



STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

JEREMY HANSON CSC MLA (CHAIR), MARISA PATERSON MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), JO CLAY MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA: To ask the Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner

In relation to: **Children with complex high-level needs**

Ref: ACT Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2019–20, pp. 64–65

1. Can the commissioner please provide further details regarding her proposal to establish an intensive therapeutic response for children and young people with complex high-level needs (p. 64)?
2. The annual report notes that work on implementing this proposal was put on hold because of COVID-19. Has it resumed yet, and can the commissioner please provide an update?

Ms Jodie Griffiths-Cook: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The proposal that was put to the Human Services Cluster Inter-Directorate Committee sought to facilitate improved outcomes for children and young people with complex high-level needs, described as those who:

- exhibit challenging and/or risk-taking behaviours of such intensity, frequency, and duration that they place themselves or others at serious risk of harm; and/or
- have mental health presentations that impair their ability to participate in life in a manner akin to their peers and that reduce access to services, activities and experiences; and/or
- have a disability and complex behaviours or complex health issues that are life-threatening or require continuous monitoring and intervention; and/or
- require cohesive and integrated therapeutic supports/intervention from multiple agencies including (but not limited to) care and protection, health, mental health, education, youth justice, etc.

The proposal involved using a panel process to:

- identify those children and young people for whom current service responses are inadequate to meet their needs
- ensure that all appropriate and relevant service offerings are being applied to address the child/young person's needs, and that these are being provided in a cohesive and integrated manner
- identify legislative and/or service gaps (and/or opportunities for legislative/service reform), that will generate a more concrete understanding of what is needed to facilitate more effective outcomes for children and young people with complex high-level needs. This is likely to include options for building capacity within existing service providers and broadening market options to better serve the needs of this cohort.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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This work has been re-enlivened within the context of work I am doing as Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner to support the raising of the minimum age of criminal responsibility. It is hoped that the panel concept might form part of the service system response that could be put in place to identify and respond to concerns at the earliest possible stage of identification, including by undertaking assessments to identify disability, mental health or complex trauma concerns that may be masked by the nature of other presenting issues for children and young people.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jm Griffiths-Cook".

Date: 9 March 2021

By the Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner, Jodie Griffiths-Cook