



Police Reference: **13/5521/1**

21 November 2013

Ms Leah Trass
PR Positive Answers Needing in Crisis
fyi-request-1222-274a0a6b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Trass

I refer to your Official Information Act request of 16 October 2013 via email, seeking the following information:

- 1) *What are the guidelines police follow when dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of children?*
- 2) *When children have made allegations of sexual abuse but remain with possible offender and then change their statement, what are the procedures in place to ensure the child has not been pressured or threatened to ensure that change?*

Following assignment of this request to the National Criminal Investigations Group, I can provide you with the following information in answer to your questions:

Request 1

The New Zealand Police investigate any allegation of sexual abuse involving children jointly with Child, Youth and Family under the Child Protection Protocol (CPP) and in line with the Police's Child Protection Investigation Policy and Procedures.

The Child Protection Protocol ensures timely, coordinated and effective action by Child, Youth and Family and the New Zealand Police so that children are kept safe, perpetrators are held accountable where possible and child victimisation is reduced.

In the same manner the Child Protection Investigation Policy and Procedures clearly sets out policies and procedures designed to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community receive timely, coordinated and effective action by Police in response to any allegation made. Again child safety is a primary focus.

Request 2

When a report of concern is received, the safety and well being of the child is the first and paramount consideration. Police cannot achieve this on its own, or in isolation from other partner agencies. An interagency approach is necessary to ensure the child's protection, enhance the accountability of the offender, and to enhance the child's partial or full reintegration into the family where appropriate.

In cases where an allegation of sexual abuse is made, an initial joint investigation plan will occur between Police and Child, Youth and Family. A key consideration of this plan is the child's safety. Where a family member was identified, no child would be left within the care of that person during the investigation. If the child was to later recant their statement for any reason, extensive interagency work would still occur to ensure the child's safety was ensured, prior to any partial or full reintegration into the family occurring. Where a recant of an allegation occurs, Police will still complete the investigation and speak to all witnesses, including the alleged suspect involved.

You have the right to request the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with the way in which I have responded to your request.

Yours sincerely



RT Drew
Detective Superintendent
National Crime Manager