

CHILD PROTECTION — YOUNG PEOPLE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE — CRIMINALISATION

2123. Hon Alison Xamon to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services:

I refer to research from New South Wales regarding the criminalisation of young people in residential care, and I ask:

- (a) how many young people are currently in out of home residential care in Western Australia;
- (b) will the Minister please advise the ages of the young people currently in residential care;
- (c) how many of the young people currently in residential care have been sentenced to a period of youth justice detention since being placed in residential care; and
- (d) how many of the young people currently in residential care have been sentenced to a community based order since being placed in residential care?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

(a) As at 7 May 2019, there were 388 children in out-of-home residential care.

(b) Of the 388 children in residential care:

One child was less than one year of age

13 children were between one and four years of age

73 children were between five and nine years of age

180 children were between ten and 14 years of age, and

121 children were 15 years of age or over.

(c) 75 of the children in residential care have had at least one recorded period of detention while in care.

Not all children who enter a period of detention will have been "sentenced". Within Communities' client information system, the reasons a young person can be recorded as being in detention include instances where they:

have been arrested and are waiting for a first court appearance or bail determination

are waiting for their court case if they have been denied bail

are waiting to be sentenced after being convicted, or

have been sentenced to a period of detention.

(d) The information requested is not readily available from the Department of Communities' (Communities) child protection information system. As this information is held on individual case files, it would impose a significant administration burden on Communities to source this data.