

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Legislative Council

ASKED BY: Meg Webb MLC

ANSWERED BY: Minister Palmer

QUESTION:

My question is to the Minister for Education, regarding the Child Safety and Wellbeing Liaison Officers (CSWLO) working under the Advice and Referral Line (ARL) in North region.

1. Minister, can you detail the current status of staffing in the Child Safety Service North office for Response and the Case Management teams? Specifically, in terms of normally appointed staff (not those assigned from other agencies) and including those on annual/recreation leave and personal leave?
2. Can you confirm that Child Safety and Wellbeing Liaison Officers for the Advice and Referral Line have been re-assigned to Response duties in the North region office, and if so how many have been re-assigned?
3. Can you detail how many cases are currently assigned to Response North, either actively allocated or awaiting allocation?
4. Wellbeing Liaison Officers have been assigned to support the North region office, how is ARL managing community outreach?

ANSWER:

1. Minister, can you detail the current status of staffing in the Child Safety Service North office for Response and the Case Management teams? Specifically, in terms of normally appointed staff (not those assigned from other agencies) and including those on annual/recreation leave and personal leave?
 - I have been advised that as at 8 December 2025, the Northern Child Safety Services office currently has 56.3 full-time equivalent positions on its establishment (inclusive of support) and 30.8 FTE Child Safety Officers (with 25.8 available).
 - On an average day, approximately 8.6 FTE are available to undertake Response team tasks and duties and 14.2 FTE are available to undertake case management tasks and duties.
 - It is important to note that the nature of child safety work requires a high level of flexibility and prioritisation on a daily basis.

2. Can you confirm that Child Safety and Wellbeing Liaison Officers for the Advice and Referral Line have been re-assigned to Response duties in the North region office, and if so how many have been re-assigned?
 - To strengthen our capacity in the Northern region, four Child Safety and Wellbeing Liaison Officers from the Advice and Referral Line have a refined focus to support families who are engaging with CSS Assessment.
 - One Liaison Officer attends the CSS Weekly Allocation Meetings, which provide clear and structured tasks for the liaison roles aligned with the department's statutory functions. Their duties include assisting with family support tasks, facilitating referrals to service providers,

and, where appropriate, undertaking home visits to support family needs.

- While they are not undertaking statutory assessments, they are directly contributing to creating safety for children young people and their families, ensuring that families most at risk of statutory intervention receive targeted and timely support. This approach represents a more focused and effective use of resources.
- Importantly, the work they are doing is very similar to their previous work within the Advice and Referral Line, but now it is embedded within the Response teams to provide direct support to families at the highest level of need.

3. Can you detail how many cases are currently assigned to Response North, either actively allocated or awaiting allocation?

- I have been advised that as of 8 December 2025 there are 58 cases, including both allocated and unallocated sitting with the response team.

4. Wellbeing Liaison Officers have been assigned to support the North region office, how is ARL managing community outreach?

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Liaison Officers remain within the ARL, however, there is now a flexible yet structured approach to ensure Liaisons are supporting families most at need, who are engaging with CSS Assessment. Their focus is now on working directly with children, young people, and their families to strengthen safety.
- Previously, these officers may have provided education and support to professionals. While that work was valuable, this new approach is far more impactful, as it prioritises families at the greatest risk and ensures they receive targeted, practical

assistance. Liaison Officers are actively involved in family support tasks, referrals to service providers, and, where appropriate, home visits, all aimed at creating safety for children and families.

- To date, this change has had a very positive effect, ensuring that families receive help earlier and in a more structured way. When external professionals require information, they are directed to resources available on the Department for Education, Children and Young People website or to community provider organisations.
- This shift represents a better use of resources, embedding Liaison Officers in team-based decision-making and aligning their work with statutory priorities to deliver the greatest benefit for child safety.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED



Hon Jo Palmer MLC
Minister for Education
Minister for Children and Youth

Date: 9 December 2025