



**ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

Monday 8 October 2012

Department for Child Protection

Question No. B1: Hon. Sue Ellery asked –

1. I turn to staffing numbers on page 96 of the annual report. Table 35 sets out a number of staff as at 30 June 2012. If I stick with permanents currently, which is 1,787, are you able to tell us how many vacancies you have now?

Answer:

As at the 30 June 2012, the Department had 141 FTE vacant positions.
The current vacancy rate as at 30 September 2012 was 136 FTE vacant positions.

Question No. B2: Hon. Alison Xamon asked –

2. (i) I want to pick up on this issue of caseworker vacancies. Could you please tell me where the vacancies currently are by district?

(ii) In terms of the figures for the regional vacancies, what percentage would that be, going through each region, of caseworker FTE?

(iii) Are you able to give a breakdown per district as well – what it would be percentage-wise? You have just given me specific FTE figures per district, but I am interested to know what that represents in the district vacancy.

Answer:

- (i) The below Table lists the current actual caseworker Allocated FTE and caseworker vacancies per district as at 30 September 2012.
- (ii) Column C of the below table identifies vacant caseworker FTE as a percentage of the total Allocated caseworker FTE per district. As at the 30 September 2012, the Department had a total of 46 FTE caseworker vacancies or 6.0% of total Allocated caseworker FTE. Metropolitan Services had 9.3 FTE vacancies or 2.2% of total Allocated caseworker FTE whereas Country Services had 37.1 FTE vacancies or 10.6% of total Allocated caseworker FTE.
- (iii) See below table.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Sue Ellery'.

Caseworker Allocated FTE and Vacancies FTE As At 30 September 2012

Directorate	District	A	B	C
		Caseworker Allocated FTE	Caseworker Vacancies FTE	Vacancies as a Percentage of Allocated FTE
		Total	Total	Total
Metropolitan Districts	Armadale	54.7	0.5	0.9%
	Cannington	50.6	0.0	0.0%
	Fremantle	47.2	2.0	4.2%
	Joondalup	42.0	0.0	0.0%
	Midland	51.6	1.0	1.9%
	Mirrabooka	51.8	2.3	4.3%
	Perth	48.0	2.5	5.2%
	Rockingham	41.0	0.0	0.0%
	Total Metropolitan Districts:	386.9	8.3	2.1%
Metropolitan Other	Crisis Care	39.5	1.0	2.5%
	Metro Services Support	1.0	0.0	0.0%
	Total Metro Other:	40.5	1.0	2.5%
	Total Metropolitan Services:	427.4	9.3	2.2%
Country Districts	East Kimberley	31.0	3.0	9.7%
	Goldfields	36.0	5.0	13.9%
	Great Southern	27.8	2.5	9.0%
	Murchison	41.5	10.5	25.3%
	Peel	31.5	1.9	6.0%
	Pilbara	44.0	6.0	13.6%
	South West	45.2	3.0	6.6%
	West Kimberley	37.2	1.2	3.2%
	Wheatbelt	40.3	3.0	7.4%
	Total Country Districts:	334.5	36.1	10.8%
Country Other	ChildFIRST	12.8	1.0	7.8%
	Country Services Support	3.0	0.0	0.0%
	Total Country Other:	15.8	1.0	6.3%
	Total Country Services:	350.3	37.1	10.6%
TOTAL FTE:		777.7	46.4	6.0%

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Question No. B3: Hon. Liz Behjat asked –

1. Can you provide us with a breakdown of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, CALD backgrounds and metropolitan and non-metropolitan – in those four categories of mandatory reports?

Answer:

	Children in mandatory reports that instigated an assessment ^(a)	Children in mandatory reports that did not instigate an assessment ^(b)	Children in non-mandatory reports that instigated an assessment	Children in non-mandatory reports that did not instigate an assessment ^(b)
Total children ^(c)	1,898	598	191	183
Aboriginal ^(d)	348	136	41	56
Non-Aboriginal	1,550	462	150	127
CaLD ^(d)	39	32	5	16
Non-CaLD	1,859	566	186	167
Metropolitan	1,350	359	132	94
Country	548	239	59	89
Total reports	1,191	537	119	166

- (a) Children may be the subject of multiple mandatory reports and therefore children in this category may also be counted in “Children in mandatory reports that did not instigate an assessment”.*
- (b) Reports that did not instigate an assessment relate to reports where the same child(ren) and incident are being assessed as a result of a previous mandatory report or some other child protection notification.*
- (c) A mandatory report may instigate an assessment for more than one child. For example, siblings of a child that is the subject of a mandatory report may not be included in the initial mandatory report, however an assessment will be undertaken for the child’s siblings.*
- (d) These figures are likely to be under-reported as, at the time of a mandatory report being made, a child’s Aboriginality and/or cultural and linguistic diversity (CaLD) status may not be known.*

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Department for Child Protection

Question No. B4: Hon. Sue Ellery asked –

1. *Why was there a substantial increase in the number of misconduct allegations in the Annual Reports of 2010/11 and 2011/12? In 10/11 there were 42 allegations and 5 matters were substantiated, and in 11/12 there were 56 allegations and 22 matters were substantiated.*

Answer:

The rollout of the sector wide Accountable and Ethical Decision Making (AEDM) training has increased awareness amongst staff of matters that require reporting to the Department for Child Protection's (the Department) Integrity Services Unit (ISU). The Department made AEDM training compulsory for all staff commencing on 22 July 2010.

In terms of physical contact allegations, the threshold for initiating an assessment is very low. A Department Officer has delegated authority under the act to restrain, search, and seize articles from children in care.

When staff operate this part of the legislation they are required to submit Critical Incident Reports that are reviewed by management, and sometimes these reports are referred to the ISU unit to assess, even in the absence of a complaint. If there is any concern that the physical contact occurred outside of the practice requirements, the employee may be asked to explain their actions during a disciplinary process pursuant to the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

2. *Of those substantiated, can you tell us how many of those were physical contact, how many were threatening behaviour, how many were unprofessional communication, and how many were a combination of any of those criteria?*

Answer:

5 were inappropriate physical contact involving children in care.

3 were threatening behaviour, none involving children in care.

10 were unprofessional communication, 6 do not involve children in care.

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Department for Child Protection

Question No. B5 : Hon. Sue Ellery asked –

Hon SUE ELLERY: Of those 45 children who were admitted to Kath French, can you tell us the average length of the stay and what was the longest; how many children stayed for what period; whether any children have been admitted more than once; and whether any children have had their times extended? The act provides for 21 days and a possible extension beyond that.

1. How many children: 45 admissions for 33 children
2. Average length of stay 22.0 days.
3. Length of stay per admission
 - 0 – 7 days for 3 admission
 - 8 – 14 days for 4 admissions
 - 15 – 21 days for 27 admissions
 - 22-42 days for 11 admissions
4. Longest period of stay: 42 days = 6 young people
5. Whether any children were admitted more than once:
 - a. 24yp admitted once
 - b. 7yp admitted twice
 - c. 1yp admitted three times
 - d. 1yp admitted four times
6. Whether any children had their times extended: 11 young people

Hon ALISON XAMON: Does the Advocate for Children in Care, referred to on page 17, visit the centre?

The young people have their rights read to them twice in their initial 48 hours to make sure they are aware of them and to account for the trauma they may be experiencing at the time.



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Question No. B6 : Hon. Sue Ellery asked –

- 1. On how many occasions has the Department assisted families to find and secure suitable accommodation?*

Answer:

In 2011-12, the Department was contacted on 8,432 occasions in relation to homelessness issues. This represented a 32 per cent increase from 2010-11, where 6,379 contacts were recorded in relation to homelessness issues.

In these cases, the Department offers a range of services to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This may include providing clients with information and referrals to community sector homelessness services, or the Department may provide financial assistance for short-term crisis accommodation.

In 2011-12, there were 693 instances of financial assistance provided to 502 distinct clients for accommodation. This represented a seven per cent decrease compared to 2010-11, where there were 745 instances of financial assistance provided to 537 clients for accommodation.

The majority of people who contact the Department with housing issues are referred to, or receive services from, community sector agencies funded by the Department to provide homelessness and other support services.

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Department for Child Protection

Question No. B7 : Hon. Sue Ellery asked –

1. *Can you give me the definition and examples of an “unendorsed arrangement” and explain why the number of children in care in these living arrangements has increased from 131 to 174 in 12 months?*

Answer:

The number of children in unendorsed arrangements increased by 3.3 per cent from 2010-11, compared to a 7.4 per cent increase in the number of children in care.

Children in the CEO’s care, particularly older children, may self-select living arrangements that have not been approved by the Department. These unendorsed arrangements may include returning to live with their parents, siblings or friends, or extended relatives such as grandparents, aunts and uncles. Young people may also self-select youth accommodation services.

When this occurs, the Department assesses the situation, and if there are any potential concerns for the child’s safety, the child is removed from the placement.

In some circumstances, the Department may assess the person as a 'significant other carer' or a 'relative carer', and if suitable, the assessment may result in the placement being subsequently endorsed by the Department. These placement decisions are made in conjunction with senior district staff and management.

RMY.