



Government of South Australia

Office of the Guardian
for Children and Young People

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Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

20 November 2018

Dear Committee Chair Mr Russell Broadbent MP

Information on notice - House of Representatives Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to the Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence in Adelaide on Friday 9 November 2018.

This letter provides the Committee with additional information requested during the hearing.

Please let me know if you require any further information about, or wish to discuss, this feedback. Your staff also can contact my Senior Policy Officer, Ms Jessica Flynn for this purpose on

Yours sincerely

**Penny Wright | Guardian and Training Centre Visitor
Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People**

Information on notice

During the hearing, I stated that one in every four children in South Australia will be subject to at least one child protection notification by the time they are 10 years old.

Ms Sharkie sought clarification as to the number of families this statistic represented.

After speaking with Rhiannon Pilkington, one of the co-authors of the research, I have been informed that current data does not allow us to ascertain how many families this represents. Work is currently underway to allow researchers to understand the numbers of families this statistic represents. This is a priority of BetterStart Child Health and Development Research Group's work with the Early Intervention Research Directorate. As you would appreciate, 'family' means different things to different people, and the composition of family can change over time.

This research has also linked NAPLAN and Australian Early Development Census data, and demonstrated that children who have a notification made about them, with no follow up or investigation required, have twice the rate of developmental vulnerability reported at the age of five, compared to children with no child protection notifications.¹ As the level of contact with the child protection system increases, so does the prevalence of performing at or below the national minimum standard on NAPLAN at age 8.

The narrative to highlight the 'one in every four' statistic, is that you cannot tell if a child protection response is necessitated by each notification, but it is a strong signal that the family is in need of support.

Mandatory notifiers are unlikely to spend time on hold or filling out a form online to make a notification about a child with a Mars Bar in their lunch box.

¹ In reference to Australian Early Development Census Data. The South Australia Early Childhood Data Project, *'Informing Early Intervention in Child Protection'*, EIRD Forum 10 April 2018, John Lynch, Rhiannon Pilkington, Alicia Montgomerie.

Further information referred to during the public hearing of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence from Penny Wright, Guardian for Children and Young People and Training Centre Visitor

South Australian Research Bodies

Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD)²

EIRD works to ensure that South Australian children will be safer and have a greater opportunity to thrive.

EIRD's strategic and operational objectives contribute to improving the wellbeing of children and families that are vulnerable to child abuse and neglect, by assisting government to fund early intervention and prevention programs and services that work. EIRD also pursues a specific vision to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system.

Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP) (University of South Australia)³

ACCP is dedicated to research that focuses on practical tools and techniques that benefit front-line staff in child and family protective services so that they can truly help children and families. ACCP researchers have pioneered methodologies for engaging vulnerable and marginalised children and families in child protection research. They collect, analyse and interpret quantitative and qualitative data to provide contextually-driven solutions to complex problems.

See publication Case File Review Research Policy Brief #1, '*Identifying early intervention and prevention pathways for child protection concerns raised in pregnancy: Preliminary Findings from Child Protection Departmental Case File Reviews*'.⁴

BetterStart Child Health and Development Research Group (Adelaide University)⁵

Research conducted by the BetterStart group aims to understand how to ensure infants and children have the best start to life. Studies focus on ways to enhance health and development throughout their life course.

It was determined that one in every four (25 per cent) children in South Australia has at least one child protection notification made about them by the age of 10.

- Notifications were 'screened in' for 19 per cent of children.

² <https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-business-and-the-community/early-intervention-research-directorate>

³ <http://www.unisa.edu.au/Research/Australian-Centre-for-Child-Protection/>

⁴ http://www.unisa.edu.au/siteassets/episerver-6-files/global/eass/research/accp/accp_eird-policybrief1.pdf

⁵ <https://health.adelaide.edu.au/betterstart/>

- Notifications were investigated for 10 per cent of children.
- Notifications were substantiated in 5 per cent of children.
- 1.8 per cent of children had an out of home care experience.

See the report '*Child Protection in South Australia*', and pages five and six of South Australia Early Childhood Data Project, '*Informing Early Intervention in Child Protection*', EIRD Forum 10 April 2018.⁶

Early Intervention by an Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation

Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS)⁷

The Bumps to Babes and Beyond program was delivered through a partnership between MDAS and the Queen Elizabeth Centre in Victoria, and offered pre and post-natal support for Indigenous mothers and families, early childhood and parenting education, and linked Indigenous families to local services.

The target population for the program were Indigenous women and families identified by MDAS as experiencing risk factors that may negatively impact their pregnancy, maternal or child health or their parenting capacity.

Education

Live, Learn, Grow (Newcastle University)⁸

Live, Learn, Grow supports students with an Out of Home Care (OOHC) experience to access and actively participate in higher education by offering support in areas that are known to present challenges.

Live, Learn, Grow was the first program in Australia and internationally to provide students from a care experience, such as foster or residential care, with a range of tailored support services including:

- Assistance with finding and maintaining appropriate accommodation
- Access to on-campus employment
- Academic and social support

⁶ <https://health.adelaide.edu.au/betterstart/publications/reports/child-protection-in-south-australia.pdf> and https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/33311/John-Lynch-EIRD-FORUM-Final-Apr-10-2018.pdf

⁷ <https://www.vaccho.org.au/om/our-membership/members/mdas/services/>

⁸ <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/community-and-alumni/community-engagement/community-and-school-programs/aim-high/live,-learn-grow>

Raising Expectations (LaTrobe and Federation Universities)⁹

Over 200 care leavers are now studying at Federation University and La Trobe University. The Raising Expectations team – a partnership between the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Federation University Australia and La Trobe University – recognise that people who have spent time in out-of-home care can face challenges and have limited support going on to and completing higher education. They provide resources, support and services to help young people in care and care leavers access higher education.

Institutional care

Diagrama Foundation – Spain (and UK)¹⁰

Diagrama Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that takes care of the needs of vulnerable people who are experiencing social difficulties, with the defence and promotion of Human Rights at its heart. The main objective is to promote the development of centres, programmes and research aimed at the prevention, treatment and integration of people in social difficulties or at social risk, especially children, families, young people and dependants.¹¹

⁹ <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/raisingexpectations/>

¹⁰ <http://www.diagramafoundation.org.uk/presentation>

¹¹ For more information, see the video here: <http://www.diagramafoundation.org.uk/bbc-visits-diagramas-custodial-centres-spain>