

27 May 2024

Letty Smith
fyi-request-26xxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.xxx.xxx.nz

Our ref: OIA 111412

Tēnā koe Letty

Official Information Act request: Youth Justice

Thank your email of 13 April 2024 to the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information about youth justice. Specifically, you requested:

I have recently seen that you are recruiting for a senior policy role. I was curious to see the name changes of the teams involved in that area, in particular the change from victims policy team to victims and youth justice team. Given this, I would like to know:

- *when did this name change occur?*
- *when was it decided that Ministry of Justice would have responsibility for youth justice?*
- *what communications occurred with the Oranga Tamariki, Corrections and / or Public Services Commission in relation to this change?*
- *why are you recruiting into this area when there are still restructures (and associated redundancies) happening in other justice sector agencies, in particular those with responsibility for youth justice?*
- *why is the closing date for this advertised position so early in light of those restructures and redundancies?*
- *why was consideration not given to lifting and shifting staff from other justice sector agencies with responsibility for youth justice as opposed to open recruitment?*

In response to your questions, I can confirm that Oranga Tamariki continues to administer the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. The Ministry has always had a role in youth justice policy. It is the lead agency for the Justice sector, it provides administrative support to the Youth Court and the Family Court and their respective judges, and there are significant overlaps between the youth and adult criminal justice systems. For example, a young person who commits a serious crime may be tried and/or sentenced in either the District or High Courts.

The Ministry therefore commits resources to youth justice policy. This includes engaging with agencies who lead or have an interest in this work, such as Oranga Tamariki and the Police.

Regarding your specific question about communications between agencies, as there has been no change in administration of the Oranga Tamariki Act or the work of the various agencies, there have therefore been no communications between the Ministry and Oranga Tamariki, the Department of Corrections and the Police. I am therefore refusing this question and the rest of your request under section 18(e) of the Act as the information sought does not exist.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: justice.govt.nz/about/official-information-act-requests/oia-responses/.

If you are not satisfied with this decision, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act. The Office of the Ombudsman may be contacted on 0800 802 602 or at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'LH', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lison Harris

Acting General Manager, Criminal Justice Policy Unit