

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS — WAIT TIMES

330. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Mental Health:

I refer the minister to wait times published in *The West Australian* some six months ago, on 1 September 2022, suggesting that under-18s faced, at that time, more than a year's wait to see a clinical psychologist.

- (1) What is the current median wait time in months for an under-18 to access a clinical psychologist?
- (2) How many children are currently waiting to see a clinical psychologist in the public health system?
- (3) What is the McGowan government doing to reduce these wait times, and what can I, as a GP, tell a patient of mine who contacted me just last week, complaining that her teenage daughter faced a wholly unacceptable two-year wait for treatment?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

The article the member references pertains to wait times in the government-funded Child Development Service—CDS—which provides a range of assessment, early intervention and treatment services to children with developmental delays or difficulties that impact on function, participation and/or parent–child relationships.

- (1) Children referred to a clinical psychologist at CDS are provided with a telephone service planning appointment with a nurse or allied health professional within eight to 12 weeks of referral. In WA Country Health—WACHS—service regions, this occurs within six weeks of referral. At this appointment, parent concerns are discussed, the referral is triaged and parents are provided with appropriate resources for managing their child's presenting issues. Current wait times for a CDS clinical psychologist is 17 months in the metropolitan area and three months in WA Country Health Service regions.
- (2) There are 1 810 children currently on the metropolitan CDS waitlist, and a further 144 children are on the waitlist in WACHS regions. Children referred to the acute setting, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service's Crisis Connect, are seen immediately.
- (3) The McGowan government supported the establishment of a Select Committee into Child Development Services and will consider the committee's recommendations when they are presented to government. WA Health continues to actively recruit to support the delivery of mental health services to children and young people.