

Data Access Agreements

Fact Sheet

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Data Access Agreements (DAAs) outline the agreed data the Department of Children and Families (DCF) can automatically access from other Northern Territory Government agencies (NT) via the new 360 Degree View of the Child (360VoC) system.

DCF can already obtain this agreed data from Participating Agencies under the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)*. However, access to this data is currently a manual request process which can cause significant delays.

DAAs for the following Participating Agencies are approved and can be found [here](#):

- Department of Health
- Department of Education and Training
- Attorney-General's Department
- Northern Territory Police Force.

Following Machinery of Government changes in 2024, DAAs are now required with two new agencies:

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development
- Department of Corrections.

DCF is seeking feedback on these two new agreements via the Have Your Say [website](#).

Why are DAAs needed?

Having the right information at the right time helps us to make good decisions about children and their families. Automated and timely access to information about children at the attention of, or in the care of, DCF and their Close Connections will improve responses and lead to improved outcomes.

Child safety is everyone's business, and a strong whole-of-government approach to information sharing and collaboration will help ensure the safety of children in our care and at our attention.

The 360VoC system has been designed to ensure data is available within 24 hours, to provide a 360 degree overview of what is happening in the child's life, so we can assess wellbeing and risk and prompt a worker to respond, which includes following up relevant agencies for more detail.

The existing manual request process can cause significant delays. Reducing the need to rely on this manual process will cut down delays and support workers to target their inquiries, delivering more timely support to children and young people who need it most.

The 360VoC system will also help identify children and families at our attention who may require early intervention and prevention services, so they can receive the support they need before reaching crisis point. The system has the capability to generate real-time alerts for children known to DCF and in the event of an emergency, will automatically send alerts to DCF's case management system (CARE) where it can be viewed by the relevant DCF worker.

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These reforms deliver on recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT and findings from the NT Coroner, which identified the need for better information sharing and record keeping across agencies to improve outcomes about the safety and wellbeing of children.

DCF is often entrusted with parental responsibility for children, and therefore requires access to the same information a parent or guardian would need to make informed decisions about a child's safety and wellbeing.

Information sharing

Participating Agencies will only provide specific types of data through 360VoC when it's relevant to the safety and wellbeing of a child in care of, or at the attention of DCF. This will include data relating to the child's health, education, housing and involvement with police and the youth justice system.

Data will only be available to DCF through 360VoC if it relates to a child in care, or at the attention of DCF, or a Close Connection of that child.

A Close Connection is a person who is linked to or related to a child at the attention of, or in the care of DCF because they are:

- a sibling, a parent or a current or prospective legal guardian or carer
- another family member of the child (including as understood under the Aboriginal kinship system) identified as relevant to the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a household member at any premises where the child normally resides, or
- the person believed to be responsible for harm to the child.

Close Connections may have an impact on the safety and wellbeing of children. Having a clear understanding of what is happening in the child's day-to-day home life ensures decision making is informed and efficient, which in turn improves the care and protection of the child. Personal information not relevant to the care and protection of the child is not captured by or included in the DAAs or made available through 360VoC, even where it exists in Participating Agency systems.

Data relating to Close Connections that could be available through 360VoC may relate to:

- domestic, family and sexual violence
- alcohol and drug abuse
- mental health admissions
- self-harm
- criminal behaviours and related events (such as, if someone has been charged with an offence, or the date when someone may be released from custody).

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Data matching

Each Participating Agency has its own data management systems with unique identifiers or client IDs.

Basic identity data is transferred from agency systems to a highly secure database where it is matched to a person known to DCF with a CARE ID. This includes children in the care of, or at the attention of, DCF and their Close Connections.

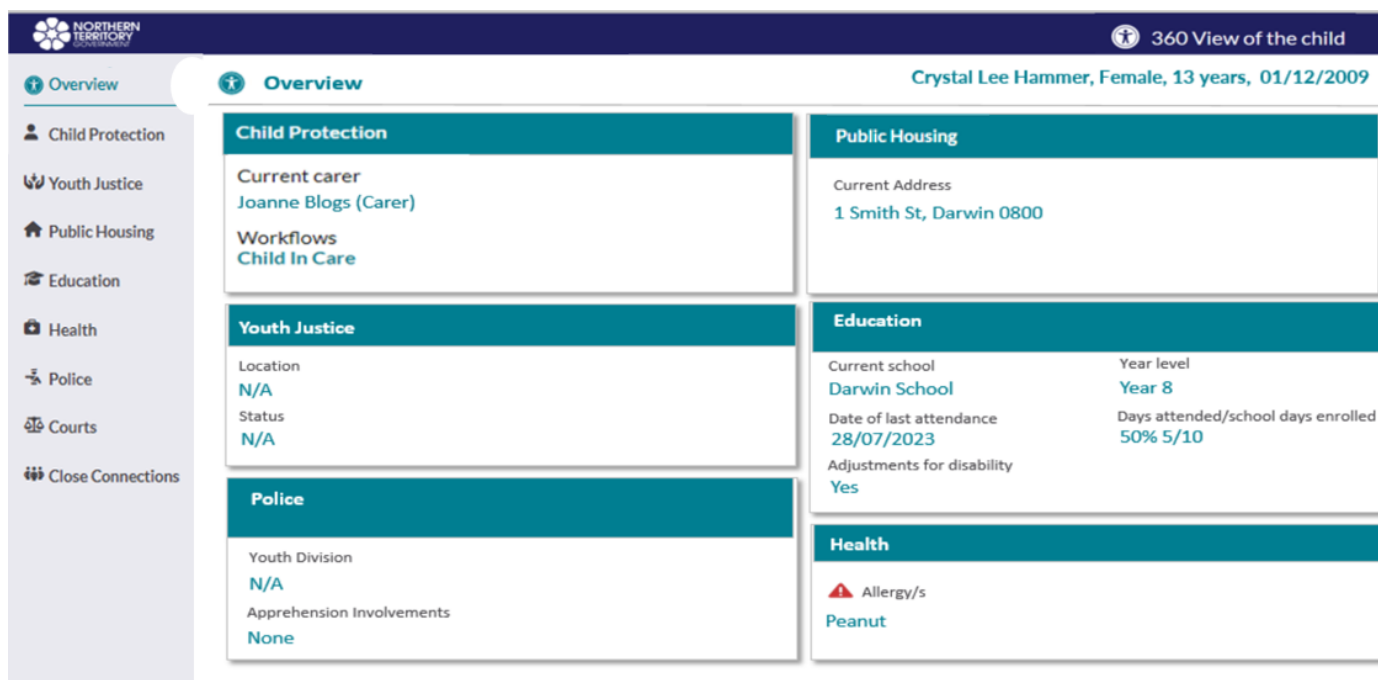
Only the matched person identification numbers from agency systems are transferred to the 360VoC when there is an open CARE case. These identification numbers are used to extract data from agency systems, ensuring that the data transferred to 360VoC from agency systems relates to the correct people and does not include any information on individuals not known to DCF.

To ensure we are accessing data about the right person, a Master Data Management (MDM) system will use algorithms to match individuals across Partnering Agencies using name, date of birth, date of death, gender, sex at birth, address, aliases, relationships and system identifiers.

Only data for defined and approved Close Connections will be visible in 360VoC.

Data in 360VoC is limited to basic details and indicators of incidents or data that might prompt an authorised DCF worker to follow up on.

Figure 1: example of data available in 360VoC



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Data security

Data transferred to 360VoC will be stored in a highly secure database. Data in the system will only then be visible to authorised persons in a dashboard view in 360VoC. DCF staff will not have access to a Participating Agency's source data at any stage.

The data in 360VoC can only be seen by a limited number of authorised users through secure and specific access controls and this cannot be edited. User access will be subject to regular audits and a multi-stage authentication and approvals process.

Those with secure access can only use 360VoC while connected to the NT Government network, which is secured behind its own firewall. Other security measures are also in place, which is standard across the entire NT Government IT environment.