

29 OCT 2021  
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**Hon Simone McGurk MLA**  
Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests;  
Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services

Our ref: 74-17952 and 74-15761  
Your ref: CORC 726 of 2017

Ms Dawn Wright  
Manager Listings  
Office of the State Coroner  
Level 10, Central Law Courts  
501 Hay Street  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Wright

Thank you for your correspondence received 15 October 2020, and 14 April 2021 regarding the completed inquest into the circumstances surrounding the death of Baby PT and Baby H, together with a copy of the Coroner's Findings. I apologise for the delay in responding as I sought comprehensive advice from the Department of Communities (Communities). Further, an administrative error resulted in your October 2020 correspondence not being responded to at the time.

I write in reply to your request for advice regarding actions Communities will undertake in response to Recommendations 1 to 3 of the Coroner's report.

The McGowan Government recently passed the Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021 (Amendment Bill 2021) through Parliament, which expands the group of mandatory reporters who form a belief of child sexual abuse. These changes implement recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse. Communities will now commence implementation of the expansion of mandatory reporting as identified in the Amendment Bill 2021.

I am advised that Communities will consider Recommendation 1(a) from the inquests into the deaths of both Baby PT and Baby H, to expand mandatory reporting to non-ambulant children, as part of the next Statutory Review of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)*, due to occur in five years. As part of the Statutory Review, Communities will consider any learnings gained from the expansion of mandatory reporting resulting from the Amendment Bill 2021.

In preparation for the Statutory Review, I understand that Communities will develop a policy position regarding Recommendation 1(a) for non-ambulant children. This will include

considering the wide-reaching implications of introducing such a regime, how this might work, as well as considering the significant cost implications. Extensive consultation will occur with internal and external stakeholders. If the Statutory Review recommends expanding mandatory reporting to include non-ambulant children, training will be developed for all stakeholders who will be impacted by this change.

With respect to Recommendation 1(b) from the inquests into the deaths of both Baby PT and Baby H, I am advised that Communities currently provides training to the Department of Health (WA Health) staff, and staff from other agencies as required, to support them to identify child abuse and neglect, and to report concerns through the appropriate avenues. Further, there is a Bilateral Schedule with WA Health for collaborative responses to child abuse and neglect identified by WA Health. This Bilateral Schedule outlines WA Health's responsibility to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and where necessary, report concerns of abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities.

I understand WA Health has a Statewide Protection of Children Coordination Unit which provides policies, training, and practice guidance for WA Health staff to respond to child abuse and neglect. After consultation with WA Health, Communities identified that these policy and training resources are being reviewed to align with implementing the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and will strengthen the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect for all children, including those who are non-ambulant.

With respect to Recommendation 2 from the inquest into the death of Baby H, Communities is committed to reviewing high-risk infant practice approaches in accordance with the implementation of an amalgamated Child Protection Monitoring Framework. The review of high-risk infant practice approaches seeks to identify and address opportunities for culturally driven and evidence-based practice improvement. The consolidated framework intends to align high-risk infant practice at the systems level, and an integrated monitoring approach that can be applied across relevant business areas and services. Improvements in communication between staff and third parties, including afterhours contact, will be addressed and captured as part of this work.

I am further advised that a review of the Critical Incident Notification Policy will also be undertaken by Communities. The review will include strengthening Communities' High-Risk Infant Policy through the inclusion of afterhours contact details in regions and districts and aligning the afterhours process for both of these policies. This review aims to simplify and strengthen the process for responding to all critical incidents, thus making the policy more effective.

In response to Recommendation 3 from the inquest into the death of Baby H, Communities is committed to a review of its Family Support After Death Policy. The review will consider existing supports for families who have experienced a death and develop new operational policy and practice guidance to support families who have experienced the death of a loved one.

As part of this work, I understand that Communities will consult and collaborate with key stakeholders and community leaders to ensure the policy promotes improved service provision to vulnerable families including safety planning for surviving siblings. The review of the Family Support After Death Policy has interdependencies with the work on the High-Risk Infant Policy and the review of the Critical Incident Notification Policy, both referred to above. This work will be undertaken concurrently, to ensure learnings, appropriate training and operational opportunities are maximised.

If you have any queries please contact Ms Amanda Dickson, Acting Director, Central Review Team, Specialist Child Protection Unit at Communities by telephone on 0437 304 789 or by email at [Amanda.Dickson@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:Amanda.Dickson@communities.wa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

HON SIMONE MCGURK MLA  
**MINISTER FOR CHILD PROTECTION; WOMEN'S INTERESTS;  
PREVENTION OF FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE; COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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