

Question on Notice

No. 1493

Asked on Thursday 8 October 2009

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

With reference to children on long term guardianship orders—

- (1) How many children were on orders as at 5 October 2009 and how many had not had contact with their biological parents for more than 12 months?
- (2) How many children on orders had not had their case plan reviewed for more than 12 months?

ANSWER:

The principles of the *Child Protection Act 1999* state that a child's family is the preferred permanency option wherever possible and safe. Child Safety Services is committed to working closely with families to ensure the best possible outcomes for children in both the short and longer term.

A long-term guardianship order is sought when, following a period of case planning and active intervention with the family to address the child's care and protection needs, it is determined that the child cannot be safely reunified with their family in the foreseeable future and an alternative permanency option for the child is required.

All forms of Child Protection Orders must be supported by the issuing magistrate who considers the harm or risk of harm to a child.

As at 30 June 2009, there were 3,248 children subject to a child protection order granting long-term guardianship.

Case planning is an essential process for managing ongoing intervention for a child in need of protection. A case plan is a written document, a living document, providing strategies for addressing a child's protection and care needs.

This document is provided to parents and children and explains what child protection concerns need to be addressed and what services are being engaged to support the child and case plan goals.

Case planning also ensures appropriate respite and support services for families, carers and children in care are engaged that meets their needs and support case plan goals.

Information about contact arrangements between children and biological parents and case plan reviews is not reportable from the Integrated Client Management System. Contact data information is written within case notes to inform appropriate case work. As the Member would be aware, undertaking a case by case manual count would redirect critical frontline child protection staff's attention from their key child protection responsibilities.

The Bligh Government is committed to ensuring Queensland children and young people are supported and safe to enable them to reach their full potential. Where there is harm or risk of harm to a child, you can be assured that Child Safety Services will take definitive action to secure that child's safety.