



## Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

### **Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023**

#### **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Asked by Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA

Reference: Hearing on 14 November 2023, Annual Report of Community Services Directorate

In relation to: Youth Justice Policy and Services and Adequacy of Existing Diversion Programs

The Annual Report notes that 'the ACT Government's overall approach to youth justice and its focus [are] on prevention ... and diversion'.

- 1) Currently, who can formally refer a young person to youth justice diversion?
- 2) Once the referral has been made, what is the average wait time for a young person in the territory to enter a youth justice diversion program?
- 3) Which diversion programs have the longest wait times, and what is the average wait for these?
- 4) What happens to a young person who is awaiting access to a youth justice diversion program?

Minister Davidson: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

- 1) Typically, a young person's Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) case manager makes the referral to the CYPS Placements team.

The two dedicated youth justice residences are Franklin House and Narrabundah House (both Bimberi Residential Services) which are currently operated by Capability Support. Narrabundah House is utilised as a youth justice diversion for First Nations boys. If a referral is required outside of 9-5 hours, the CYPS After Hours team can make an emergency placement for a young person to those residences. Placement decisions are determined by the suitability of matching young people together (their needs and associated risks) and approved by CYPS Executive. Some young people are case managed by ACT Together when in foster or kinship care and CYPS involve ACT Together in referrals and care team communications in that instance.

For the alternative service response related to raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, following the commencement of the Therapeutic Support Panel on or before 27 March 2024 referrals can be made by a *referring entity* as defined in [Section 501A of the amendment to legislation](#).

- 2) Placements are made on the day a referral is accepted. Should Franklin House or Narrabundah House not have vacancies Placement Managers will source alternative arrangements through MacKillop Family Services (who operate the Therapeutic Residential Care program) or 24/7 staffed emergency hotel or respite accommodation.
- 3) Franklin House has less strict eligibility criteria so has fewer vacancies – wait times can be some weeks. Young people will in that instance be provided alternative placement.
- 4) Case Managers and Placement Managers work with CYPs Executive to plan placement options for young people known to require youth justice diversion, and to respond to placement needs of young people newly involved with youth justice. The youth diversion services are intended as short-term placement options. Parallel planning is actioned to enable CYPs and ACT Together to work with young people towards restoration with family, kinship and foster care, Therapeutic Residential Care or semi-independent transitional accommodation.

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

Signature: 

Date: 30/11/23

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