

Question on Notice

No. 1246

Asked on 19 September 2018

MR D PURDIE asked the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (HON D FARMER)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise how children identified by the department as being at risk are protected from further harm following the employment of an additional 292 frontline staff, two-thirds of which are already on the ground, working?

ANSWER

The Palaszczuk Government has boosted frontline staff and frontline support staff with a staffing increase of 458 positions over three years from 2016-17 — 365 positions over the past two years, with 93 more in 2018-19.

This includes government investment of \$200 million over four years from 2017-18, the biggest investment in over a decade, with funding for an additional 292 Child Safety services staff in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

The June 2018 data shows that the allocation of additional frontline staff to undertake investigation and assessment work has helped to improve response timeframes. This means we are getting to families faster. The proportion of 24 hour investigations commenced on time was 93.2 per cent in June 2018 compared to 92.9 per cent in March 2018.

Despite significant increases in casework complexity and family needs, caseloads for frontline Child Safety Officers as at 30 June 2018 have decreased to 17.0. This means Child Safety Officers are able to respond more quickly and effectively to the needs of vulnerable children and spend more time on each case.

On 7 September 2018, the Queensland Government released *the Supporting Families Changing Futures: 2018 update*, a progress report of the child protection and family support reform program.

The report shows the positive results of investment in child safety services, with increases in families accessing early intervention services, more investigations being commenced on time, and nearly half of children who need to be removed from home to ensure their safety being placed with kin.