



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

28 SEP 2016



Dear

On 5 August 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information regarding the Kaitaia Branch of Child Youth and Family and the Te Tai Tokerau region.

On 12 August 2016, you were contacted by a Ministerial and Executive Services advisor to discuss the scope of your request. It was agreed that the scope of the request would not include email correspondence.

For the sake of clarity I will address each of your questions in turn.

- *All audits/reports/emails in relation to the performance of Kaitaia branch of CYF since (and including) 2012. Please include complaints relating to staff performance or actions, information on any investigations into those complaints and the results of any such investigations.*

I can advise that there have been no audits or reports into the performance of the Kaitaia branch. As such, your request for all audits and reports is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act as the information does not exist.

Child, Youth and Family have a formal complaint process to address issues around the service being provided. Further information about the complaints process can be found on the Child, Youth and Family website at: www.cyf.govt.nz/about-us/our-service-commitment/index.html.

Child, Youth and Family makes every effort to resolve all concerns raised at a site, regional or national level. If a complaint remains unresolved or if the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision made by Child, Youth and Family they can approach the Ministry of Social Development's Chief Executive Advisory Panel. This Panel is independent of Child, Youth and Family and provides families or individuals with another option to have their complaints reviewed.

People are also able to lodge complaints with the Office of the Children's Commissioner and the Office of the Ombudsman. These organisations are also both independent of Child, Youth and Family.

The majority of complaints received by Child, Youth and Family come from family members and caregivers and mainly concern communication and issues relating to access, care and custody.

In addition to the complaints process Child, Youth and Family encourages and supports its frontline social workers to become registered. The Social Work Registration Board (SWRB) is a crown entity that provides assurance to the public that registered social workers meet professional standards and are accountable for

Page 1 of 4

the way in which they practice. All registered social workers are required to adhere to the SWRB's code of conduct which lays out the minimum professional standards of behaviour, integrity and conduct and are subject to the SWRB's complaint and disciplinary process if they breach the code.

More information regarding the SWRB is available at: www.swrb.govt.nz/.

I have enclosed a table that shows the number of formal complaints received by Child, Youth and Family broken down nationally, the Te Tai Tokerau Region and the Kaitaia Site including the outcome of the complaint.

The predominant themes identified show that complaints generally are about:

- care and access: standard of care and issues with access
- communication: delays in response and insufficient information provided
- fair treatment: lack of support and not addressing identified concerns.

This is consistent with the themes identified nationally.

- *Could you please also answer how many caregivers CYF's has in the Northland area?*
- *Is there a shortage of placements compared to the number of children needing care?*

The table below shows the number of approved caregivers in the Te Tai Tokerau region including the number of approved caregivers who have a child or young person in their care. The table shows that there are a number of approved caregivers without a placement and that indicates that there is not a shortage of caregivers in the Te Tai Tokerau region. The number of approved caregivers is not always reflective of the number of caregivers who are available to take on young people for placements. Some of the approved caregivers are approved to care for specific children or young people whilst others are in a pool of caregivers.

Total number of approved caregivers in the Te Tai Tokerau region and number of approved caregivers with placements as at end of March 2016:

Site	Without Placements	With Placements	Total
Kaikohe	10	36	46
Kaitaia	19	23	42
Te Kaipara	4	15	19
Whangarei	25	86	111
Total	58	160	218

Notes:

- Only carers with a carer status of "Approved" and "Provisionally Approved" have been included.
- These carers are available to offer respite, transition and Home For Life care. Carers may also be approved for adoption (international or domestic).
- This table excludes those who are only approved for adoption (international or domestic).

- *How many children in CYF's care in Northland are currently unaccounted for (as in they've run away from their CYF's caregivers)? (as at 5-8-2016)*

When a child or young person, who is in the custody of the Chief Executive, absconds or escapes from their placement, part of Child, Youth and Family's response is to file a missing persons report with the Police. The Police send through weekly reports to Child, Youth and Family which have the number of open missing person reports as at the date the Police report is sent. This enables Child, Youth and Family to report the number of missing children and young people as at a particular date in time. Information about the Joint Protocol with New Zealand Police and how Child, Youth and Family work with Police to manage missing children is available at: <http://www.practicecentre.cyf.govt.nz/policy/caring-for-children-and-young-people/key-information/reporting-and-managing-missing-children-and-young-people-in-care.html>

I can advise you that there are no children who are registered as missing in the Te Tai Tokerau region as at the 8 August 2016.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely


Murray Edridge
Deputy Chief Executive, Child, Youth and Family

The number of formal complaints received by Child, Youth and Family broken down nationally, by the Tai Tokerau Region and by the Kaitiaki Site including those upheld and partially upheld as at the end of June 2016.

Financial year	National			Te Tai Tokerau Region			Kaitiaki Site		
	Received	Upheld	Partially upheld	Received	Upheld	Partially upheld	Received	Upheld	Partially upheld
2012/13	786	91	179	59	10	8	6	0	1
2013/14	1080	125	242	49	20	8	4	0	1
2014/15	901	100	200	46	16	3	11	5	1
2015/16	971	117	215	59	18	8	12	2	2

Note:

- This is the number of complaints registered in the Child, Youth and Family Complaint Management System.
- A 'Received' complaint may include more than one issue and some or all of these issues may be individually 'Upheld' or 'Partially upheld'.
- Not all complaints are resolved in the financial year in which they are received.

