

18 May 2020

Ms Victoria Anne  
[fyi-request-12690-bc17c619@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-12690-bc17c619@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Ms Anne

Thank you for your email of 23 April 2020 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *How many children involved have been involved in child exploitation and prostitution (under 18) in NZ and what are the ages, gender and areas, for between the years 2010 and 2020.*
- *What is Oranga Tamariki's response and action plan when a child comes into their care who has been in child exploitation/ prostitution?*
- *What is the main reason children are in the situation of sexual exploitation and prostitution?*
- *How many referrals to Oranga Tamariki from NZ police of child exploitation/prostitution from 2010 - 2020 for children they have been involved with*

Every situation Oranga Tamariki responds to is unique. There are a range of reasons for a child or young person to come to our attention and a range of different responses we can provide. Under section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, any person who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed, ill-treated, abused, (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), neglected or deprived, or who has concerns about the well-being of a child or young person, may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police. These are referred to as reports of concern (ROCs) by Oranga Tamariki.

Once a ROC has been received, we undertake inquiries to determine the situation for the child. This includes investigating and assessing the concerns, often in conjunction with Police, and determining whether there are ways we can support the family to safely care for the child. At every point, the safety and wellbeing of the child is our foremost concern. Once we have assessed the concerns and circumstances of the child and their

family, we decide whether further action may be required. This could involve working with the family to provide them with support and assistance, through to taking action to ensure the safety of the child.

Oranga Tamariki does not hold information on how many children have been involved in child exploitation and prostitution in New Zealand or on what the main reason is for children to be in a situation of sexual exploitation and prostitution. To assist with our response to you, we consulted with Police on these parts of your request. In our consultation, Police advised that while it holds victimisation statistics for sexual assault, these statistics do not identify if children were involved in child exploitation or prostitution. Police do not hold information on the main reason children are in situations of child exploitation and/or prostitution. Accordingly, these parts of your request are refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by us and I have no grounds to believe that it is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. Please note that Police victimisation statistics are publicly available and can be found via the following link:

<https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publications-statistics/data-and-statistics/policedatanz>

Oranga Tamariki has developed a set of practice standards that describe at a high level the core domains of how we work with children and their families, as well as providing a benchmark for our practitioners. The emphasis of the practice standards is child and family centred, trauma informed and culturally responsive practice. While Oranga Tamariki does not have a specific response or action plan for when a child has experienced child exploitation or prostitution, our social workers are trained to recognise and understand the impact trauma can have on a child's current and future wellbeing. Part of our practice framework includes trauma informed practice and theory, which assists our staff in situations where a child or young person has experienced a challenging event. A trauma informed approach recognises the importance of relationships and works to highlight cultural connection and a sense of belonging, stability and appropriate support. It also recognises and seeks to mitigate potential harm caused by intervention into the child and their family's life, while facilitating access to resources to support recovery and wellbeing. Further information about our trauma informed practice and theory can be found on the Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre website via the links below:

<https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/practice-standards/practice-framework-knowledge-and-evidence-base/trauma-informed-practice/>

<https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/practice-standards/about-our-practice-framework/trauma-informed-theory/>

When working with children and their families, including if a child comes into care, we assess their needs using our Tuituia assessment framework. This assists us to understand their needs and create a plan to provide the appropriate support and assistance to the child and their family. The Tuituia subdomain of 'Health' takes into consideration the psychological, emotional and physical effects of trauma, as well as physical and mental health. Any needs that presented as a result of exploitation or

prostitution would be supported, possibly through specialist services, and any plan developed would be regularly reviewed to ensure any needs are being addressed. More information on the 'Heath' subdomain of the Tuituia assessment can be found here:

<https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/practice-tools/the-tuituia-framework-and-tools/the-tuituia-framework-and-domains/health-tuituia-domain/>

Lastly, you have asked how many referrals Oranga Tamariki has received from Police regarding child exploitation and/or prostitution, from 2010-2020. Between 2009/10 and 2018/19, Oranga Tamariki received, on average, 20,000 ROCs each year from Police. This does not include family violence ROCs from Police, which are recorded separately. In order to determine how many of these Police ROCs involved child exploitation or prostitution, we would need to review, in detail, thousands of individual files. As such, I am refusing this part of your request under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation and research. I have considered whether extending the timeframe for response or imposing a charge would allow us to respond to your request; however, I have concluded that, in either case, our ability to undertake our work would still be prejudiced.

Oranga Tamariki intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. We will do this by publishing this letter on our website. Your personal details will be deleted and we will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@ot.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. Information about this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Steve Groom  
**General Manager Public, Ministerial and Executive Services**