

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Burgoyne to the Minister for Territory Families:

**Foster and Kinship Applications**

1. What was the average wait time for the department to process applications to become a foster/kinship carer in the 2021/22 financial year?

**ANSWER:**

It is not possible to accurately report on the average wait time to process applications as each application is individually assessed for suitability based on the information provided, and may require further time to gather additional or supporting information from when the initial application was submitted.

This includes probity checks that are dependent upon external factors such as receiving national policy criminal history checks, Working with Children Clearances and completed medical assessments from general practitioners.

Similarly, once the assessment is allocated, the time to complete the assessment depends upon factors such as the number of interviews required of the prospective carers, any other children in their household and referees.

2. What is the average time between making an application and successfully becoming a foster/kinship carer? What is the longest time an applicant has waited in the 2021/22 financial year?

**ANSWER:**

It is not possible to accurately report on the average wait time to process applications as each application is individually assessed for suitability based on the information provided, and may require further time to gather additional or supporting information from when the initial application was submitted.

The Department monitors carer assessment progress through manual status reviews triggered at various stages including progression from inquiry to commitment to undergo assessment, return of probity checks and allocation to an assessor.

The new electronic care management system (CARE) will include reporting specific to processing applications.

3. What is the average time it takes for the foster and kinship unit to respond to phone calls and emails regarding pending foster or kinship carer applications?

**ANSWER:**

Contact from foster and kinship carer applicants are initially responded to by the Central Placement Unit. Contact is recorded however the time taken to respond is not monitored.

The new electronic care management system (CARE) will include reporting specific to processing applications.