

**Item 10 - Question Time**

To the Chair of the Care, Learning & Housing Committee

“Item 7 of the Care, Learning and Housing Committee papers on 10/10/19 stated that, in this financial year, 30 children had been either prevented from going out to or had been returned from out of authority placements. Of these 30 children, how many were returned from placements which they had been in for more than 6 months?”

Response to Mr A Jarvie

25 out of 30 children were in placement for more than six months. When deciding on what child/young person should be considered to possibly return to Highlands, we base this on the age/stage of development and how well they are doing in placement. If it is a critical time for the child or they do not want to return to Highlands then no further work will progress for that child. Planning for a child to return can take months of planning in order to find the best place for them to be cared for, which can be in our own residential or foster care, throughcare or kinship or home arrangement. Another consideration will be how many moves they have had in their childhood and whether they have good or poor attachments in their current caring environment. If a child has complex needs then getting a good package of support including education could take longer than six months. This is to allow time to put plans in place, in particular if the child is on a legal order as due process of attending children’s hearing and getting the order varied will also be part of the plan.