



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by **MRS ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA**:

Reference: Hearing on 9 November 2022, Annual Report of CSD

In relation to: Page 65, 68, Safe and Connected Youth

1. The home that supports the Safe and Connected Youth program has six bedrooms (p. 373). What is the maximum number of young residents that this house has supported since it opened its doors, and how many young people are in the facility right now?
2. In total, how many youth have been supported in this facility so far?
3. If the house ever has spare capacity, do any other services have access to this facility?
4. It was stated in the hearing that 80 per cent of young people served in this home have been reunited with their families. What are the current living arrangements for the other 20 per cent?

MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The Safe and Connected Youth: Coordinated Service Response Program (Program) includes two complementary service elements, these are:
 - Early Preservation Outreach; and
 - Therapeutic Respite Accommodation and Post-Exit Outreach (Ruby's House Canberra).

Contractual arrangements for the expanded and ongoing Program commenced from 1 April 2022.

Since 1 April 2022, the Program has supported 21 families to decrease conflict and improve family functioning. These 21 families comprised 76 individuals; 50 who were directly engaged in service delivery and 26 who were supported indirectly (siblings and other immediate family members).

Between April and June 2022, the Program continued to deliver services as they had been delivered under the pilot program supporting a phased transition. A phased transition was required to support the establishment of Ruby's House Canberra,

acknowledging the time required to recruit and train staff and ensure a suitable staffing complement to support the provision of 24/7 services.

Ruby's House Canberra started welcoming young people from 20 June 2022.

Since 20 June 2022, Ruby's House Canberra has supported 13 young people with access to overnight accommodation. Not every young person receiving support through the Program requires overnight accommodation. Four young people are currently accessing regular overnight accommodation in line with their case plans.

2. Since 20 June 2022, Ruby's House Canberra has supported 13 young people with access to overnight accommodation. Not every young person receiving support through the Program requires overnight accommodation. Every family engaged with the Program (including through the Early Preservation Outreach component) access the property for various reasons including to engage in family counselling, host family dinner nights on neutral ground, attend community consultation nights and other family events.

20 of the 21 families have been invited to engage in supports on site at Ruby's House Canberra, as one family exited the Program before Ruby's House Canberra opened on 20 June 2022.

3. No. This decision has been made to maintain the safety and integrity of the service based on lessons from the operation of the model in South Australia.
4. 20 per cent of young people did not return home as it was either unsafe or the young person chose not to. The Program worked with these families and young people to enable appropriate accommodation, and where possible, supported the young person to stay connected to family.

Of the young people that did not return home:

- one young person chose to stay in a safe residence with a family friend and was supported to remain connected to family;
- one young person chose to share their time between several safe environments and stayed connected to family; and
- one young person chose not to return home or stay connected to family as it was not safe to do so and was engaged with statutory services.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:



Date: 12/1/23

By the Minister for Families and Community Services, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA