

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 21 OCTOBER 2008



Human Services Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Human Services
Outcome/Output Group: Outcome 1/Output Group 2
Topic: Child Support Complaints

Senator: Siewert

Question reference number: HS20d

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 December 2008

Question:

HS20d: How many of the complaints received refer to the number of nights a parent cares for a child and the impact this has on the increase or decrease in payments. There is an incentive for the payee to discourage children from staying with the payer and an incentive for the payer to have the children for more nights than they may have in the past. What mechanisms are in place when children won't go to the non resident parent to stay?

Answer:

HS20d: COMPLAINTS

The Child Support Agency (CSA) has provided information about complaints relating to care. The response to question HS1 provides an analysis of customer complaints received in the period 1 July to 31 October 2008 and for the same period in 2007 and 2006.

CARE ISSUES

While CSA has no power to determine issues relating to access or where a child lives, there are a number of ways that CSA supports parents in resolving between themselves how to share parental responsibility. Where appropriate, CSA refers parents to Family Relationship Centres or offers customers a phone transfer to the Family Relationship Advice line.

CSA maintains a Community Services Directory which is available to parents on the CSA website www.csa.gov.au. Customer service officers can also give parents details of family dispute resolutions advisers in their locality.

CSA also provides materials, for example the *Me and My* series of booklets, that provide some guidance in helping parents resolve care issues.

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