



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
BEC CODY MLA (CHAIR), VICKI DUNNE MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), CAROLINE LE COUTEUR MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2017–18 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Elizabeth Kikkert: To ask the Minister for Children, Youth and Families

Ref: CSD Annual Report, output class 3.1, Child and Youth Protection Services

In relation to: Out-of-Home Care

1. The report notes that ‘all children and young people who enter care have suffered trauma’ and that understanding their individual trauma is critical to helping them (p. 77). If so, why did fewer than half (355) of all children and young people involved with CYPS have a therapeutic assessment report completed?
  - a. What specific obstacles have prevented the completion of these reports?
  - b. I note that CYPS is partnering with the Australian Childhood Trauma Group to increase this number. What is the goal this year? 100 per cent? If not, why not?

Minister Stephen-Smith: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–

- 1) Under A Step Up for Our Kids Strategy, the strategy to implement therapeutic assessments for all children and young people in care has been a phased approach over time. Children and young people in care already receive services in line with their identified needs and as outlined in their individual care plans. The absence of a therapeutic assessment does not mean children, young people and their carers are not receiving the support and services they require.
  - a) Therapeutic assessments are detailed and take time to develop. The information gathering process includes discussions with multiple people involved with the child’s life including parents and carers, educators, relevant health staff, other service providers who may be delivering a service and case managers. Each therapeutic assessment can take up to six weeks to complete depending on the complexity and needs of the child or young person.

A key factor that impacts on the timeliness of the completion of the report is the availability of those who need to participate in the development of the assessment, including parents and carers.

In August 2016, Child and Youth Protection Services commenced an initial therapeutic consultation with carers within seven days of the child being placed, in order to provide the carer with strategies to respond to trauma related behaviour. The initial consultation provides the carer with information about why the child entered care and an overview of what trauma the child has experienced (eg: neglect, exposure to family violence, sexual abuse); what to look out for in the child’s behaviour and social and emotional presentation; strategies that may be helpful to settle the child; and information about the therapeutic

assessment process and when the carer can expect this process to commence for the child in their care.

- b) The Australian Childhood Trauma Group have been funded to complete 116 Therapeutic Assessments over the 2018-19 financial year.

The movement of children and young people in and out of care, and the unpredictability of children coming into care on an emergency basis makes it difficult to achieve 100 per cent on any particular day. Child and Youth Protection Services commence the development of a therapeutic assessment for children as they come into care. In parallel to this assessment work, the case managers and identified care team members continue to deliver, monitor and review services already involved with children to ensure they continue to meet the individual needs of children.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services

Signature:



Date:

26/11/18

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