

**ATTACHMENT: QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AND FURTHER
INFORMATION AGREED TO BE SUPPLIED AT THE
HEARINGS**

Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN PORTFOLIO

1. With respect to unallocated child protection cases:

- a. please provide the number of unallocated cases during 2016-17, and for 2017-18 to 31 May 2018**

(Asked by Mr O'Brien, pages 6-9, 12-13 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The number of unallocated cases as at 1 June 2018 was 2,337 (revised from previously quoted figure following a month end data reconciliation undertaken after the PAEC hearing). This is compared to 2,351 unallocated children as at 30 November 2014.

The allocation rate as at the last Friday of April was 85%. This contrasts with the allocation rate at the change of Government, which was 80.7%. This is despite an 17% increase in reports to child protection in 2015-16.

An additional 3,249 children have been allocated a worker in this term of government.

The allocation rate has always been published as a percentage. Because the number of cases unallocated can change by the minute, the rate is a more effective representation of the efficiency of the department and gives the community a greater understanding of the child protection operations. Publishing the allocation rate as a percentage is a more accurate measure as the actual numbers do not reflect the growth of the number of additional children coming into the child protection system.

Our Government has increased transparency by publishing the allocation rate quarterly, something the previous government failed to do.

It is important to note that when a case is unallocated to a primary worker there is still a senior team member who has oversight and responsibility for the case.

The Victorian Government is increasing our Child Protection workforce. The 2018-19 budget includes \$225.5 million to employ more than 450 child protection workers – the largest ever expansion of the workforce, growing it by 36.4 per cent since November 2014.

The improvement in the allocation rate is a direct result of the investment and reforms being implemented.

As child protection practitioners are recruited and skilled up to manage a caseload, the allocation rate is expected to continue to improve.

b. please provide the latest number of unallocated cases (from the Client Relation Information System) by region.

(Asked by Mr O'Brien, pages 6-9, 12-13 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The number of unallocated cases as of 1 June 2018 by division is:

North division - 413

South division - 626

East division - 297

West division – 1,001

2. With regards to child protection funding:

a. please provide the amount expected to be spent per child during 2017-18, 2018-19 and over the forward estimates:

i. supporting children in the home

ii. supporting children in out-of-home care.

(Asked by Ms Pennicuik, page 9 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The amount expected to be spent per child and over the forward estimates to support children in out of home care is unavailable. Out-of-home care expenditure is typically reported in arrears (i.e. once the financial year has closed).

b. how has the out-of-home care funding changed in relation to:

i. the significant population growth in Victoria

ii. the number of children in out-of-home care?

(Asked by Ms Pennicuik, page 9 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

(i) Forecasts for the number of placements use historical data to predict future need, with population growth implicitly built into the projections.

(ii) Additional funding is provided by the Victorian Government to meet growth in demand for statutory out-of-home care placements.

In addition to funding demand for out of home care placements, the Victorian Government has funded a range of initiatives to improve the outcomes for children in out of home care. These initiatives align with the Victorian Government's *Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children* and are summarised below.

The 2018-19 State Budget will deliver a total of \$390.7 million for improving home-based care for children in out-of-home care, including a new model of kinship care and Australian-first reforms such as professionalised foster care. Key initiatives funded include:

- \$188.05 million over 3 years to support 2,772 home-based care placements per year to sustain demand in the home based care system.
- \$22.8 million over 3 years for flexible support for foster, kinship and permanent carers, including client expenses and placement support brokerage. This investment will also continue a dedicated helpline established to provide advocacy and support for permanent carers and adoptive families. To December 2017, the helpline responded to 2,243 enquiries from permanent and adoptive carers. This will also continue the provision of support, education and training to foster and kinship carers.
- \$3.5 million for learning and development opportunities through Carer KaFE. Since June 2017, 2,000 carers have engaged in face-to-face and online training. This investment provides more carer camps, accredited training, new face-to-face training options and a broader range of online learning opportunities.
- \$82.46 million over 4 years for every placement in residential care to be subject to improved safety and supervision requirements.
- \$49.35 million over 2 years for 162 Targeted Care Packages (TCPs) to reunify children with their families. TCPs have supported more than 550 children to transition out of residential care and into a caring family or to prevent them from entering residential care.
- Up to \$8.75 million over 1 year for 3 evidence-based, therapeutic initiatives which are being tested in Victoria's South division. This includes the Treatment Foster Care Oregon Model, the Intensive Support Treatment Service and Sibling Group model.

This is in addition to \$161.1 million in the 2017-18 Budget to support families and children, including \$9.8 million which was allocated to support the residential care workforce to meet minimum qualification requirements from 1 January 2018. To date, more than 1,400 workers have been booked into training through Technical and further Education Institutions (TAFE)

3. How much is provided to carer households per child per year?

(Asked by Ms Pennicuik, page 14 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

Carers are provided with allowances based on the child's age and level of need.

Care allowance prices for 2017-18 are provided in the table below and are published on the department's website:

| Level | Age | 2017-18 |
|--|-----------------|----------|
| Level 1 (General) | 0-7 years | \$10,121 |
| | 8-10 years | \$10,473 |
| | 11-12 years | \$11,600 |
| | 13+ years | \$14,885 |
| Level 2 (Intensive - Level 1) | 0-7 years | \$10,684 |
| | 8-10 years | \$11,610 |
| | 11-12 years | \$13,727 |
| | 13+ years | \$18,847 |
| Level 3 (Intensive - Level 2) | 0-7 years | \$13,937 |
| | 8-10 years | \$15,064 |
| | 11-12 years | \$17,962 |
| | 13+ years | \$24,771 |
| Level 4 (Complex - Non High Risk Adolescent) | 0-7 years | \$26,769 |
| | 8-10 years | \$26,769 |
| | 11-12 years | \$26,769 |
| | 13+ years | \$26,769 |
| Level 5 (Complex – High Risk Adolescent) | 0-7 years | \$41,237 |
| | 8-10 years | \$41,237 |
| | 11-12 years | \$41,237 |
| | 13+ years | \$41,237 |
| Therapeutic Foster Care Allowance | 0-7 years | \$3,255 |
| | 8-10 years | \$3,255 |
| | 11-12 years | \$3,255 |
| | 13+ years | \$3,255 |
| School Attendance Allowance | 5-11 years | \$349.00 |
| | 12-18 years | \$523.00 |
| New Placement Loading | 6 months (only) | \$804.00 |

All foster, kinship and permanent carers also have access to flexible funding for extraordinary expenses such as specific medical needs, childcare or transport.

4. With respect to early intervention:

a. Which areas of early intervention and protection are receiving increased funding in this budget?

(Asked by Ms Pennicuik, page 15 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The 2018-19 budget included \$858.6 million to continue the transformation of Victoria's children and family services system from a crisis response to early intervention and prevention through the Roadmap for Reform. This includes:

- \$92 million over two years for family services and intensive early years services.

- \$9.8 million over four years in improving the quality of services provided to prevent child abuse and neglect. The investment will continue the transformation of services by expanding the use of evidence-based program trials in child and family services.
- \$19.4 million over four years to commence a Community Partnerships initiative focused on reducing child abuse and neglect. We will do this through a place-based approach that builds the capability of parents by linking them to earlier and more effective community and social service supports. This will see child and family service practitioners based in universal services. This is a joint initiative between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education and Training.
- \$225.5 million over three years to employ more than 450 child protection workers.
- \$47.3 million over four years will go towards supporting Aboriginal families and children including cultural planning and the Australian-first Aboriginal Children in Aboriginal Care program.
- \$6 million over four years for Aboriginal child and family innovation and learning systems.

b. Is this an increased percentage of the overall budget compared to the past?

(Asked by Ms Pennicuik, page 15 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

Yes.

5. With respect to youth justice facilities for the year 2017-18:

(Asked by Mr Smith, pages 17-19 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

- a. **What types of drug use is occurring in youth justice facilities?**
- b. **How many young people who are afflicted by an ice addiction are coming into the youth justice system?**
- c. **How many young people with drug or alcohol addictions entered the youth justice system?**
- d. **How many youth people are expected to be in drug rehabilitation programs during 2018-19?**

Young people are assessed and screened for alcohol and drug dependency issues when they are admitted into Youth Justice custody, whether they are on remand or sentenced. An initial health assessment conducted by a Registered Nurse within 24 hours of admission, includes general issues related to alcohol and drug usage. This is followed up by a comprehensive medical assessment that identifies triggers for addiction as well as alcohol and drug needs within 72 hours of a young person entering custody.

- a. Some young people may have used illicit substances prior to their admission into Youth Justice custodial services and may be withdrawing from these substances during their detention. The Department of Justice and Regulation has stringent security processes in place to maintain the safety and security of Youth Justice centres, including strategies to detect and prevent contraband from entering Youth Justice centres, and to prevent its availability and use.
- b. The Youth Parole Board (the Board) reports on the health and background of young people in the Youth Justice system in its Annual Report. The 2016-17 Youth Parole Board Annual Report reports that 65 per cent of young people had a history of alcohol and drug misuse. The 2017-18 Annual Report will be available in due course.
- c. Please refer to the answer above.
- d. This data is not available. Alcohol and other drug (AOD) programs that will be delivered in custody in 2018-19 include: a 24-hour group AOD program, a brief psychoeducational AOD group program, individual transition sessions (aimed at harm minimisation and relapse prevention), and individual counselling (addressing AOD needs in conjunction with other offending behaviour interventions).

6. In relation to 'Better Futures — Supporting Young Care Leavers' there is an allocation of \$2.3 million this year and nothing thereafter. That budget line will extend a current trial of 'a new way of delivering supports to young care leavers', 16 to 21, in parts of Gippsland and south east Melbourne.

a. How long have these trials been running, and what have the outcomes been so far?

(Asked by Ms Shing on behalf of Ms Pennicuik, page 20 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The Better Futures (South) trial has been running since April 2017, and the Barwon trial since August 2017.

The Department of Health and Human Services' Centre for Evaluation and Research is evaluating both trials. Early learnings from the South trial show stakeholders see the model as an improvement on existing responses due to the focus on early intervention and proactive follow up approaches, with services keeping in touch with young people from the date of eligibility until they are ready to engage.

b. How is the impact of those trials being measured?

(Asked by Ms Shing on behalf of Ms Pennicuik, page 20 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The Department of Health and Human Services' Centre for Evaluation and Research is drawing on a variety of data sources to evaluate the impact of the Better Futures trials.

It will measure a range of short, medium and long-term outcomes, including engagement in education, training and employment., suitability and stability of housing, cultural and community connections and health. The evaluation will also include listening to the voice of young people to understand their first-hand experience of the model and how it has contributed to their transition and leaving care readiness.

c. Will the program be funded to continue and extend pending the program evaluation?

(Asked by Ms Shing on behalf of Ms Pennicuik, page 20 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The program is funded until 30 June 2019 and any future funding will be informed by the evaluation findings.

7. Why is the new model of kinship carers not funded beyond next year (BP3, p. 72)?

(Asked by Ms Shing on behalf of Ms Pennicuik, page 20 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The new kinship care model is funded for 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Future funding decisions in respect of the new model will be informed by an evaluation of the impact of the current investment, based on a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework that has been developed to support the roll out of the model.

8. Please provide a list of contraband that has been collected in youth justice facilities over the last year.

(Asked by Mr Smith, page 21 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The Department of Justice and Regulation has stringent security processes in place to maintain the safety and security of Youth Justice centres, including strategies to detect and prevent contraband from entering Youth Justice centres, and to prevent its availability and use.

Contraband represents prohibited items found at either Parkville or Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct.

Prohibited items are items that could jeopardise the security of the Precinct or the safety and wellbeing of people within the Precinct. Prohibited items include items that are illegal (e.g. illicit drugs), as well as items that are legal in the general community but are not permitted in custodial centres, as they have the potential to cause harm or jeopardise the security of the centre (e.g. sharpened implements, mobile phones). The discovery of any illegal item or substance is treated as an extremely serious matter, and is referred to Victoria Police to investigate and consider whether criminal charges are appropriate.

All contraband seizures are categorised as either:

- tobacco related
- weapons
- prescription medication
- green vegetable matter
- suspected synthetic drug
- drug implements/paraphernalia
- electronic/electrical items (or part thereof)
- foodstuffs
- alcohol
- mobile phone related
- related or other articles that do not fit within these categories

Contraband seized in Youth Justice facilities from 1 July 2017 to 31 May 2018 include all of the above items, except for alcohol.

9. Regarding the new Cherry Creek youth justice facility, please confirm the amounts allocated to and spent on the project (both capital and output) to date.

(Asked by Mr O'Brien, page 23 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

As of the end of May 2018, the expenditure was \$11 million. The expenditure was lower than anticipated due to timings in the approval of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* referral.

This will not impact the construction completion date with the centre due to be operational in early 2021.

10. Please supply a copy of the consultancy report by Susan Baidawi into the sexual abuse and exploitation of children in residential care. What were the findings of the report and what actions have been taken?

(Asked by Mr O'Brien, page 27 of the Families and Children portfolio transcript)

The Commission for Children and Young People engaged Ms Susan Baiwadi as a consultant. The CCYP in its systemic inquiry 'As a good parent would' which utilised the work conducted by Ms Baiwadi investigated the adequacy of the provision of residential care services to Victorian children and young people who have been subject to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation whilst residing in residential care.

The Report outlined 9 recommendations with 18 actions including:

- improving the physical environment of residential care facilities
- improving staff capability
- simplifying the approach to conducting quality of care allegations, and
- ensuring Principal Practitioners and Community Service Organisations coordinate investigations.

In response to these recommendations:

- The department increased its focus on preventing sexual exploitation of children in care and improving the quality and safety of residential care.
- Since 2015, over \$20 million has supported the renovation, redesign, renewal, and maintenance of residential care properties.
- In partnership with Victoria Police delivered the Enhanced Response Model to better protect children at risk of sexual exploitation and disrupt offenders.
- Five sexual exploitation practice leaders are employed by the department to support the enhanced response model and actively monitor all children known to children protection who are at risk of, or experiencing exploitation.
- Unannounced, quality and compliance audits that supplement agency accreditation have continued to monitor the safety and wellbeing of young people in residential care.
- Investment in Targeted Care Packages (TCPs) which commenced in 2015 have been used to reunify children with their families. TCPs have supported more than 550 children to transition out of residential care and into a caring family or to prevent them from entering residential care.
- A new client incident management system (CIMS) was implemented, including out of home care specific guidance for responding to quality of care concerns.
- Every four bed home is required to have a stand up staff member overnight and every residential care home is subject to a robust Overnight Safety Plan, including the provision of additional staff when required.
- \$9.8 million has been allocated to support the residential care workforce to meet minimum qualification requirements.
- Complaints awareness resources have been provided to children to assist them to speak up if they have any issues or concerns about their care.