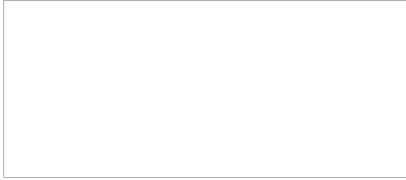




- 9 JUN 2016



Dear

On 28 April 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about the funding for alternative medicine treatments such as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT).

I will address each of your questions in turn:

- *Are any alternative medicine treatments funded by CYF for children in their care? If yes, which ones? IE - acupuncture, NLP, EFT, hypnosis etc*
- *On what basis? (perceived mental health improvement, trauma recovery etc)*
- *How much money did CYF spend on alternative medicine treatments between January 1, 2011 and January 1, 2016 (a five year period)?*

Children who come into Child, Youth and Family care are some of New Zealand's most vulnerable children. Many have a combination of health and education difficulties that have gone unidentified or untreated prior to them coming into Child, Youth and Family's care. As a result of their backgrounds, children who come into care are often disconnected from regular health and education services, and are more likely to have physical, behavioural, and emotional barriers to overcome. Often the complexity of the problems means that no single agency is able to provide the full package of care and services required.

Every child or young person in care has a plan that addresses their education, health and care needs. This plan includes a permanent care goal. The plan and any other relevant documents are then provided to all involved parties, including the child or young person and their caregiver.

Every child and young person entering the care of Child, Youth and Family, or already in care, is also referred for a Gateway Assessment. A Gateway Assessment ensures that the health needs of children and young people in care are identified at the earliest opportunity, and that interventions are timely and targeted.

Gateway Assessments make a significant difference by linking children, young people and their families to the health (and education) services to get the support they need. These services include but are not limited to Parenting Programmes, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Functional Family Therapy. To be successful, Gateway Assessments require Child, Youth and Family and District Health Boards (and education services if appropriate) to work closely together. More information about Gateway Assessments can be found at: <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/keeping-kids-safe/ways-we-work-with-families/gateway-health-and-education-assessments.html>

Alternative medicine treatment is a very broad term and to identify what payments have been made to this specific group you would need to provide the Ministry with a list of specific supplier trading names for this category.

I can advise that alternative medicine treatments may form part of a child or young person's care plan. The nature of that treatment is recorded on notes in individual case files and the Ministry is unable to centrally report information about the types and nature of alternative medicine treatments that children and young people in care receive. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files.

As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service. I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

The Ministry is also unable to report on the total amount of money that Child, Youth and Family have paid for alternative medicine treatment providers. The details of the individual alternative medicine treatment providers and the costs of their services to treat children and young people in care are held on notes in individual case files. In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

- *Is the specific alternative medicine therapy known as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) funded by CYF for children in their care?*
- *On what basis? (Perceived mental health improvement, trauma recovery etc)*
- *How much money did CYF spend on EFT treatments between January 1, 2011 and January 1, 2016 (a five year period)?*

As each child or young person in care has their own personal care plan that is recorded in their individual case file, it is not possible to confirm if Child, Youth and Family have ever funded the alternative medicine treatment known as Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). In order to provide you with this information Ministry staff would have to manually review thousands of files. As such I refuse your request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public interest is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I can confirm however that a search of Ministry records failed to identify any direct payments made to the Emotional Freedom Technique Therapist, Liz Hart (under that supplier trading name), who you referred to in your article.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response regarding alternative medicine treatments by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

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

Yours sincerely



Viv Rickard
**Deputy Chief Executive
Child, Youth and Family
Ministry of Social Development**