



Ref 16 9465

30 October 2016

Mr Ross Francis

By email: fyi-request-4722-6c52fe7c@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Francis

Official Information Act 1982 request

I refer to your Official Information Act 1982 request dated 9 October 2016 in which you requested:

1. *How has the interviewing of child witnesses changed from 1992 to today?*
2. *Is the information obtained from child witnesses today more or less accurate than information obtained from child witness in the early 1990's*
3. *Are interviewers of children required to avoid asking yes/no questions?*
4. *What is the best way to obtain the most accurate information from children?*
5. *Please give examples of the sorts of questions that a typical child interview would contain.*

One of the purposes of the Official information Act 1982 is to provide for the availability of official information/documentation. Aspects of your request go further than this, and seek answers to questions that would require research and opinion.

1. *How has the interviewing of child witnesses changed from 1992 to today?*

The Specialist Child Witness Interview (SCWI) takes places as part of the investigation and assessment process. The SCWI is a tool to help Child Youth and Family and Police to establish if the child is in need of care and protection, and/or, this is information that a criminal offence has been committed. SCWI are a transparent method of interviewing and therefore have the greatest level of accountability. New Zealand child interviewing is based on the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) protocols.

Attached is the current 'Specialist Child Witness Interview Guide' last published on 11 May 2016 (updated in 2012). The document details policy and guidelines relating to specialist child witness interviews (SCWI) agreed jointly by Child, Youth and Family and the New Zealand Police. The policy and guidelines ensure SCWI are conducted and recorded in accordance with the Evidence At 2006 and the Evidence Regulations and the that best practice is maintained.

Attached is previous policy, entitled - 'Video Recorded forensic interviews with at-risk children and young people'. This has been replaced by the 'Specialist Child Witness Interview Guide'.

2. *Is the information obtained from child witnesses today more or less accurate than information obtained from child witness in the early 1990's?*

The information does not exist within Police records and your request is refused pursuant to section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982.

3. Are interviewers of children required to avoid asking yes/no questions?

Attached is current reference material '5.5 Question types' that provides guidance to SCWI interviewers on question types and examples.

Appendix 1 of previous policy ie 'Video recorded forensic interviews with at-risk children and young people' details 'Questioning terminology'.

4. What is the best way to obtain the most accurate information from children?

The information does not exist within Police records and your request is refused pursuant to section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982.

5. Please give examples of the sorts of questions that a typical child interview would contain.

Attached is reference material '5.5 Question types' that provides guidance to SCWI interviewers on question types and examples.

Appendix 1 of previous policy ie 'Video recorded forensic interviews with at-risk children and young people' details 'Questioning terminology'.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Official Information At 1982, to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with the way I have responded to you request.

Yours sincerely



Craig Scott
Detective Inspector
Manager Investigation Support
POLICE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Attached:

- Specialist Child Witness Interview Guide
- Video recorded forensic interviews with at-risk children and young people
- 5.5 Question types