

# Seven children in welfare and a mum who says all she wanted was a helping hand



**DESPERATE:** The mother, at her home yesterday, says she has been let down by the system, with her pleas for help going unanswered.

**Pictures:** CALUM ROBERTSON

**KEN MCGREGOR  
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THE mother of seven children taken into custody on Christmas Eve amid claims of neglect and domestic violence says she has been “absolutely let down” by Families SA.

The woman, 32, yesterday told *The Advertiser* she had repeatedly asked Families SA and other government departments to help her care for, feed and house her children as she faced crippling financial difficulties.

In the five years she has lived at her dilapidated eastern suburbs home, the mother said Families SA had given her one cheque for \$79 for groceries. Now her children have been taken.

She claims she was told her situation was “not desperate enough” for her to get Housing



**RUN-DOWN:** The kitchen in the house, deemed unfit for children.

Trust accommodation and maintenance of the house was declined.

“The only shame should be theirs that they didn’t help me ... not mine that I could not cope,” the mother said yesterday when she gave *The Advertiser* access to the

house deemed on Thursday not fit to be a home for her children.

The mother said she co-operated with police after they responded to her call for assistance in a domestic dispute between her former partner and her father – also residents



From Saturday’s *Advertiser*

at the house. She said she only “relinquished” her children because she did not want to traumatise them and on the condition they were not separated – an undertaking she believes has been broken.

“I am not a bad mother. It’s not how I want to be living, I am not exactly proud of it,” she said yesterday as she cleared the house of old clothes, broken furniture and toys. “I have asked them to work alongside me, there was no need to traumatise my children.”

The mother believes the children – aged between 22 months and 13 years – have been split up, with some in a boarding facility at Old Noarlunga, and the others in three different family care houses in Murray Bridge.

Sources had claimed the children had been left alone for up to four days at a time, a claim their mother strongly rejected.

Families and Communities Minister Jennifer Rankine yesterday said the family had not received anti-poverty assistance since 2004 but she had asked the Department to check all records.