



12 AUG 2015

Mr Alan Corbett  
[fyi-request-2840-4de312a4@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-2840-4de312a4@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Mr Corbett

On 12 June 2015 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the number of children who have been confirmed as suffering physical abuse in the seven years prior to and since the 2007 amendment to the Crimes Act.

The Ministry of Social Development works hard with communities, partner agencies and Non-Government Organisations to create community environments where abuse and neglect of children and young people is not tolerated. Child, Youth and Family always works with the best interests of the child or young person in mind and is guided by the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989.

As part of the Children's Action Plan, the Ministry is currently developing tools to enhance information sharing between public sector agencies such as the Ministry of Social Development, Housing New Zealand, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Police.

Furthermore, the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 introduced compulsory child abuse policies for agencies working with children. The Act changed the law so that all agencies working with children must have policies covering how to recognise and report suspected child abuse and neglect. This is supported by a code of practice that makes it clear that everyone working with children has a responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Once a report of concern is received, Child, Youth and Family will determine whether further action is required. Not all reports of concern received by Child, Youth and Family will result in further action as it may become evident early in the process that there are no issues warranting further assessment. Cases requiring no further action by Child, Youth and Family may lead to referrals for other avenues of advice and support being made available to the family, including partnered responses with other organisations.

When further action is required, cases will be referred for either a Child and Family assessment or an investigation for situations including serious physical abuse, sexual abuse, serious neglect or cases in which a child or young person witness's serious family violence, thus warranting an investigation.

Further information regarding notifications and relevant policies can also be found on the Child, Youth and Family Practice Centre website at: [www.practicecentre.cvf.govt.nz](http://www.practicecentre.cvf.govt.nz)

Please find enclosed a table showing the number of investigation assessment findings of physical abuse for the 2004/2005 to 2013/14 financial years. Please note that as this a count of investigation findings, there may be more than one investigation finding for one

child within a period. I am unable to provide the number of substantiated abuse findings prior to 2004/2005 as this is not part of the Ministry's standard reporting, and as such, does not exist.

More information regarding care and protection reports of concern requiring further action and substantiated abuse findings is available on the Child, Youth and Family website at <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/about-us/key-statistics/care-and-protection-reports-of-concern-requiring-further-action-and-substantiated-abuse.html>.

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



Bernadine Mackenzie  
**Deputy Chief Executive, Child, Youth and Family**

Table One: The number of substantiated physical abuse findings for the 2004 to 2014 financial years.

Financial Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Substantiated physical abuse	1,864	2,351	2,336	2,274	2,321	2,855	2,886	3,253	3,330	3,343	3,305