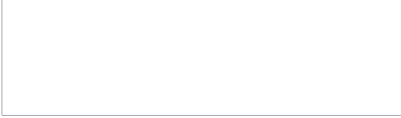




12 JUL 2016



Dear

On 13 June 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *information about the current situation of the target number 2 "End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children."*
- *What your ideas/plans are to achieve this objective.*

The Sustainable Development Goals are considered within the Ministry's existing policy and reporting frameworks.

A number of the existing policy and reporting frameworks led by the Ministry will contribute towards target number 2 of the 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal. The Government is committed to an on-going programme of work to make improvements for vulnerable children. This includes the:

- Children's Action Plan
- Vulnerable Children Act 2014
- Better Public Services Result 4: Reducing assaults on children
- Development of a new operating model for Child, Youth and Family
- Reporting to the United Nations.

*Children's Action Plan and the Vulnerable Children Act 2014*

The Children's Action Plan was released in October 2012, and the Vulnerable Children Act was enacted in 2014. Together they make the five Chief Executives of government agencies jointly accountable for developing and implementing a plan to protect New Zealand children from harm, as well as working with families/whānau and communities. Further information about the Children's Action Plan and the Vulnerable Children Act 2014, can be found on the Children's Action Plan website at: <http://www.childrensactionplan.govt.nz/>

*Better Public Services Result 4: Reducing assaults on children*

In 2012, the Government set 10 challenging results for the public sector to achieve over the next five years. The Better Public Services Result 4 aims to halt the rise in

children experiencing physical abuse and reduce current numbers by five per cent, by 2017.

As at December 2015, the number of children experiencing substantiated physical abuse in the previous 12 months dropped below 3,000 for the first time since 2011. Historically there has been some volatility in the counts from quarter to quarter, but the count has decreased for each of the four quarters in 2015 and is now within one per cent of the Better Public Services Result 4 target.

Work is progressing in key areas to help reach the target, such as good progress in implementing the Children's Action Plan and the work of Children's Teams. The Teams complement Child, Youth and Family by working with families and whānau to reduce their vulnerability and prevent their needs from escalating.

#### *New operating model for Child, Youth and Family*

The Government has agreed to the new operating model for the future system for vulnerable children as proposed by the Modernising Child, Youth and Family Expert Panel. It will take effect from 31 March 2017. The new operating model will consist of five major service areas:

- Prevention of harm through early escalation
- Intensive intervention when concerns escalate
- Care support when children are unable to live with their birth families
- Youth justice services for young people who offend
- Transition support for young people entering adulthood.

The new operating model will be central to the new Vulnerable Children's Action Plan. It is supported by six foundational building blocks:

- A child-centred system – a system that embeds the voices of children and young people in the design and delivery of services and prioritises the earliest opportunity for a stable and loving family.
- Engaging all New Zealanders – “all New Zealanders” includes the State, the community and individuals, and “engagement” refers to building understanding of what care means for children and playing a shared role in championing the role of children.
- High aspirations for Māori children – a single system-wide, trauma-informed framework of practice characterised by a common set of definitions, behaviours, values, principles and commitment to evidence from all professionals working with vulnerable children, young people and families across the social sector.
- A professional practice framework – a clear framework of practice that describes the values, principles, definitions, and approaches at both system and practitioner levels, required to achieve the full range of objectives for vulnerable children.
- Strategic partnerships – Government and communities/organisations working together around the common objective of meeting the needs of children and families.
- An investment approach – considers a lifetime view of the wellbeing of individual children and promotes early intervention to address factors that contribute to child vulnerability and the costs associated with poor outcomes.

### *Reporting to the United Nations*

As a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), New Zealand is committed to implementing the Convention to ensure that all children's rights are realised. This includes a child's right to protection from all forms of child abuse, neglect, exploitation and cruelty, including the right to special protection in times of war and protection from abuse in the criminal justice system. If we are able to fully implement the Convention and protect children from all forms of abuse, then target number 2 will be met.

In accordance with the United Nations reporting requirements, New Zealand submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child the *'Initial Report under the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography'*, in July 2014. A copy of this report can be accessed at: <http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/uncroc/>

In May 2015, the Government also submitted a *'Fifth Periodic Report'* under UNCROC that outlined the initiatives that the Government had taken to care for and protect vulnerable children in New Zealand. This report is available on the Ministry's website at: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/uncroc/optional-protocols.html>

On 3 June 2016, we also submitted to the Committee:

- The response of the New Zealand Government to the list of issues on the Fifth Periodic report on UNCROC
- The response of the New Zealand Government to the list of issues on the Initial Report on OPSC.

These responses have been published on the United Nations Office of The High Commissioner's website.

I hope you find this information helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

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

Yours sincerely



Maree Roberts  
**Associate Deputy Chief Executive, Social Policy**