

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 1218**

**Asked on Tuesday 15 September 2009**

**MR DEMPSEY ASKED THE MINISTER FOR CHILD SAFETY AND MINISTER FOR SPORT (MR REEVES)—**

- (1) How many complaints of harm have been recorded for children in care where the complaint involved inappropriate sexual behaviour by another child?
- (2) How many matters were referred to police for investigation involving sexual abuse allegations against a child in care involving another child?

### **ANSWER:**

The Bligh Government is committed to supporting Queensland's children and young people who have experienced harm or are at risk of experiencing harm. With a record budget of \$638 million, this Government is investing in more services to support our most vulnerable children and young people.

Where there are reported concerns about harm to a child in out-of-home care by another child in the placement and the allegations are of a sexual nature, an assessment by the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) is undertaken to determine whether a child is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm.

I can assure the Member that when information received by the department contains allegations of harm that may have involved the commission of a criminal offence relating to a child, regardless of who is allegedly responsible for the harm—adult or child—the information is immediately provided to the Queensland Police Service.

The Member's question concerning the allegations of sexual harm to a child in care where the perpetrator was alleged to be another child is not part of the Department of Communities' reporting framework.

To extract data from the department's systems to identify the people involved and their age would require a manual process of review. Such a process would in turn require significant time and effort, diverting important resources and staff from core frontline service delivery.

Child Safety Services clearly assesses the child's needs when determining an appropriate placement, including matching an appropriate carer, with the necessary skills, to a child who may have behavioural issues.

When children display these types of behaviours it is important to look into any potential issues that may be the cause and to ensure that all children involved receive appropriate supports to address any behavioural issues that may be evident. Wrap-around services, which include counselling or therapeutic support, can be put in place to support a child, and the carer, in a placement.