

OOHC audit – the need for resources to support casework staff

Community Services (CS) now requires a large amount of 'audit' work to be done by Managers Casework (MCW) and Caseworkers (CWs) without additional dedicated resources.

The department has issued a spreadsheet with 159 lines of information (the OOHC audit tool) that needs to be completed for every child in Out of Home Care (OOHC).

This is a huge amount of work and some districts have requested it be undertaken by MCWs and CWs without any additional resources.

Some districts have organised additional dedicated resources to do this work, but not all.

MCWs and CWs are at breaking point as they are pressured to allocate more children.

The PSA believes there are already unsafe and unmanageable caseloads that are being imposed on these members.

The PSA believes the OOHC Audit tool is yet another administrative imposition that further increases the workload of casework staff.

The Department is placing increasing pressure on MCWs to allocate more and more cases, irrespective of the capacity of caseworkers – and requiring them to "increase productivity" in relation to the number of children:

- subject to ROSH who have a face to face response
- in OOHC who have an allocated CW.

Community Services is funded for 543 CWs, however there are approximately only 350-400 who are actually carrying a caseload.

In addition to this, many CWs have been moved out of OOHC into statutory child protection work, others carry a mixed caseload of CP and OOHC.

According to the most recent OOHC dashboard, there are 19,909 children in care.

The NGOs have only 7,344 while CS is left with 12,344 children.

This means CS OOHC Caseworkers have on paper a caseload ratio of between 1:20 to 1:30.

This is a major imposition on an already greatly expanded workload which has evolved since there was a change in direction with OOHC matters transitioning to NGOs.

FACS are now expected to meet OOHC standards, while an increase in the numbers of children entering OOHC are not being met with a corresponding rise in caseworker resources.

The Department needs to urgently recruit additional staff in order to undertake the ever-increasing workload of CWs.

The PSA wrote to Deidre Mulkerin on 26 August 2015 regarding this issue.

Click [HERE](#) to read a copy of that letter.

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