

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Social Workers and Young People

Question reference number: HS 98

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 December 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Please provide details of the number of social workers employed in each of the last four years and the reason for reduced referrals in 2014-15.
- b) What was the reason for reduced engagement by social workers with young people in 2014-15?

Answer:

a)

| Social Work Staff | FTE | Headcount |
|--------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 30/06/2015 | 649.19 | 741 |
| 30/06/2014 | 597.13 | 680 |
| 30/06/2013 | 611.44 | 689 |
| 30/06/2012 | 630 | 729 |

Reporting information available indicates that there has been a steady decline in referrals to social workers over recent years. There is no evidence available to confirm the reason for the decline in referrals.

- b) In 2014-15, reporting parameters changed to include reporting on the number of case plans created with a young person in that year, rather than the total number of customers referred into social work.

While overall social work referral numbers have been trending down, evidence available indicates referrals for the social work priority groups – those presenting with mental health issues, youth at risk, domestic and family violence, and customer aggression - have remained steady.