

# COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

## Violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings

### Questions on Notice FRIDAY, 21 AUGUST 2015 CANBERRA Department of Social Services.

#### Hansard – Page 6

*Senator McLUCAS: I want to go back to the hotline. Do you do a satisfaction survey - for want of a better word - regarding how people feel they have been responded to on the hotline? I acknowledge that it would be pretty hard to do such a satisfaction survey, but I am trying to find out whether people feel the hotline has been successful for them. Do you know of anything like that?*

*Mr Pearson: I will need to take that on notice. Having said that, I would point out that any response would have to take into account that this hotline does not resolve; it refers.*

**Response -** The Hotline does offer notifiers the ability to undertake a satisfaction survey. A number of notifiers have used the on-line survey with all indicating satisfaction with the service and rating the staff as professional. Given the limited nature of the replies it is not possible to provide further analysis.

*Senator McLUCAS: The other question I want to go to is about the nature of those referrals. Do you do any analysis of what proportion are referrals to police and what proportion are referrals to other state-based agencies? Do you analyse the data in that respect?*

*Mr Pearson: Again, I will need to check that.*

#### **Response –**

The Department receives regular data reports from the Hotline and they are analysed for trends and systemic issues. Over the past 3 years 45% of notifiers were provided with information and no formal referral was made. 27% of notifications required a formal referral to the relevant State and Territory Government agency. A further 19% required notification to Commonwealth agencies. The other 8% were either referred to local government or other authorities or data is not recorded.

The Hotline encourages individuals who raise criminal issues to contact their local police. This data is not recorded above as referrals made by the Hotline. It is rare for the Hotline to contact police directly to report a case of abuse. The Hotline will contact the police directly if the individual is an imminent danger to themselves or others. The Hotline has contacted the police due to suicidal threats in about 10 cases between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2015.

Furthermore, the Hotline has contacted the police on five occasions due to messages left on the Hotline voice mail describing sexual abuse of minors between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2015.

## Hansard – Page 7

*Senator McLUCAS: I suppose a useful thing that you might ask the hotline people is: is there a question? Have you talked to anyone else about this?*

*Mr Christian: I can take that on notice.*

**Response** - As part of the processes followed by the Hotline, notifiers of allegations are asked about other services the notifier has approached and outcomes of those contacts. The Hotline may still raise an issue and consider alternative referrals, depending on the needs and requests of the notifier.