

FOSTER CARE — CASES OF NEGLECT

918. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

- (1) (1) With regard to incidents of neglect of children in the care of registered foster carers or family carers I ask:
 - (a) In each of the following years how many cases of neglect were investigated by the Department of Communities and how many of those cases were substantiated:
 - (i) 2019;
 - (ii) 2020;
 - (iii) 2021;
 - (iv) 2022; and
 - (v) 2023 to date?
 - (2) (2) How many children, and how many family groups, were involved in each of the substantiated cases of neglect and what were the ages of those children:
 - (a) of each substantiated case of neglect, how many involved:
 - (i) a relative carer;
 - (ii) a registered foster carer; and
 - (iii) why were charges not brought against any carers where cases of neglect were substantiated?
 - (3) (3) What were the ages of the children involved in the substantiated cases of neglect?
 - (4) (4) Of each substantiated case of neglect, how many involved:
 - (a) a relative carer; and
 - (b) a registered foster care?

Ms S.E. Winton replied:

The Department of Communities (Communities) advises:

- (1) (a) As at the 30 September 2023:
 - (i) 2019 – 66 cases investigated, of which 35 substantiated
 - (ii) 2020 – 57 cases investigated, of which 23 substantiated
 - (iii) 2021 – 46 cases investigated, of which 23 substantiated
 - (iv) 2022 – 28 cases investigated, of which 16 substantiated
 - (v) 2023 – 14 cases investigated, of which 7 substantiated
- (2)–(4) Of the 104 substantiated cases there was 72 family groups, and 102 children with the following age ranges:
 - 37 were aged 0 to 4 years
 - 26 were aged 5 to 9 years
 - 35 were aged 10 to 14 years
 - 4 were aged 15 to 16 years

For each of the substantiated investigations of neglect, no foster or family carers were assessed as meeting the criteria for causing Actual Harm and Continuing Risk (ACHR).

Criminal matters are referred to the WA Police Force for investigation and any subsequent charges.