

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 29 MAY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Child Support Agency – Complaints against Staff

Question reference number: HS 38

Senator: Fifield

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 27 July 2012

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) How many complaints were lodged against CSA staff in 2010-2011?
- b) How many complaints were lodged against CSA staff in 2011-2012?
- c) How many complaints against CSA staff in 2011-2012 were upheld and what was the action against the staff member in question?
- d) How many CSA staff have been formally disciplined between 2010 and 2012 as a result of complaints relating to customer service?

Answer:

- a) 1,329 complaints were lodged against Child Support Program staff in 2010-11 (i.e. where the qualitative issue was recorded as behaviour, how a staff member interacted with a customer, as opposed to action taken on a case).
- b) 1,369 complaints have been lodged against Child Support Program staff this year to date, as at 31 May 2012.
- c) 518 of these complaints were upheld. Where the complaint is handled by a staff member's team leader, the team leader provides feedback to the staff member and monitors their performance to ensure it meets the required standard in future. Where the complaint is handled by a complaints officer, formal written feedback is provided to the staff member's team leader and copied to senior management for information and appropriate action. Where a staff member's behaviour does not meet the required standard after feedback and support has been provided, a formal disciplinary process under the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct may be applied.
- d) As at 31 May 2012, two staff had been formally disciplined between 2010 and 2012 following code of conduct investigations resulting from complaints relating to customer service.