



MINISTRY OF YOUTH, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SENIORS

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Shadow Minister Robin Tucker, MP

(Written response)

December 5, 2025

Q1: Will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House of the number of referrals the Psycho-Educational Committee received from the Ministry of Education and from Child and Adolescent Services seeking approval for overseas placements for each year from and including 2020 to present date, broken down by Ministry and department?

A1: The chart below illustrates the number of referrals submitted to the Psycho-Educational Committee by the Ministry of Education's Student Services Department (MOED) and by the Ministry of Health/Bermuda Hospitals Board (BHB) Child and Adolescent Services (CAS). In instances where MOED or CAS were not the direct referral agency, they provided formal endorsement of the referral. Such endorsements were issued when it was determined that the child's needs exceeded the level of support available within their respective service settings, or when the required services were not available through their agencies.

Year	Total New Referrals to Psycho-Ed	Direct Referrals by MOED	Direct Referrals by CAS
2020	0	0	0
2021	3	1	0
2022	6	2	0
2023	7	2	2
2024	9	0	3
2025	7	4	2

Note: *There are other referral agencies other than Child Adolescence Services and Ministry of Education which are the Department of Child and Family Services, Department of Court Services and/or the Department of Health. In very special/exceptional circumstances the Ministry of National Security has made referrals for consideration.*

Q2: Will the Honourable Minister please provide an update to this Honorable House on what is currently being done to establish a coordinated response between the Department of Child and Family Services, the Ministry of Education and Child and Adolescent Services required to meet the clinical needs of children diagnosed with conduct disorder, severe mental health challenges, complex behavioural needs and those deemed high-risk within the community?

A2: The Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), the Ministry of Education (MOED) and the Bermuda Hospitals Board's Child and Adolescent Services (CAS) continue to work collaboratively to provide a coordinated response for children presenting with conduct disorder, significant mental health challenges, complex behavioural needs, and those assessed as high-risk within our community.

The Government's primary mechanism for multi-agency coordination in this area is the High-Risk Intervention Committee (THRIC). THRIC convenes monthly to review high-risk referrals, undertake joint case planning, and monitor progress. Through this forum, representatives from DCFS, MOED, and CAS and other stakeholders collectively identify service gaps, align agency goals, and establish clear lines of responsibility; specifying what actions are required, who will lead them, and what resources are necessary. Regular case reviews ensure ongoing accountability and timely adjustments to intervention plans.

Where it is determined that local resources are unavailable, insufficient, or have been exhausted, referrals are made to the Psycho-Educational Committee, which considers the need for overseas comprehensive assessments or longer-term therapeutic interventions based on clinical recommendations.

While THRIC provides an essential structure for cross-agency coordination, the increase in both the volume and complexity of referrals places significant strain on existing systems. All three agencies, DCFS, MOED, and CAS face limitations in staffing, specialized therapeutic capacity, and appropriate placement options. As a result, there has been an increase in applications for overseas therapeutic placements

for young people whose needs cannot be adequately addressed within the current school environment or local clinical services.

Recognizing these pressures, the three agencies are jointly advocating for enhanced resources and system strengthening. This includes expanding specialized clinical services, increasing therapeutic placement capacity, improving training for professionals working with high-needs youth, investing in early-intervention supports and parental education. Their shared objective is to build a more robust, responsive, and sustainable framework that ensures children and families receive the appropriate level of care within Bermuda wherever possible.

The Government remains committed to addressing the growing clinical and behavioral health needs of our children and will continue to prioritize the development of coordinated, high-quality, and accessible services across Ministries with the inclusion of community partners.

Q3: Will the Honourable Minister please provide an update on the introduction of digital forms for persons making application for financial assistance?

A3: DFA's work plan is to gradually introduce digital application forms for three (3) programmes – Financial Assistance (FA), Child Day Care Allowance (CDCA) and the Short-term Relief Benefit (STRB).

The phased rollout begins with the re-introduction of digital forms for the STRB Programme, scheduled for January 2026 with confirmation from the Digital Transformation (DT) Team. Online testing for the STRB digital forms has been completed, and the DT Team is now making the necessary updates and corrections identified as required during the testing process.

Following this, DFA will begin the development and introduction of digital forms for the FA Programme, which is expected to be completed by July 2026.

The final phase will then cover introduction of digital forms for CDCA Program, with an anticipated completion of December 2026.

In addition to the digital forms rollout, the DFA plans to maintain the manual application process. Clients who do not have access to smart devices (computers, phones or tablets) as well as those who experience difficulties completing the online applications and uploading the required support documents, will still be able to collect hard-copy application forms, complete and submit applications in person.

The DFA also plans to introduce a dedicated assistance desk at its reception area, equipped with a computer and officer ready to support clients wishing to complete their applications online. This initiative will be implemented following the relocation of the Department's reception to the Global House ground floor and the subsequent reconfiguration of the office space to accommodate these changes.