# Child, Youth and Family Residential Care Regulations Inspection Report: 2015

### Epuni Care and Protection Residence

Epuni Care and Protection Residence (Epuni) located in Wellington, was opened in July 2001. Epuni is a 20 bed mixed gender residence and caters for children and young people aged 10 – 16 years of age. Many of the young people are from the North Island although, as a national residence, it also provides accommodation for young people from other parts of New Zealand.

Staff at the residence aim to provide children and young people with the best possible opportunities to improve their life outcomes and realise their potential. To help achieve this, Child, Youth and Family provides:

* a safe, structured environment which maximises learning opportunities
* evidence-based programmes to stabilise and address behaviour
* assessments which inform our planning and interventions to meet the individual needs of each child and young person
* practice and relationships that are informed by the values, beliefs and protocols of family and whānau
* interventions that engage children and young people in a supportive constructive process of change
* a comprehensive plan to transition children and young people successfully back into education, training or employment opportunities and to permanent and stable care.

The residence manager is supported by 60 full time permanent staff at Epuni, which is one of four Child, Youth and Family care and protection residences operating in New Zealand. The other three are Whakatakapokai in Auckland with 20 beds, Te Oranga in Christchurch with 10 beds and Puketai in Dunedin with 8 beds.

### Background

Child, Youth and Family provides residential care for a number of children and young people under section 364 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989.

Staff provide 24-hour care and custody for some of the most challenging and vulnerable children and young people who are admitted when there is a concern for their safety, or if their continued behaviour in the community is putting themselves or other people around them at significant risk.

### Inspection Reports

Each residence is assessed every calendar year by the Office of the Chief Social Worker to ensure:

* compliance with the regulations as specified in the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Residential Care) Regulations 1996 (the Regulations)
* compliance with section 384 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989
* the provision of safe, appropriate care for children and young people.

A report is produced summarising the findings of the inspection that focuses on any non-compliance identified, and residences are required to develop a response to the report that addresses these areas for improvement.

## Inspection summary as at May 2015

### Scope

The residential care regulations are about the safety and wellbeing, and upholding of the rights, of children and young people placed in a Child, Youth and Family residence. They also outline expectations about management and inspection of the residences.

Each inspection covers the six parts of the regulations, namely:

* Part 1: Rights of children and young persons in residences
* Part 2: Limitations on powers of punishment and discipline
* Part 3: Management and inspection of residences
* Part 4: Searches
* Part 5: Secure care
* Part 6: Records.

In 2015 Epuni achieved a 87 per cent rate of compliance across the six parts of the regulations, for those provisions tested on the inspection.

### Overall

* Not all provisions of the residential care regulations and section 384 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 apply to every residence, on every occasion.
* Due to the nature of some regulations, non-compliance in one area can mean automatic non-compliance with other regulations as they are inherently linked.
* The inspection identified areas of strength as well as areas for improvement for Epuni.
* An improvement plan was developed to address the identified areas of improvement and the result of this plan is outlined below.

### Areas of strength

Areas where the inspection found evidence of good practices and processes that were promoting the wellbeing and safety of young people included:

* child focussed processes to ensure young people acclimatised and transitioned into the residence positively
* positive relationships with the education and health providers
* young people had good access to advocates in the grievance process

**Areas for improvement**

Areas where improvement was required included ensuring:

* greater clarity about the behaviour management programme for both staff and young people
* improved management of secure care processes, including appropriate grounds for admissions to the secure care unit and placements reviewed as required, with outcomes recorded in the secure care register
* consistency of approach when applying sanctions and approaches taken to manage young people’s challenging behaviour involve no more than the minimum amount of physical intervention necessary
* management of young people with specific needs, and requiring an individual approach, maintains adherence to the regulations
* understanding of the CYP&F 1989 Act 1989 and the regulations in respect of Searches and Seizures to ensure compliance in this
* improvements in recording practice
* every effort is made to re-establish the community liaison committee.

### Service delivery response

As a result of the Residential Care Regulations Inspection outcome, immediate action was taken to address identified high risk areas pending the development of a plan focussed on ensuring the provision and maintenance of high standards of care to children and young people.

Achieving and maintaining the required standards of care necessitates both short and long-term input.

Epuni leadership team prepared a short-term plan to address the practice recommendations with a focus on establishing minimum standards.

A longer term plan to improve the health and well-being of staff and their environment has commenced. There is an expectation that as a result practices and processes will improve, ultimately affecting the outcomes for children and young people. This plan, which focuses on a mixture of technical skills, interpersonal skills and leadership skills, is being actively supported by the wider Residential and High Needs Services team with specialist input from the Ministry of Social Development’s Organisational Solutions.