

CHILD PROTECTION — CITY OF BUSSELTON

4917. Ms L. Mettam to the Minister for Child Protection:

- (1) How many children were being monitored by the Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support in the City of Busselton in the following years:
  - (a) 2015–16;
  - (b) 2016–17; and
  - (c) 2017–18?
- (2) How many mandatory child protection reports were received by the Department in the City of Busselton in the following years:
  - (a) 2015–16;
  - (b) 2016–17; and
  - (c) 2017–18?
- (3) How many children in the City of Busselton were under the care of the Department in the following years:
  - (a) 2015–16;
  - (b) 2016–17; and
  - (c) 2017–18?
- (4) How many foster carers are currently registered in the City of Busselton?
- (5) How many applications are pending with the Department for individuals/couples to become foster carers in the City of Busselton?

**Ms S.F. McGurk replied:**

The Department of Communities (Communities) monitors cases at a district level. Responses have been provided for the South West district as the City of Busselton lies within this district.

- (1) A count of monitored cases as at July each year has been produced, with the number of monitored cases for the South West district as follows:
  - (a) On 7 July 2016 – 23 cases
  - (b) On 8 July 2017 – 26 cases
  - (c) On 7 July 2018 – 85 cases

An increase in demand in the South West District in 2017–18 resulted in a higher level of monitored cases across the District.

‘Monitored cases’ refers to new or existing low-risk cases not allocated to a caseworker but allocated and monitored regularly by a senior and experienced child protection professional, the team leader.

Communities’ first priority is the safety and wellbeing of children. Children at immediate and substantial risk are not on the monitored list. Strict guidelines are in place for children appearing on the monitored list and compliance with these guidelines are examined closely.

Children in care on the monitored list are settled with their needs being met. If concerns are raised for any child on the monitored list, an urgent review is undertaken by senior staff and immediate allocation to a caseworker occurs.

- (2) The number of mandatory child protection reports received by the South West district were as follows:
  - (a) 174
  - (b) 194
  - (c) 227
- (3) The number of children in care in the South West district were as follows:
  - (a) 311 as at 30 June 2016
  - (b) 311 as at 30 June 2017
  - (c) 330 as at 30 June 2018
- (4) As at 12 April 2019, the number of approved carers in the South West district were as follows:  
87 general foster carer households which includes 161 carers, and

78 family carer households which includes 128 carers.

- (5) As at 8 April 2019, there are currently three general foster carer households and seven family carer households that are pending approval.