › you or your lawyer, if you are included in the proceedings
- › the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services)
- › anyone else involved in the proceedings.

For confidentiality reasons, if you are not involved in the proceedings, you will not be given a copy of your child's social assessment report.

A social assessment report gives the court an independent opinion on your child's best interests and helps guide decisions affecting their future.



What if I disagree with the report's recommendations?

If you disagree with the report's recommendations, please speak to your lawyer. They can let you know how you can raise these issues with the court or tribunal before decisions are made about your child.

What if I have concerns about my safety?


The report writer may ask you to take part in an interview with your child's other family and friends. Please tell your lawyer if you have a domestic violence order in place against someone who could attend these interviews. Your lawyer will make arrangements to protect you and your family during this process. If you don't have a lawyer, please speak to your child's separate representative or the report writer.

What if English is my second language?

If you would like this factsheet explained in your language, you can contact us through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50. TIS will organise an interpreter in your language and will connect you to Legal Aid Queensland. This is a confidential and free service.

For more information about our services:

 **1300 65 11 88**

 **www.legalaid.qld.gov.au**

Your local Legal Aid office:

Brisbane

44 Herschel Street

Bundaberg

2nd Floor, WIN Tower
Cnr Quay & Barolin Streets

Caboolture

Ground Floor, Kingsgate
42 King Street

Cairns

Level 2, Cairns Square
42-52 Abbott Street

Inala

Level 1, Inala Commonwealth
Offices, 20 Wirraway Parade

Ipswich

Level 7, 117 Brisbane Street

Mackay

Ground Floor
17 Brisbane Street

Maroochydore

Ground Floor, M1 Building
1 Duporth Avenue

Mount Isa

6 Miles Street

Rockhampton

Ground Floor
35 Fitzroy Street

Southport

1st Floor
100 Scarborough Street

Toowoomba

1st Floor
154 Hume Street

Townsville

3rd Floor, Northtown
280 Flinders Street

Woodridge

1st Floor, Woodridge Place
Cnr Ewing Road & Carmody Street

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