



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by **MR ED COCKS MLA** on 21 November 2023: **MINISTER DAVIDSON** took on notice the following question:

Reference: Hansard uncorrected proof transcript 21 November 2023 [PAGE 28]

In relation to: Patients absconding from care

1. Thank you. Well I might return to the question around mental health patients going missing or absconding from care. I did want to start by clarifying one of the points you made in the last response. I was asking about the number of patients and occasions patients have absconded or gone missing and you were very clear in your response that you were only referring to patients who were uncontactable during approved leave. Are there any other occasions where any patient has absconded from care or gone missing in any other way?

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

1. The number of times that consumers have been absent without approved leave (AWOL) for the 2022-2023 financial year is twenty-eight.

An AWOL or missing patient is defined as one or more of the following:

- their location is unknown, or
- they have not notified staff of an intention to leave, or
- they have not sought approval from staff to leave, or
- they left an organised activity outside an inpatient unit and didn't return with others from the activity, or
- they are subject to an order under the Mental Health Act 2015 and are either missing or known to have left against advice or without seeking approval, or
- they are a detainee subject to section 309 of the Crimes Act 1900 and have escaped from custody before being assessed in the Emergency Department or after they have been admitted as an inpatient, or
- they are a detainee subject to section 54 of the Corrections Management Act and are missing or were witnessed escaping, or
- they have not returned from approved leave, or
- they have been abducted or taken against their will.

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

Signature: 

Date: 7/12/23

By the A/g Minister for Mental Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA