



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA : To ask the Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services

Ref: Budget Outlook, p. 131

Hearing Date: 28 July 2023

In relation to: Multisystemic Therapy

- (1) In the hearing discussion around the establishment of a Therapeutic Support Panel, it was said that another service that may be used is Multisystemic Therapy. What has the ACT Government done to date to look into and/or consider Multisystemic Therapy?
- (2) Has a provider been approached about running a Multisystemic Therapy pilot/trial in the ACT, and if so, what progress and/or plans have been made?

MINISTER DAVIDSON: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

- (1) Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is a well evidenced response leading to reductions in the criminal activity of serious and violent juvenile offenders. A randomised trial of MST was found to produce a 63% reduction in rearrests for violent and other serious crimes.¹ Professor Morag McArthur et al.'s 2021 independent review² of the ACT service system provided extensive support for MST as a 'multifaceted, short-term, intense, home-based, evidence-based intervention ... [for] adolescents who experience severe social, emotional and behavioural problems'.³ The evidence suggests this diversionary approach may be beneficial to include in the ACT, alongside other supports such as Functional Family Therapy, to address the specific needs of the child or young person based on their individual situation.
 - (2) At this point no providers have been approached regarding an MST pilot/program in the ACT. The first phase of raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 years presents an opportunity to gather evidence about potential demand for MST and other services for consideration by Government about the design of the future service system.
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¹ Schaeffer, C. M., & Borduin, C. M. (2005). Long-Term Follow-Up to a Randomized Clinical Trial of Multisystemic Therapy With Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(3), 445–453.

¹ McArthur, M et al (2021), 'Review of the service system and implementation requirements for raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Australian Capital Territory' https://hdp-au-prod-app-act-yoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2716/3428/0940/Independent_Review_-_Final_Report.PDF

¹¹ McArthur et al (2021), 'Review of the service system', p 47.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature: 

Date: 17 August 2023

By the Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, Emma Davidson MLA