

Question on Notice

No. 281

Asked on 2 March 2017

MS BATES asked the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise (a) how many children aged under 12 were placed in residential care for any period of time in 2015–16 (reported by region) and (b) how many children aged under 12 are currently in residential care as at 1 February 2017 (reported by region)?

ANSWER

More than 80 performance measures for child safety are released quarterly by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

In relation to part (a) the information requested changes on a daily basis as stays in residential facilities can range from one night to several months depending on the needs of the child. There would be a significant amount of work involved in extracting this data from the Integrated Client Management System, which would divert staff from other critical work.

In relation to part (b) as at 30 September 2016 there were 140 children aged under 12 in a residential care placement. This data, broken down by region, is as follows:

Children under 12 in a residential placement by region as at 30 September 2016

Region	Number
Brisbane	22
Central Queensland	15
Far North Queensland	24
North Coast	9
North Queensland	7
South East Queensland	23
South West Queensland	40
Total children	140

Of these 140 children, 35 children have since been reunited with family or transitioned to family based care. It should also be noted that 53 children are part of larger sibling groups and live in a residential care setting to be close to older brothers or sisters.

At any time, there may be number of reasons why a child under 12 years of age is supported in a residential care setting, including:

- a comprehensive assessment indicates that the child's needs (including therapeutic needs) may be best met through therapeutic residential care to help the child heal before transitioning to family based care
- to meet the needs of children with extreme health and/or disability needs requiring 24-hour care
- they are one of a sibling group that would benefit from being placed together
- the service model has been explicitly developed and approved for children younger than 12, for example, Safe Houses (Safe Houses are residential care services located in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with attached family intervention services, which provide short to medium-term care for the purpose of supporting a child to remain in, or return to, the child's community of origin).