

Questions from Mr Ian Cohen MP

Community Services

The Government has allocated \$36 million to early intervention and prevention programs as part of Keep Them Safe. Of this amount, \$10 million has been allocated to run a new early intervention program for children from Kindergarten to Year 2 who have disruptive behaviours – Getting on Track in Time or 'Got It!' (\$2.5 million in 2010-11). This program will be available in three regions in NSW – Mt Druitt, Newcastle and Dubbo.

1. What is the model being used for the program? Is the model based on an existing program and, if so, has it been evaluated?

The Model is being adapted from the Victorian Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Schools Early Action Program, an evaluated evidence based program delivered in Victoria since 2004.

2. How many schools will the program be run in this year and where are these schools?

It will be in the catchment of the three Family Referral Services. The schools will be identified through a selection process.

3. Have any funds been set aside to evaluate the implementation and outcomes of the program in NSW?

Approximately 10% of the total budget has been held centrally to fund evaluation and training and resources.

4. Are there plans to make this program more widely available if it proves to be successful?

No decision on wider rollout has been made at this time, however the evaluation will be important in informing further implementation across NSW.

As the Minister is aware, Community Services is undertaking the Community Services Grants Program Realignment to create a service continuum which is called the Early Intervention and Placement Prevention Services. What is the total amount of funding (including the investment of new funding from Keep Them Safe) that is allocated to each of the streams in 2010-2011?

5. Child and Family Advice, Support and Parenting Skills

Answer: See answer to question 6.

6. Youth and Family Advice, Support and Parenting Skills

Answer: 5 and 6: The total amount of funding allocated to the Child, Youth and Family Service model in 2010-11 is \$36.5 million. This includes \$32.0 million of existing CSGP funds and \$4.5 million new KTS funds.

7. Brighter Futures (0-8)

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Answer: The total amount of funding allocated to Brighter Futures in 2010-11 is \$147 million.

8. Intensive Family Support

Answer: The total amount of funding allocated to the Intensive Family Support service model in 2010-11 is \$11.5 million. This includes \$8 million of existing CSGP funds and \$3.5 million new KTS funds.

9. Intensive Family Preservation.

Answer: The total amount of funding notionally allocated to the Intensive Family Preservation service model in 2010-11 is \$5.5 million. This includes \$2.0 million of existing CSGP funds and \$3.5 million new KTS funds.

The allocations detailed above are 'notional' at this stage. A tender is currently underway that allows for services formerly funded under the CSGP program to align that funding with the new service models and where new funds are available in their local area, tender for additional funds. The finalisation of the tender may see some slight variations in the identified allocations.

In addition approximately \$10 million of CSGP services are not required to align with the new EIPP models. These include state-wide and sector development (Peak) services, child sexual assault services, domestic violence specialist services and telephone counselling services.

Questions from Ms Robyn Parker MP

10. How many children were removed from their families and then restored and subsequently died as a result of neglect or abuse?

Answer: In 2009 there were no children who died in these circumstances.

11. How many children died while in the care of foster carers as a result of neglect or abuse?

Answer: In 2009 there were no children who died in these circumstances.

12. How many acting managers has Broken Hill CSC had in the past nine months?

Answer: There have been 11 acting managers, across 5 positions, in the Broken Hill Cluster which includes Dareton and Wilcannia CSCs in the past nine months. These acting arrangements covered periods when manager positions were temporarily vacant, for example, due to leave or secondment or substantively vacant.

13. How many parental responsibility contracts have been agreed and signed in 2009?

Answer: 27.

14. Did any fail to achieve the required outcome and if so, what alternative action was taken?

Answer: This information is not collected in a reportable form.

15. Staying Home Leaving Violence

Answer: This is not a question.

16. Has there been any quantitative, systematic data collected from clients of SHLV, to enable evaluation of the impacts of SHLV on women's lives?

Answer: Yes, data is being collected as part of an evaluation, due for completion in July 2012.

17. Please provide a copy of the complete evaluation – not the summary of the evaluation that is available on the website - carried out on the Bega and/or Eastern Sydney pilot studies.

Answer: We are unable to provide the complete pilot evaluation reports because the evaluation identifies victims of violence. The next stage of the evaluation has not yet been completed.

18. How many exit surveys were completed out of the 36 women who participated in the Eastern Sydney pilot study?

Answer: Six exit surveys were completed. Clients that did not complete an exit survey were either still active at the time of evaluation, or were not asked to complete an exit survey.

19. Is there any evidence that the women being case managed by SHLV in Eastern Sydney were at high risk of homelessness when they entered the program?

Answer: Yes. Domestic violence is the highest risk indicator for homelessness.

20. Do SHLV clients resemble Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) clients in terms of vulnerability factors like unemployment and multiple complex needs?

Answer: Yes. SHLV is specifically targeted for women and children escaping domestic violence, which is one of the targets of Specialist Homelessness Services funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (previously known as SAAP).

21. Is there any evidence, or has the view been expressed by practitioners for instance, that SHLV clients are likely to be at low risk of experiencing severe violence.

Answer: No.

22. Of the clients who participated in the Bega and Eastern Sydney programs had any experienced breaches of exclusion orders/AVOs?

Answer: Yes

a) If so, how many?

Answer: Seven of the thirty-six clients in the Eastern Sydney pilot experienced a breach. The Bega Pilot Evaluation does not provide this information.

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23. Do you have any quantitative data to show that SHLV clients were at high risk of homelessness and/or severe violence?

Answer: Please refer to responses to questions 20 and 21.

24. Are there any characteristics that differentiate between women who enter the program and stay in their home, and women who enter the program but then reconcile with their partner or move house or have an outcome other than staying in their home with the perpetrator excluded?

Answer: Not known.

25. Has SHLV been successful in engaging with Indigenous clients?

Answer: Yes.

26. How many Indigenous women have gone through the program, and how many Indigenous women managed to remain in their own home?

Answer: Three Aboriginal women accessed the Eastern Sydney program during the 21 month pilot evaluation period. This is 8 per cent of the total client group for that period.

The Bega Pilot evaluation report reports ten clients were Indigenous or Maori or had Indigenous partners. This is 22 per cent of the total client group for that period.

27. Has a cost-benefit analysis of SHLV been conducted?

Answer: No.

28. Is there any evidence that the successful implementation of SHLV relies on close geographical proximity of SHLV workers to other services, for example police and courts?

Answer: The pilot evaluation summary highlights the importance of collaborative relationships; however there is no specific evidence on impact of locating services in close proximity to Police or Courts.

29. Has the need for co-location with other services and proximity to police been taken into account, in terms of the rollout of the program in other areas?

Answer: Given the evidence from the pilot evaluations, the focus of the program expansion has been on ensuring collaborative relationships with key stakeholders.

30. Are there any concerns about the ability of SHLV to meet levels of demand?

Answer: Service Specifications for the projects have been defined by resource allocation. Each service has been assigned targets that match their budget.

31. Does SHLV have any impact on AVO breaches, or on how police respond to breaches?

Answer: The program evaluation due for completion in July 2012 will consider the impact of SHLV on breaches.

32. Can you tell me what data you have on that?

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Answer: Please refer to question 16.

33. In cases where personal alarms have been activated or where police are called out to help a SHLV client, what was the average police response time, for both the Eastern Sydney and Bega pilots of SHLV?

Answer: Not known.

34. What was the average number of referrals in a month made to the Brighter Futures program in 2009 and how does that figure compare with one month in 2010?

Answer: In 2008/09, there were approximately 1,250 referrals to Brighter Futures on average per month, compared with 800 in 2009/10. Note that some families may have been referred to the program more than once in a year.

35. How has the previous allocation of out-of-home care funding (from the \$1.2b) been used to fund contracts with NGOs?

Answer: Through the budget enhancement and Out of Home Care reform process, funding negotiations with NGOs commenced in February 2008. By June 2009 most of these agencies prioritised for funding through the funding roll out process had successfully commenced operations with new funding. Over a 5 year period commencing 2007/08 about \$850 million is available to fund NGO contracts.

36. What is the breakdown of out-of-home care places by region and by service type?

Answer:

Number of Children/Young People in Out-Of-Home Care by Region and placement type as at 30th June 2009

Placement Type	Hunter and Central Coast	Metro Central	Metro South West	Metro West	Northern	Southern	Western	Statewide Services	Total
Parents & Relative Kinship Care	247	132	144	191	159	104	95	6	1,078
Foster Care	1,462	772	1,015	1,275	1,571	997	1,328	14	8,434
Supported Accommodation	1,009	586	674	835	1,038	600	863	536	6,141
Residential Care	17	17	13	11	3	3	14	1	79
Independent Living	31	44	26	57	30	22	13	169	392
Non-related person	36	19	12	15	49	12	26	14	183
Others	33	32	37	39	26	28	21	-	216
								1	1
Total	2,835	1,602	1,921	2,423	2,876	1,766	2,360	741	16,524

Source: 2008/09 KiDS/MDS annual data

37. Regarding the cost of the upgrade to the KiDS computer system, how much has been allocated to deal with:

- a) Child protection, due to go online in June 2011
- b) Contract management online in December 2011

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c) OOHC case managements system due online in June 2012

Answer: The original *KiDS Core Design Update Business Case* proposed solutions to solve a number of problems.

Some of the costs are directly attributable to Child Protection or Out of Home Care issues however the vast majority were not categorised in that manner and it is therefore difficult to attribute those directly to one of the two streams.

It should be noted that the *KiDS Core Design Update Project* never included in its scope any work in the area of contract management. This is in the scope for the *Community Online Management System (COMS) Stage 3* project that will be implemented in conjunction with the *KiDS Core Design Update*

Although the detailed scope of Stream #1 has been agreed, the detail of stream #2 and #3 is incomplete. Community Services is working with Deloitte to bring together the overall program management of *KiDS Core Design Update* and a number of other related projects

38. In the 2010/11, there is an allocation of \$680.2 m for OOHC services in comparison to \$337.7 m for secondary intervention programs including early intervention and placement prevention programs and Brighter Futures.

Answer: This is not a question.

39. Can the Minister provide a breakdown of the expenditures allocated to administration and coordination in both cases in comparison to the expenditures allocated to direct service delivery?

Answer: As per the 2010-2011 Budget Papers expenditure for OOHC and Prevention & Early Intervention service groups is as follows:

	2010-11 Budget \$'000	
	OOHC	P&EI
Employee related costs	124,536	70,783
Other operating expenses	42,583	24,751
Grants & subsidies	264,920	233,442
Other expenses	248,147	8,695
Total Expenses	680,186	337,671

NB: A substantial proportion of the 'Other Expenses' line item relates to director service delivery – but this amount can not be disaggregated without substantial additional work.

40. Can the Minister indicate the amount of funding allocated to prevention and early/primary intervention programs to support families before they reach crisis point?

Answer: Refer to Question 39- \$337.7m.

41. Under KTS, can the Minister/the Department indicate the amount of money allocated to referral and coordination services (including Child Wellbeing Units and Family Referral Services) in comparison to the amount of money allocated to direct service delivery?

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Answer: \$750 million over five years has been committed towards the implementation of KTS.

The KTS reforms are in the following areas:

- Prevention and early intervention and placement prevention services
- Improving services for Aboriginal communities
- Changes to the child protection system
- Increasing investment in acute services
- Out-of-home care.

Of the \$107.4m allocated to KTS for 2010/11, Child Wellbeing Units and Family Referral Services will receive \$17.4m. Two of the three Family Referral Services currently being piloted provide direct services through shop front premises to vulnerable families.

42. One of the main recommendations of KTS is sector development. Can the Minister/ the Department indicate how much money is allocated to sector development and what is the plan for this money?

Answer: Sector development is integral to the reforms and capacity building is being implemented through a number of KTS initiatives.

Most notably \$10 million was allocated for the two years 2009/10 and 2010/11 for training and change management. The immediate focus was to ensure that identified target groups (including key mandatory reporter categories) were provided the necessary information and training in the new reforms. This involved:

- a series of regional engagement tours in September/October 2009
- information sessions for all mandatory reporters
- agency specific training to government mandatory reporters, and
- training to non government mandatory reporters and child care workers.

In addition, a change management plan is currently being developed and is expected to be rolled out later this year or early next year.

A five year Workforce Development and KTS NGO Capacity Building Plan has also been developed to guide further capacity building in that sector. An implementation steering committee chaired by the Federation of Non Government Associations and including both NGO and government representatives to progress strategies identified in the plan.

43. Does the Minister have statistics in relation to the number of parents who have been notified to the Department after voluntarily seeking assistance under the Brighter Futures Program?

Answer: This information is not available.

44. Could it be concluded that if parents are afraid to approach Brighter Futures for assistance, that the monies and resources provided by these programs are not being effectively utilised?

Answer: It is not accepted that parents in general are afraid to seek assistance through Brighter Futures.

45. How many children have been removed from their parents at birth during the last year?

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Answer: 206 children entered out-of-home care 2008/09 within one month of their birth.

46. If these statistics are rising, what would be the reason for this?

Answer: Between 2006/07 and 2008/09 there was a 1.9 per cent increase in the number of children under the age of one month who entered out-of-home care. During the same period there was 3.7 per cent increase in the number of all children and young people who entered out-of-home care.

47. Are statistics kept in relation to the reasons for such removals?

Answer: No.

48. How many cases have been taken by parents to the Equity Division of the Supreme Court in the last twelve months?

Answer: Nine from more than 5,200 care applications.

49. If such cases have occurred, what have been the outcomes?

Answer: Five applications were dismissed, one application upheld and three are ongoing.

50. How many cases of child removal have been appealed to the District Court in the last twelve months?

Answer: July 2009 until June 2010: 89 from more than 5,200 applications.

51. What has been the outcome of these cases?

Answer: July 2009 until June 2010:

Appeals commenced by parents: 7 upheld, 16 dismissed/withdrawn, 43 ongoing.

Appeals commenced by relative other than parent: 1 upheld, 3 dismissed/withdrawn, 2 ongoing.

Appeals commenced by Community Services: 9 upheld, 2 dismissed/withdrawn, 3 ongoing.

Appeals commenced by child: 0 upheld, 2 dismissed/withdrawn, 0 ongoing.

Appeals commenced by carer: 0 upheld, 0 dismissed/withdrawn, 1 ongoing.

52. How much money does Community Services spend on legal services, including external contractors such as barristers. Could a breakdown of these figures showing internal and external services be provided?

Answer: In 2009/2010 Community Services spent \$5,936,144 in salaries for all internal Legal Services staff. Salary on costs and corporate costs for internal staff was \$2,786,988. Total operating costs for the internal legal staff amounted to \$404,485.

In regard to external solicitor costs (including external contractors such as barristers) CS spent \$7,121, 591. This includes fees and disbursements. An additional \$286,929 was spent on Crown Solicitor's Office costs.

53. It is expensive for families to mount a legal defence in relation to children's court matters. Some parents need to sell or extend mortgages on their homes, in order to do so.

Answer: This is not a question.

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54. Does the Minister regard it as inequitable that parents are engaged in dispute with a department which might appear to have endless resources in relation to legal matters and the removal of children?

Answer: Legal Aid is available to assist with the carriage of appeals. Pro bono assistance is also available through the NSW Law Society and many Community Legal Centres also provide free legal advice and representation to parents. There is no evidence of any trend in Community Services inappropriately incurring legal expenses.

55. How many children with special needs have been removed from their parents in the last 12 months?

Answer: Approximately 9 per cent of children in care who were receiving direct payments from Community Services as at 30 June 2009 received a special needs payment of Care +1, Care +2 or a high needs payment.

56. What percentage of the total number of children removed are these?

Answer: Please see question 55.

57. If this is a high percentage, is the minister concerned that children who have special needs comprise such a high proportion of the total?

Answer: Nine percent is not a high percentage.

58. How much money has the Department spent for counselling children who have been abused in out-of-home care?

Answer: This information is not collected in a reportable manner.

59. Could you please provide the following figures for 08/09 and 09/10:

The number of children in:

- a) Docs Foster care
- b) NGO Foster Care
- c) Statutory kinship arrangements
- d) Residential care
- e) Supported kinship with order
- f) Supported kinship with no order
- g) Other
- h) Voluntary

Answer: As at 30 June 2009:

- a) 3,999
- b) 2,142
- c) 3,396
- d) 392
- e) 2,328
- f) 2,708
- g) 1,556 were in "other" placements which included placements with parents, in supported accommodation, with a non-related person or in Independent Living situations.
- h) 39.

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Please note the information on foster care, residential care and "other" is recorded by the 'placement type' of the child. Information on supported care, statutory care and voluntary care is recorded by the care arrangement for the child or young person. These data should not and can not be compared or combined to represent the total population in OOHC, as for example, a child in foster care may also be in statutory care.

Reportable data for 2009/10 is not yet available.

60. Could the department provide the average cost of care per child per service per year listed above per year required?

Answer: Average cost of care per child per year is listed in the table below.

Category	2008/09	2009/10
CS foster care	\$17,615	\$17,673
NGO foster care	\$39,776	\$39,776
NGO intensive foster care	\$92,780	\$92,780
CS: Statutory kinship care	\$15,308	\$15,217
NGO: Residential care *	\$203,025	\$203,025
CS: Supported kinship care	\$13,552	\$13,691
NGO: Voluntary	\$39,776	\$39,776
Other – NGO Supported Independent Living	\$105,671	\$105,671
Other – NGO Supported Family Group Home	\$66,879	\$66,879

* Weighted average of residential care and intensive residential care

Notes

1. Community Services figure does not include caseworker costs
2. NGO figure is based on contracted placements and unit cost as at March 2010. The same contracts apply for both 2008/09 and 2009/10. However, placement mixes between different NGOs and placement types might change over time. No detailed information is available thus unit costs in 2008/09 and 2009/10 are assumed the same.
3. Unit costs for NGO Residential Care and Supported Independent Living can differ significantly between service providers depending on the model of care.

61. Could the number of cases per case worker be listed for each category?

Answer: The information requested is not held in a reportable format.

62. Could the department indicate the number of caseworkers 08/09 and 09/10 - could this number be represented by full-time equivalent (FTE) as well?

Answer:

2009/10:

In 2009/10 the Caseworker headcount was 2468. This number includes all part time, temporary and permanent full time staff employed as caseworkers during this period. The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) was 1967.89. FTE is the number of caseworker hours.

2008/09:

In 2008/09 the Caseworker headcount was 2465. This number includes all part time, temporary and permanent full time staff employed as caseworkers during this period. The FTE was 2015.34.

There was a slight increase in the overall head count for Casework staff between 2008/09 and 2009/10. The change in FTE, suggests more people were entering part time working arrangements or taking leave without pay which has coincided with an increase in maternity leave across the Agency. Further, in response to the KTS roll-out, caseworkers have been attracted to non-casework roles.

63. Assuming that all well-being units are scrutinised by the Department of Community Services (Human Services) the overarching authority in child protection services,

Answer: This is not a question.

64. How many well being units have been established in each of the government agencies, Health, Education, Police and Human Services?

Answer: NSW Health has three units. Education, Police and Human Services have one unit each.

a) Where are they located?

Answer: The units are located as follows – NSW Health (Dubbo, Newcastle and Wollongong); Education (Sydney CBD); Police (Tuggerah); Human Services (Lidcombe).

65. In the period January 2009 until December 2009, how many children in out-of-home care were formally adopted by foster parents?

Answer: 43.

66. In the same period, how many children who were not in out-of-home care were formally adopted?

Answer: There were a total of 115 non out-of-home care adoptions in 2009 calendar year. This is broken down into:

9	Local adoptions
3	Agency adoptions
89	Inter-country
11	Step-parents
3	Special case

67. Given that fees payable direct to Community Services for a child to be adopted from China are around \$9,300 with the total cost of the adoption conservatively estimated to be close to \$25,000 how does this compare with costs levied in other states and territories in Australia?

Answer: Fees charged by Community Services for an inter-country adoption for the first application are \$9,700.

Comparable fees within other jurisdictions are as follows:

South Australia – \$9,880
Victoria – \$7,295.50
Queensland – \$5,309.65
Australian Capital Territory – \$4,939
Tasmania – \$3,185.12
Northern Territory – \$6,300
Western Australia – \$2,476

68. How many foster carers are there currently in NSW?

Answer: Community Services is currently compiling data on foster carers in *Child Protection Australia 2009/10*. It is anticipated that this will be published by AIHW in January 2011.

69. How many foster carers did Community Services have in 2009?

Answer: Community Services is currently compiling data on foster carers in *Child Protection Australia 2009/10*. It is anticipated that this will be published by AIHW in January 2011.

It is assumed this question is seeking not to determine the number of care placements but to distinguish between foster, kin, relative and other types of carers or to distinguish between active carers and carers who have been authorised but may not be active.

70. How many kinship carers are there?

Answer: See answer to question 71.

71. How many kinship carers were there in 2009?

Answer: 70 & 71. While there are data relating to the number of children and young people placed in kinship care there is no information presently available in relation to the number of kinship carers. However, Community Services is working toward a process for the collection, recording and reporting of data in this area.

72. What steps are being taken to prevent domestic violence perpetrators who are excluded from the home, from themselves becoming homeless?

Answer: There is no evidence to suggest that men excluded from their home as a result of their own violence, are left homeless. The Staying Home Leaving Violence program provides information to Police about local options for emergency accommodation for men. Community Services is currently creating a printed resource for men that includes options for financial assistance and accommodation for distribution by Staying Home Leaving Violence Service Providers.

73. Since the tender/expressions of interest process in 2007 for children in out-of-home care in NSW, which included residential care and foster care and the resulting contracts that were issued has there been a measurable improvement in the key performance areas of care such as stability of placement and education?

Answer: For information on the number of placements for children and young people in out-of-home care please see question 186. These data have been reviewed by statisticians and there is no discernible trend.

Information on education is not recorded for analysis and reporting.

74. How much did the process cost the department?

Answer: The administrative cost of the Expression of Interest was not calculated.

75. If there have been improvements in the delivery of care, what areas have improved and if not, why not?

Answer: All OOHC agencies that provide placements for children and young people are required to be accredited by the Office of the Children's Guardian and their performance is monitored by that Office.

The Expression of Interest aimed to increase the number and range of services available for children and young people in OOHC and to improve the delivery of care by making available a more suitable range of placement options.

76. Did any of the NGOs fail to be appointed following the 2007 process?

Answer: For the 2007 OOHC EOI process 310 applications were received from 107 organisations.

Of these applications, 305 applications were eligible for the assessment process. 42 service providers were shortlisted for negotiations for enhanced funding through the OOHC EOI process.

Ten service providers that were short-listed through the EOI did not proceed to sign contracts.

Prior to negotiations being completed with the remaining shortlisted agencies the Boston Consulting Group was commissioned by Treasury, Department of Premier and Cabinet and DoCS to conduct an OOHC Review. The Review was to consider the impact of growth in OOHC and to review areas such as policy, practice, contracting and effectiveness and efficiencies of current systems.

The signing of new contracts and the expansion of the OOHC NGO funded service system is reliant on the outcomes of the OOHC Review and the review of contracting processes.

Agencies that were short listed and with contracts that didn't proceed through the OOHC EOI met with Senior Community Services Officers and were advised that until the OOHC Review is finalised funding negotiations would not proceed.

These unfinished negotiations will need to be reviewed in light of the OOHC Review outcomes. When this work has been completed, the remaining shortlisted agencies will be considered for funding on a priority basis according to the needs and gaps identified in the service system.

77. Apart from auditing the finances of the NGOs who deliver out-of-home-care what other ongoing measures are taken to ensure accountability and best practice?

Answer: As noted above, OOHC service providers funded by Community Services are required to be accredited by the Office of the Children's Guardian, according to the standards implemented by the Guardian.

NGOs are monitored on a regular basis against their Service Agreement and Specification, as regards the performance of the obligations under the Agreement.

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For OOHC service providers this is undertaken in the context of their contract and growth management. This monitoring has regard to the management of placement referrals, the provision of contracted placements and the achievement of milestones for service capacity, the provision of services to children and young people in those placements, and planned growth and/or delivery of services against forward milestones.

For organisations that are contracted to provide services for 'High Needs Kids' are monitored annually under the Performance Monitoring Framework. This includes a self-assessment of performance against a set of qualitative and quantitative measures and a joint review of that self-assessment.

Additionally every OOHC service provider funded by Community Services is required to report on entries into placements and exits from placements as they occur, and to report twice each year for each child in a placement including regarding their health and education.

78. How much is Community Services spending on supervised contact via Header Agreements?

Answer: In 2009/10 Community Services spent \$8.8 million towards supervised contact costs via Header Agreements.

79. How many children in care are participating in supervised contact by another agency other than their placement agency?

Answer: This information is not available.

80. How many calls to the Helpline have been determined to be not at risk of significant harm?

Answer: From 1 January to 31 March 2010 there were 24,521 child protection reports and child/young person concern reports which were determined not to be at risk of significant harm.

81. Can the Minister confirm if a review has been undertaken by a private consultancy firm to determine the best structure for the NSW Department of Human Services?

As part of the NSW Government's public sector reforms and agency amalgamations, Cabinet commissioned the Boston Consulting Group to review the Department of Human Services (DHS).

82. If such a review has been undertaken, can you tell us what were the review's terms of reference, has the review has been completed and, if so, what are its recommendations?

The review, commissioned by Cabinet, considered issues including due diligence, organisational structure and governance arrangements, joined-up service delivery and models to consolidate corporate and shared services for the new department. The review is Cabinet in confidence.

83. Can you also tell us how much the review has cost and whether the report will be made available to the public?

This question should be referred to the Premier.

84. If the report is not being released to the public, why not?

This question should be referred to the Premier.

85. I understand \$11.1m has been allocated from Keep Them Safe funding for projects related to Keep Them Safe and the Boston Consulting Group Review of out-of-home care.

Answer: This is not a question.

86. Can the Minister or the department outline what work each of these projects entail, what consultancy firms have been contacted to do this work and what are the individual costs for each of the projects?

Answer: None of the \$11.1 million *Keep Them Safe* funding allocation will be used by Community Services to engage consultants.

There are nine separate initiatives currently funded from the \$11.1million allocation as part of the Community Services major *reform* program:

1. Extra Family Supervision (\$0.899 million). This initiative involves a revised and expanded version of the existing Parental Supervision provisions. Funding has been allocated for a temporary (12 months) Community Services project team. This team will research current practice; consult with key internal and external stakeholders including the Children's Court; and develop and pilot new pathways and casework practice procedures.
2. Family Restoration (\$1.605 million). This initiative aims to promote a focus on family restoration casework and enhance restoration support services. Funding has been allocated for the establishment of a temporary (12 months) Community Services project team. This team will review current legislation, policies and casework practice procedures that can be drawn upon to facilitate restoration and conduct pilots at Community Services Centres in three regions.
3. Short Term Court Orders (\$1.319 million). Community Services will work with the Children's Court to promote the increased use of short term court orders in order to prevent children entering into statutory out-of-home care through the use of prevention orders and short term court orders like restoration and supervision. This initiative is intrinsically linked to the family supervision and restoration initiatives as short term orders provide a formal basis in which to link in support services whilst monitoring families and assessing their ability to avoid statutory care. Additional legal officers will assist caseworkers to determine appropriate cases and orders.
4. Supported Care (\$2.21 million). The Boston Consulting Group Review of out-of-home care identified an increase in payments of the Supported Care Allowance as one of five major drivers contributing to the increase in the annual cost of out-of-home care in NSW. Supported care usually involves out-of-home care placements of children and young people with relatives or kin. This initiative focuses on addressing the policy and practice considerations required to enable implementation of the new legislative provisions specifically dealing with supported care arrangements where there are no orders from Children's Court and a transition to more rigorous criteria for assessing and reviewing supported care placements. There are three key deliverables for this initiative: developing and applying assessments for new cases; implementing an annual placement review mechanism; and transitioning existing cases to align with the new legislative provisions. The funding provides for the establishment of temporary caseworker positions to undertake the assessment and review of pre-proclamation supported care arrangements.

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5. Increase Adoptions (\$0.390 million). Where it has been comprehensively assessed that a child or young person is not able to live with their parents or extended family, their interests are best served by being placed in a safe, stable, permanent high quality care environment. For some children in out-of-home care, this can be achieved through adoption or through a Sole Parental Responsibility court order. This initiative aims to increase the number of out-of-home care adoptions and Sole parental Responsibility Orders through targeted and enhanced casework, management frameworks and coordinated state-wide activity. The funding has been used to contribute to recruiting and training six regional adoption caseworkers in Community Services non-metropolitan regions.
6. Accreditation (\$2.1 million). This initiative aims to develop and implement a range of strategies and improvements to out-of-home care casework practice in order to enhance Community Services capacity to meet Children's Guardian's accreditation requirements. Work on reviewing Community Services policies and procedures and establishing an Internal Compliance Regime has commenced. The funding is being used to establish specialist practitioner teams to drive the implementation of targeted actions in the regions.
7. Client health pathways (\$1.2 million). A pathway model between NSW Health and Community Services has been established to help ensure that all children and young people in care undergo a comprehensive health and development assessment and have their health needs addressed. The pathways model promotes the use of available government funded allied health services rather than more expensive private options. The funding has been used by Community Services to recruit temporary caseworkers. These caseworkers will work with NSW Health Pathway Coordinators to establish the pathways in the regions.
8. Brighter Futures Assessment Unit (\$1.122 million). This funding has been used to establish a centralised unit for assessing eligibility and referring families to the Brighter Futures program. The unit commenced operation when the new risk of significant harm threshold was introduced on 24 January 2010. Cases that come to the Helpline or a Child Wellbeing Unit that are potentially eligible for Brighter Futures (that is, if the family have a child/ren under 9 years of age or the mother is pregnant, and one or more of the Brighter Futures vulnerabilities is indicated) are forwarded to the Brighter Futures Assessment Unit in Community Services for eligibility assessment. Eligible cases are then forwarded to a Community Services Early Intervention Team or a non-government Lead Agency for case management and support services.
9. Interstate Liaison Unit (\$0.224 million). Additional temporary positions established within Community services Interstate Liaison Unit funded under this allocation have enhanced the unit's capacity to undertake its usual workload and implement reforms. These reforms include information sharing protocols with Commonwealth agencies as they are developed under National Frameworks (for example with the Family Court of Australia and the Child Support Agency); and the new provision in the NSW legislation allowing for the exchange of information to interstate and Commonwealth law enforcement agencies.

87. With regard to these projects, can the Minister specify what work is being undertaken that relates to foster carer allowances and can the Minister give an indication of whether these allowances will be increased or decreased as a result?

Answer: Based on its findings that contingency payments to carers in NSW have been growing as a percentage of out-of-home care spending the Boston Consulting Group Review of Out-of-Home Care recommended reform of the current contingency payments scheme by replacing it with a limited list of services for which additional Community Services funding is

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available. The Boston Consulting Group also recommended reducing the level of carer allowances on the basis of its findings that the allowances paid in NSW are significantly higher than other jurisdictions.

Community Services is currently undertaking a comparison of allowances and contingencies paid in NSW and in other jurisdictions in order to verify the Boston Consulting group's conclusions. This will include examination of carer categories, eligibility criteria and jurisdictional specific factors that may impact on payments. This will inform whether any changes are warranted within NSW.

88. Within the budget for out-of-home care funding for Community Services, how much is allocated to funding Aftercare services?

Answer: \$4.1 million has been allocated to Aftercare services for 2010/11.

89. Can the Minister and/or Community Services provide details about whether any of the projects (related to the expenditure of \$11.1m outlined previously), will involve a review of Aftercare expenditure? And can the Minister give an indication of whether we can expect funding allocations for Aftercare to be increased or decreased as a result?

Answer: There are no proposals to review aftercare expenditure as part of the \$11.1 million allocation.

90. How many children in the last year have been temporarily or permanently removed from their parents on the basis of medical child abuse or Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSBP)? (or any of its pseudonyms such as fabricated and induced illness, factitious disorder by proxy etc).

Answer: No child is removed because any syndrome is alleged. A child is removed because Community Services is of the view that a child or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm.

91. If records have not been kept in relation to these allegations, what would be the reason for this?

Answer: Refer Question 90.

92. Is the department continuing to remove children on the basis of MSBP?

Answer: Refer Question 90.

93. Is the minister aware of any cases where parents are being profiled as MSBP, without the label being used in court, as it is known to be discredited?

Answer: There are instances where it is alleged that a parent is deliberately harming a child.

94. Is there any plan to review cases where MSBP has been involved?

Answer: No.

95. Is the Minister aware that Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy is not a recognised disease or illness and is not a definitive diagnosis in the DSM IV and was found to be inadmissible in R v LM [2004] QCA 192?

Answer: Yes.

96. Is the minister aware of the reasons why MSBP was found to be inadmissible as evidence in this case?

Answer: Yes.

97. Can the minister explain why this syndrome is being used by psychiatrists and psychologists in the removal of children from their parents?

Answer: This is a matter for the expert witness and not the Minister.

98. Is the Minister aware that the evidence of discredited medical practitioner, Sir Roy Meadow, has been used in NSW courts?

Answer: The Minister is aware that the evidence of Sir Roy Meadow has been used in NSW Courts.

99. Is there any plan to review cases which specifically involved Sir Roy Meadow?

Answer: No.

100. In cases of alleged medical child abuse, how many cases have involved conflicting medical evidence between expert witnesses?

Answer: In all cases of alleged medical abuse of children it will generally be the case that there will be conflicting expert medical evidence that is filed by the parties. Statistics are not kept on the use of expert witnesses by all parties in care proceedings.

101. If the Minister does not have these statistics, why not?

Answer: The Minister has not had a need for this data. The fact that the parties will have conflicting evidence in relation to an issue in contention is an accepted part of any court proceeding and the function of the judicial officer is to weigh up the evidence of all parties and come to a decision that is in the best interests of the child.

102. Is the minister aware that a number of cases in the UK which involved conflicting medical evidence between expert witnesses were placed under review?

Answer: Yes.

103. Is the minister planning to place similar NSW cases under review?

Answer: No.

104. Does the Minister have statistics of the number of parents who have been notified to the Department who have been identified as seeking 'complementary' or 'alternative medicine', biomedical/nutritional health care and/or have consulted 'integrative medical practitioners'?

Answer: No.

105. If not, why not?

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Answer: There has been no need to collect this data. The number of reports of failing to address the medical needs of children are a statistically insignificant percentage of all reports.

106. What is the Department's position in relation to this type of health care?

Answer: Community Services has no position in relation to this type of health care.

107. Is such health care regarded as 'illegitimate' and a basis of risk, despite being legal?

Answer: No.

108. Does the Minister plan to issue guidelines to parents in relation to the health care practices it regards as legitimate?

Answer: No.

109. Is the Department targeting patients of medical practitioners of this ilk despite the highly successful implementation of integrative medicine in countries such as the US?

Answer: No.

110. As quoted by you in October, 2008, "Neglect is the failure of a parent or a caregiver to provide a child with basic things like..., food, medical and dental attention, and emotional support....."

Are you prepared to concede that removing a child from his/her family (when the reason is the implementation of a special diet or other biomedical intervention) has resulted in the parent/caregiver being unable to provide emotional support and that neglect has therefore been caused by inappropriate removal?

Answer: No.

111. According to the 2010 Access Economics Report, two-thirds of Australians use complementary medicine every year – does this mean that two-thirds of parents are at risk of notification to the department?

Answer: No.

112. In cases of medical child abuse, could the Minister identify the procedures used by the Department to undertake independent medical investigation ie. an independent medical review not undertaken by the original notifiers – as recommended by Justice Butler-Sloss in relation to the false allegations of child abuse in Cleveland, UK.

Answer: The procedures differ according to the nature of the abuse alleged. In all cases the evidence is tested before a Court.

113. How many children have been removed from their parents during the last year, based on emergency removal?

Answer: KiDS records indicate that 1,430 children and young people entered out-of-home care under an emergency removal during 2009/10.

114. If this number has increased, what is the reason for this?

Answer: The number has decreased.

115. How much notification is given to parents to prepare their legal defence in such cases?

Answer: This is a matter determined by the Court. The average time before a final hearing is approximately 7 ½ months.

116. Are parents given the opportunity to get a second opinion of their children's illnesses after removal from the home?

Answer: Yes, unless there is a contrary Court Order.

117. If not, why not?

Answer: Not applicable.

118. Does the Minister have a record of the educational qualifications of all case workers who have the power to assess families and/or remove children from their families?

Answer: Yes.

Could the Minister describe the specific training provided to such workers in relation to the following:

119. rare illnesses e.g. KBG syndrome, or other genetic illnesses

120. rare infections such as dendolimiasis

121. serious illnesses or conditions such as spina bifida or Down's syndrome

122. multiple chemical sensitivities and allergies

123. mitochondrial disorders

124. asthma

125. autistic spectrum disorders

126. cancer sufferers

127. gastro reflux

128. premature babies

Answers: 119. to 128. There is no specific requirement that caseworkers have medical training. In any event, a court would not give weight to any medical opinion offered by a caseworker as this is essentially a matter for expert evidence.

129. Could you describe the level of medical training held by case workers who are diagnosing parents with medical child abuse before seeking a medical practitioner's opinion?

Answer: A caseworker does not diagnose a parent but instead investigates and assesses whether a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and then forms an opinion as to whether the child or young person is in need of care and protection based on expert medical opinion they may seek. These actions are required by Sections 30 and 34, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

130. If a medical practitioner's opinion is then sought by caseworkers, how many involve a diagnosis of the mother without the mother and/or children being interviewed?

Answer: This data is not kept. Any such practice would be relevant to the weight a Court might give to this evidence.

131. Do you regard a medical or psychiatric assessment without consultation as a valid medical assessment?

Answer: It may be a valid medical assessment but the evidentiary weight may be limited. Once again the individual judicial officer determining the matter is able to give the requisite weight to such an assessment based on the manner in which it was obtained.

Could the Minister describe the specific training provided to foster carers who look after children with special needs including:

132. rare illnesses e.g. KBG syndrome, or other genetic

133. illnesses

134. rare infections such as dendolimiasis

135. serious illnesses or conditions such as spina bifida or Down's syndrome

136. multiple chemical sensitivities and allergies

137. mitochondrial disorders

138. asthma

139. autistic spectrum disorders

140. cancer sufferers

141. gastro reflux

142. premature babies

Answers: 132. to 142. There is no specific requirement that foster carers have medical training.

143. Could the Minister describe the process whereby the Department's case workers inform foster carers about the specific medical needs of children with these special difficulties?

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Answer: Community Services, as is the case for all designated agencies, is to comply with section 144, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* by passing on information actually held.

144. If this is not a formal process, why not?

Answer: See response to Question 143.

145. In relation to temporary removals and a mother accused of medical child abuse, (where the department does not believe there is anything wrong with the child), is the foster carer still informed about the possibility of such illness and the treatment required, in consideration that the court case has not yet reached a conclusion about the existence of such illness?

Answer: Where the existence of a medical condition is a matter of dispute Community Services will always rely on expert medical opinion. Where Community Services is relying on expert medical opinion that says there is nothing wrong with the child then no information will be conveyed to foster carers.

146. If not, why not?

Answer: See response to Question 145.

147. Could the Minister provide statistics for the number of parents who have been denied access to their children during the process of temporary removal?

Answer: Any removal, no matter how temporary must be the subject of an application to the Children's Court under section 45, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

Whenever a child or young person is before the Children's Court then the Court can make contact orders under section 86 of that Act. No statistics are held by Community Services when the Children' Court declined to make a contact order.

148. If so, what were the reasons for this refusal?

Answer: See response to Question 147.

149. Is the Department considering an inclusion in forthcoming budgets for possible legal action in relation to wrongful removal of children for medical child abuse or MSBP, in consideration of the fact that children in the UK have been advised that they can sue for wrongful removal upon reaching the age of 18 years.

Answer: No.

150. Could the Minister provide statistics for the numbers of children abused in foster care in the last twelve months?

Answer: Community Services' Allegations Against Employees Unit investigates serious allegations of reportable conduct by (Community Services' engaged) foster carers. In the 2009/10 financial year there were 23 children were involved in sustained allegations of this kind of conduct. This represents a very small proportion of the more than 16,000 children in out-of-home care in NSW.

151. If not, why not?

Answer: Not applicable

152. Could the Minister provide statistics in relation to the amount of time it took the Department to move children abused in foster care to another carer?

Answer: The amount of time it takes a caseworker to manage these situations is specific to each case.

153. If not, why not?

Answer: Community Services does not aggregate this information.

154. Could the Minister provide statistics in relation to the number of children cared for by each foster carer at any one time?

Answer: Community Services is currently compiling data on foster carers in *Child Protection Australia 2009/10*. It is anticipated that this will be published by AIHW in January 2011.

155. Is there a limit for the number of children cared for, at any one time, by a foster carer?

Answer: Yes. Carers are not usually authorised to provide care for more than six children and/or young people at any one time; including their own children and other children who may be placed with them by Community Services or another agency.

156. Does the Minister have a policy in relation to parents video—taping access visits with their children?

Answer: See answer to question 157.

157. If parents are disallowed from video-taping their children, what are the reasons for this?

Answer: 156 and 157. There are no specific policies in relation to birth parents video-taping contact visits with their children. The Reference for Contact for Children and Young People in Out-of-Home Care notes that 'in determining contact arrangements the paramount consideration is the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person' (p.2). Further, the role of the contact supervisor is to 'support and protect the child from physical and/or emotional harm and if necessary terminate the contact session' (p.11). Therefore, video-taping children during contact visits would need to be assessed on a case by case basis and would be dependent on the purpose of the video-taping. In some circumstances, it may not be appropriate for a birth parent to video-tape a child or young person during a contact visit if this action causes distress or harm to the child or young person and affects the quality of the contact between the birth parent and the child or young person.

Section 105, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* stipulates that an individual may be guilty of an offence if they publish or broadcast the name of a child or young person or any information, picture or other material that identifies the child or young person.

158. How many cases of MSBP or Parent Alienation Syndrome in the children's courts are also involved in family court disputes where the mother has accused the father of sexual abuse of the children?

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Answer: No such statistics are held.

159. (a) In cases of restoration of children with special needs to their parents, can the Minister explain why certain services such as speech therapy and occupational therapy are denied during foster care, but reinstated when returned to their parents' care?

Answer: Speech therapy and occupational therapy services are not denied during foster care if these services form part of an approved case plan, that is, they are recognised needs of the child.

(b) Can the Minister explain why children may also be denied access to day-care or pre-school during foster care, but have this service re-instated on restoration?

Answer: Access to day care or pre-school is not denied during foster care if this service forms part of an approved case plan, that is, it is a recognised need of the child.

160. Can the Minister explain why a child who has been prescribed a gluten-free, dairy-free diet by a qualified medical practitioner is forced to eat a 'normal' diet by case workers not trained in nutrition or medicine?

Answer: No explanation can be provided unless the particular child can be identified and there is confirmation that these facts are correct.

161. In cases of parental supervision of children with serious illness by the Department, can the Minister explain why a child with terminal cancer might be forced to attend school by the department, despite being seriously ill and in severe pain?

Answer: See response to Question 160.

162. How much money is spent by the Department in relation to enforcement of such protocols?

Answer: No such protocols have been identified.

163. How many department caseworkers have been investigated for breaches of protocol and procedure in the last twelve months?

Answer: Community Services employs over 4000 staff. In the 2009/10 reporting period 25 investigations were completed into allegations of reportable conduct or misconduct by Community Services salaried staff. This included 20 Caseworkers.

164. What have been the outcomes of these investigations?

Answer: Of these investigations 11 were sustained (reportable conduct) or upheld (misconduct). Penalties included cessation of employment, reduction in salary, reprimand, remedial action and resignation.

165. Is the Minister aware of the potential legal possibility that individual department case workers could be held personally liable for their actions – if the employee has used an unauthorised method to undertake an authorised task and/or has engaged in discriminatory or harassing behaviour?

Answer: Yes.

166. Is the Minister aware that the department could be held jointly liable (vicarious liability) if found not to have taken reasonable steps to prevent the discriminatory and harassing behaviour?

Answer: Yes.

167. What procedures does the Department undertake to make sure that parents are not 'verballed' by department caseworkers during interviews, in consideration that interviews are taped in criminal cases to protect against police 'verballing'?

Answer: Care proceedings are not subject to the laws of evidence nor do they have the same standard of proof as criminal proceedings. Having said that, the rules of natural justice and the need to establish evidence to a standard commensurate with the seriousness of the allegation do apply.

168. What procedures are provided by the Department to make sure that parents are not 'verballed' during supervised access visits by parents?

Answer: Most supervision of contact visits is undertaken by contracted agencies which are contractually bound to accurately report.

169. What procedures does the Department undertake to make sure that affidavits written by caseworkers are accurate and based on evidence?

Answer: This is subject to training, codes of practice, and subject to testing in Court.

170. How much importance does the Minister place on hard evidence in children's court proceedings, as opposed to profiling, innuendo and hearsay?

Answer: The Minister always seeks to rely upon the best available evidence and having done so it is a matter for the court to decide what it admits into evidence and then what weight it gives to the evidence received.

171. Is Community Services predicting a continuing decline in reports, and if so, to what extent?

Answer: Substantial changes were implemented in the child protection reporting system of NSW during January 2010, including proclamation of a new threshold for child protection reporting and system changes. The changes have resulted in a significant reduction to reports. It is expected that this lower level of reporting will be sustained, but further trend projections cannot be made until a full year of reporting under the new threshold has occurred.

172. In the budget allocations for 2010-2011, what actual savings (compared with the previous year) have been projected for the reduced level of anticipated reports of risk of significant harm to the Helpline?

Answer: No savings are projected for the 2010-11 budget allocation.

The Helpline has not had an increase in staffing since 2006. Between 2007 and 2009 call volumes increased by 10 per cent annually.

Call volumes in 2010 are at the 2006 level.

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Between 24 January and 30 June this year there has been a 24 per cent drop in the volume of calls to the Child Protection Helpline compared with the previous year. Complete data for 2009/10 have not yet been published. Structured Decision Making tools were introduced at the Helpline in January 2010 to assist Helpline staff to assess the new threshold of Risk of Significant Harm. Call handling time has increased as a result of new processes following the introduction of SDM. The impact of the reduced number of calls to the Helpline is likely to be seen during 2011/12.

173. Has there been any evaluation on the implementation of Chapter 16A in the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* that allows for easier information exchange between government and non-government agencies?

Answer: No.

174. Is the Minister aware of the process involved when a child in out-of-home care requires a pair of spectacles that cost more than \$500?

Answer: Yes.

175. The process is as follows: eye test, quote for glasses, quote provided to caseworker who makes a submission for approval to the casework manager, who then provides same to the Manager of the CSC. If approved the caseworker receives a submission which is passed on to the optometrist who makes the glasses which unfortunately cannot be collected until the Caseworker submits a submission for payment to the Casework Manager who then passes it to the Manager CSC who then transmits the information to head office from whence the cheque is sent.

Answer: The process as outlined in question 175 is incorrect as only one submission is required for the purchase of eye glasses for child or young person in out-of-home care.

On 6 August 2010, the Director General, Jennifer Mason endorsed the amended Instrument of Delegation, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2000, Children's Services Regulation 2004*.

A Casework Manager and equivalent position, as identified within the Delegations Manual, is able to approve up to \$1,000 expenditure for financial assistance under Sections 22 and 161, *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*. A Manager Client Services can approve costs of up to \$5,000.

A Carer is not required to meet the costs of any optical expenditure however the cost must have previously been approved by Community Services and should be documented within the child or young person's case plan.

The Carer advises the service provider to send an invoice directly to Community Services for payment, made to the attention of the caseworker. The caseworker prepares a submission to obtain approval for the expenditure and once endorsed, payment is then arranged through the Agency's financial system and a cheque is issued Optometrist.

176. Has there been any costing done on this process?

Answer: No, as this is part of assessing a child's needs and supporting their identified needs within a case planning framework as part of quality casework.

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177. At a case conference that involves a child, parents and staff why is the carer the only person not entitled to have a support person particularly given that a staff member can be accompanied by a union representative?

Answer: The purpose of a case conference is to discuss the case plan and needs of a child or young person. While there is no procedure precluding carers from having a support person present, it is not usually necessary for a carer to require a support person. Union representatives do not attend or represent staff at case conferences.

How many invoices payable by Community Services are:

178. 0 – 30 days

Answer: Answer at 181

179. 30 – 60 days

Answer: Answer at 181

180. 60 – 90 days

Answer: Answer at 181

181. More than 90 days?

Answer: Payment of accounts is closely monitored to ensure accounts are paid in accordance with the Treasurer's Directions. The agencies accounts payable process is administered by NSW Businesslink, a shared services operation.

For the year ending 30 June 2010 the following performance indicators where achieved:

Accounts paid on time within each quarter:

Quarter	Target	Actual	Payments Processed on time	Total payments processed in quarter
September	90%	97%	144,842	149,695
December	90%	97%	159,116	163,252
March	90%	96%	135,341	141,252
June	90%	96%	162,015	168,090

182. Are there any interim evaluation results available for the Family Case Management project?

Answer: No. The interim evaluation report is due in February 2011.

183. How many FTE staff are engaged in pursuing Victims of Crime compensation on behalf of child victims of abuse or neglect. If there is no dedicated legal officer, what is the estimated staff effort involved in pursuing Victims of Crime compensation?

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Answer: This is undertaken by members of the Care Legal Support Teams within Legal Services and by a panel of external legal practitioners. It is estimated that at present 5 FTE legal officers are engaged in this task alone.

184. Cost of relocating a child in OOHC

Answer: This is not a question.

185. What is the cost of relocating a child, who does not have special needs, to an alternative carer if a placement breaks down?

Answer: The cost of relocating a child depends on the individual child's needs and circumstances. The cost amount will vary. Community Services Caseworkers follow financial guidelines for placement of children and young people in OOHC when undertaking placement.

186. Can the department provide statistics on the number of placements that broke down in 2009, including information about multiple placements for children in that time frame?

Answer: These data are not held in a form available for reporting purposes.

187. What is the cost of relocating a sibling group that comprises, for instance 3 children?

Answer: The cost of relocating a child depends on the individual child's needs and circumstances. The cost amount will vary. Community Services Caseworkers follow financial guidelines for placement of children and young people in OOHC when undertaking placement.

188. If a contingency amount is allocated to a carer to accommodate a sibling group and that placement breaks down, what becomes of furniture and other belongings, such as beds, that may have been purchased by Community Services for that family?

If a placement breaks down, a child's belongings - including those purchased by Community Services - travel with the child to the next placement. Allocations made to the carer to facilitate carer arrangements in place between the carer and Community Services remain with the carer.

Community Services' financial guidelines for placement of children and young people in out-of-home care outlines the provisions for this to occur.

188A. In relation to the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)

a) Did the program cease on 30 June this year?

Answer: No. In its meeting on 29 November 2008 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the new National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and three associated National Partnership Agreements: Homelessness; Social Housing; and Remote Indigenous Housing.

The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) replaces all previous housing and homelessness support agreements between the Commonwealth, and the States and Territories, including the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. The NAHA became effective from 1 January 2009.

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b) What guidance or directives have been given to NGOs which received funding under the SAAP?

Answer: The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, and the NSW Homelessness Action Plan now refer to SAAP services as Specialist Homelessness Services.

Specifically the NAHA commits States and Territories (and thereby NGOs which receive funding under the NAHA) to reducing the rate of homelessness and to achieving the following outcome: *'People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and social inclusion'*.

The NSW Homelessness Action Plan established three strategic directions to guide Specialist Homelessness Services, Specialist Services, and Mainstream Services, to achieve better outcomes for homeless people in NSW by:

- Preventing homelessness: to ensure that people never become homeless
- Responding effectively to homelessness: to ensure that people who are homeless receive effective responses so that they do not become entrenched in the system, and
- Breaking the cycle: to ensure that people who have been homeless do not become homeless again.

The NSW Homelessness Action Plan includes initiatives funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness as well as other actions funded by the NSW Government. The NSW Implementation Plan for the National Partnership on Homelessness sets out specific funding commitments by the Australian and NSW Governments for a range of projects and initiatives to address and prevent homelessness in NSW.

NGOs in NSW are further guided by Regional Homelessness Action Plans launched in August 2010. Regional Homelessness Committees, led by Housing NSW, have been formed in collaboration with the community sector to oversee the implementation of the 10 Regional Homelessness Action Plans.

The Plans represent the geographic regions of Central Coast, Hunter, Illawarra, South East New England/North West, North Coast, Western NSW, Riverina/Murray, Greater Western Sydney, and Coastal Sydney.

Each region has identified key priority target groups with a key focus on prevention and early intervention approaches to stop first time homelessness and to provide a more effective response when people become homelessness.

c) Will a new program replace the SAAP?

Answer: Yes. The current SAAP Program Guidelines will be reviewed in due course to reflect the new directions of the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, and the NSW Homelessness Action Plan.

Key to the development of new Program Guidelines will be incorporating the new directions of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan which set the direction for state-wide reform of the NSW homelessness service system. This will include the re-alignment of existing effort, increasing the focus of the service system on prevention, early intervention, and long-term accommodation and support.

d) Where can NGOs which previously accessed funding under the SAAP apply for funding?

Answer: As noted above Specialist Homelessness Services are now funded in NSW under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) with additional funding from the NSW Government.

In 2009/10 Community Services provided \$121.363 million to fund 366 Specialist Homelessness Services to provide accommodation and support to people who are homeless or at risk of homeless - including families in crisis, women and children affected by domestic violence, young people, and single adults.

The National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) commits additional Commonwealth Government funding of more than \$100 million and additional NSW matching funding of more than \$180 million from 2009 to 2013. This funding has already been allocated under the NSW Implementation Plan for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. Accordingly there are no uncommitted funds under the NPAH in NSW.

NGOs which previously accessed funding under the SAAP V Multilateral Agreement would pursue the same mechanisms for additional funding under the NAHA. There are however no uncommitted funds for Specialist Homelessness Services under the NAHA.

189. What is the NSW Government doing to support the Hope Food Barn in Warrawong?

Answer: Community Services currently does not fund the House of Hope Recovery Centre in Warrawong. The House of Hope may be eligible to apply for funding under the Community Builders Program, which aims to build capacity and skills within communities. However, similar to the Area Assistance Scheme, this program will not fund projects with ongoing funding implications.

Community Services makes a significant contribution to addressing disadvantage at the local level through the provision of \$514,922 (2009/10) through the Community Services Grants Program to organisations based in the Illawarra. These services include neighbourhood centres, which provide breakfast and community lunch programs. Other services offered from these neighbourhood centres include a variety of budgeting and nutrition programs in partnership with local government and Healthy Cities Illawarra.

190. What Community Services programs are designed specifically for the 8-12 year old bracket, which is known as 'the missing years' within the sector? How much funding was allocated to programs for 'the missing years' each financial year from 2003-04 to 2010-11 and what percentage was allocated to Western Sydney?

Answer: The Better Futures Program is specifically aimed at supporting children and young people aged 9-18 years by encouraging their development, improving family and community support and youth participation.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet was responsible for the Better Futures Program when it commenced in 2004/05. Community Services was responsible for the Better Futures program from 2005/06 to 2008/09, and in 2009/10 the program and NSW Government Youth Policy transferred to Communities NSW.


Community Services did not develop any specific programs for Better Futures. Funding was allocated at a regional level, based on locally identified needs and priorities that targeted the program's specific population and objectives.

Estimates 2010: Questions on Notice, Supplementary Questions

The following data identifies the funding known to Community Services that was allocated to the Western Sydney area, for children aged 8 to 12 years of age.

Fin Year	Total Budget	Actual expenditure for Western Sydney	%	Agency responsible for the Better Futures Program
03/04	Program did not exist			
04/05	\$ 2,354,100	\$208,625	9%	Premier's and Cabinet
05/06	\$ 4,559,401	\$294,516	6%	Community Services
06/07	\$ 4,355,048	\$136,994	3%	Community Services
07/08	\$ 3,650,000	\$232,000	6%	Community Services
08/09	\$ 3,652,100	\$332,626	9%	Community Services
09/10	Transferred to Communities NSW	Not available		Communities NSW

Beyond this specific program there are a range of general programs which this age range of children and their families can access, but which it is presumed that the question does not address.



Linda Burney MP
Minister for Community Services
Minister for the State Plan