



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA (CHAIR), ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), ELIZABETH LEE MLA

Inquiry into Youth Mental Health in the ACT
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA:

In relation to: out-of-home care and youth offending

1. What mental health assistance do kids in OOHC receive when they are charged with an offence?
2. How many kids received this assistance in 2020 and 2019?

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

1. Children and young people involved in Out of Home Care have usually experienced significant trauma in their own families and come into the child protection system with complex needs. These are the most vulnerable and at-risk children and young people in our community. Older children and young people can be highly mobile and detached from positive relationships with family or other adults. Their complex needs may also be related to mental health challenges and/or substance use.

Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) support an individualised therapeutic response for each child or young person and works to manage the behaviours of those who pose a risk to themselves and others through close collaboration with mental health services and other therapeutic treatment providers. These mental health services include the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, the Adolescent Mobile Outreach Services and Australian Childhood Foundation through their therapeutic specialist support.

Each child and young person is supported by a care team who meet to develop and review case management plans in respect to care needs, such as mental health interventions.

For young people in out of home care who are charged with an offence and are subject to a supervised community-based youth justice order (e.g. bail or good behaviour order), CYPS complete a youth justice induction. At this time, the young person is screened for mental health concerns. Should any concerns be identified, safety planning is commenced and community-based referrals to a GP or mental health services are made for ongoing support and treatment.

If the young person presents with low level mental health concerns they may be referred to community-based services such as (but not limited to) Headspace, the Junction, Menslink, or school-based counsellors/psychologists. For moderate to severe mental health concerns, a young person is referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and young people with co-morbidity issues, such as drug and alcohol use are referred to the ACT Health, Youth, Drug and Alcohol Program (YDAP). If a young person presents with a specific complex matter that needs a

specific clinical assessment, a referral through the CYPs assessment unit will be completed. Additionally, the Court has the authority to order specific mental health assessments to assist in determining sentencing options. The Court also has the authority to place as a condition on an order that the young person engage with mental health services.

Should a young person present with significant mental health concerns at the time of arrest, ACT Policing have authority to transport the young person to the hospital for a mental health assessment.

For those young people who have been placed in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre as a result of their offence, a mental health assessment is undertaken by Forensic Mental Services within the first 24 hours of being held in custody. If a mental health condition is identified, treatment is recommended and this forms part of the young person's case management plan. Should the young person be sentenced, Forensic Mental Health Service provide ongoing treatment and support.

2. The Community Services Directorate has advised that the information sought is not in an easily retrievable form, and that to collect and assemble the information solely for the purpose of answering the question would be a major task, requiring a considerable diversion of resources. In this instance, I do not believe that it would be appropriate to divert resources from the provision of services, for the purposes of answering the Member's question.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs

Signature:



Date:

6/7/20

By the Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA