

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - CARE APPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN -
INTERIM ORDERS

3255. Hon Nigel Hallett to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Community Development

- (1) How many interim orders relating to 'care applications' for children were made in the following years -
- (a) 2001;
 - (b) 2002;
 - (c) 2003;
 - (d) 2004; and
 - (e) 2005?
- (2) What is the quickest, average and longest time delay between the initial application and the subsequent court hearing for the years -
- (a) 2001;
 - (b) 2002;
 - (c) 2003;
 - (d) 2004; and
 - (e) 2005?

Hon KATE DOUST replied:

- (1) Until the introduction by this government of the Children and Community Services Act 2004, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, Interim Orders relating to care applications were not recorded electronically by the Department for Community Development. Therefore, unless every care and protection file created between 2001 and 2005 is physically perused, the Department is unable to answer this question.
- (2) This answer is based on records held by the Department for Community Development and does not take into account applications initiated other than by the Department. There are usually a number of Mentions between the filing of the application and the final hearing. Assuming the Member is asking about the time between the application being filed and the final court hearing, departmental records indicate the following:
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| 2001 | quickest: 66 days; average: 281 days; longest: 872 days |
| 2002 | quickest: 12 days average: 299 days; longest: 847 days |
| 2003 | quickest: 36 days; average: 302 days; longest: 780 days |
| 2004 | quickest: 30 days; average: 229 days; longest: 590 days |
| 2005 | quickest: 19 days; average: 177 days; longest: 373 days (note: this figure will change as some 2005 matters are still before the court). |

While generally protection applications should be dealt with by the Children's Court as quickly as possible, there are circumstances in which a significant adjournment would be in the child's best interests, for example to enable the Department and the family to work cooperatively to enable reunification before finalisation by the Court.