

**Question on Notice
No. 743
Asked on 11 May 2006**

MS P CROFT asked the Minister for Child Safety (MR REYNOLDS) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the Crime and Misconduct Commission inquiry into foster care which recommended increased funding for the provision of counselling for children and young people in care who have been sexually abused – what has his department done to address this matter and, in particular, what has been done about funding services on the Gold Coast?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and for her interest in the safety of children not only in her electorate but right across Queensland. The provision of therapeutic services, particularly sexual abuse counselling services, was highlighted by the Crime and Misconduct Commission and external consultant, Gwenn Murray, as being of particular importance in responding to the needs of children and young people in the statutory child protection system.

My department, in conjunction with the Department of Communities, currently provides triennial funding of \$1,062,053 per annum to six sexual abuse counselling services throughout the state. These services are based at the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Bundaberg and Maryborough.

In addition to these services, my department is in the process of advertising the Blueprint's full commitment of \$800,000 per annum to establish additional sexual abuse counselling services in the following zones which have demonstrated the highest need for these services:

- Gold Coast and Brisbane South Zone (\$200,000);
- Ipswich and Western Zone (\$200,000);
- Logan and Brisbane West Zone (\$200,000); and
- Northern Zone (\$200,000).

The additional funding of \$2.4M over three years will enable government and non-government organisations to work in partnership to combat the social, emotional and behavioural impacts that affect the individual victims of sexual abuse, their immediate family and the wider community.

Services will provide counselling and therapeutic interventions to children and young people subject to child protection statutory intervention who have experienced sexual abuse or are engaging in sexualised or sexual offending behaviour.

In addition, services will support non-offending family members/carers to reduce the impact of sexual abuse, break the cycle of abuse and increase their capacity to support and protect children and young people affected by sexual abuse.

Activities provided by sexual abuse counselling services will include:

- a consistent and comprehensive approach to assessment of needs;
- practice that is soundly based on proven evidence, theory and/or practice;
- culturally appropriate practice methodology and equitable access; and
- effective links across the non-government sector and relevant statutory agencies to ensure service coordination to meet the needs of clients.

The funding process commenced on 29 April 2006 and non-government organisations have until 5.00 pm, Tuesday, 13 June 2006 to submit a funding application.