

Question on Notice

No. 848

Asked on 12 August 2020

MR D JANETZKI MP 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 provide details of the number of youth housed by the department in commercial accommodation and for how many nights listed by region for the last five years (reported separately by year)?

ANSWER

The specific data requested is not part of standard corporate reporting and would require manual extraction of data from individual case files, which would divert resources from important frontline service delivery.

However, preliminary analysis of data provided by regions for the month of August 2020 indicates commercial accommodation was used infrequently, with approximately four children per region placed in these arrangements, typically overnight. At least one case related to the need for a young person to quarantine due to COVID-19 testing.

The department is currently undertaking work in relation to its client management systems and is giving consideration to including the capacity for reporting of this level of information in the future design.

I can confirm that commercial accommodation, such as motels and hotels, is only used in emergency situations where no other options are available. This type of placement provides the department with the flexibility to place children in emergent situations when a child urgently requires accommodation and no suitable alternatives can be identified.

Hotels and motels may be used where, outside of business hours, a child has to be urgently removed from his or her family home for safety reasons; or where a child's out-of-home care placement ends unexpectedly.

When children are placed in hotels or motels, arrangements are made to ensure they are provided with adequate support and 24-hour supervision to meet their safety needs, while longer-term care arrangements are being sourced.

The length of placements in hotels or motels varies based on individual needs. It is typically used overnight or for a few days, while an available carer or care service is identified.

We are also following health directives regarding mandatory quarantining for those young people who are at risk of exposure to COVID-19.