



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

- 8 FEB 2017

Ms Joanna MacLennan
fyi-request-5006-3c40746b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms MacLennan

On 24 November 2016 you emailed the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about the registration of social workers with the Social Workers Registration Board.

For clarity each of your questions have been addressed in turn.

- *How many current practising social workers at Child Youth and Family Services are registered with the Social Workers Registration Board?*

As at 31 October 2016, 1,376 social workers were working for Child, Youth and Family in the front line. Of these social workers, 1,059 were registered with the Social Workers Registration Board. Of the registered social workers, 1,039 were Field Social Worker Line social workers and 20 were Residential and High Needs Services social workers.

Of the total number of social workers working in the front line for Child, Youth and Family, 298 Field Social Worker Line social workers and 19 Residential and High Needs Services social workers are identified as not being registered with the Social Workers Registration Board.

- *When a social worker is not registered, are they are restricted?*

The Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (SWR Act) established a voluntary system of registration. The legislation protects the title 'Registered Social Worker'. This means that unregistered social workers will still be able to call themselves a social worker, but will not be able to call themselves a "Registered Social Worker".

The SWR Act does not make registration compulsory for all social workers, and it is not uncommon for Registered Social Workers to work alongside unregistered social workers within Child, Youth and Family. This anomaly has driven much of the lobbying from the social service sector and the Social Workers Registration Board to amend the SWR Act to make registration mandatory.

In December 2016 the Minister for Social Development, Hon Anne Tolley referred a paper to the Social Services Committee to consider options for addressing recommendations for making registration mandatory for social workers, which the committee endorsed. Other recommendations included-

- That it permit only registered social workers to use the title 'social worker'.
- A transitional period for phasing out social work registration on the basis of practical experience.
- Broader options for the board to manage complaints about social workers.

Child, Youth and Family has a registration policy which is directed at achieving 100 percent registration of all Child, Youth and Family frontline social workers (basic graders, senior practitioners and supervisors) As at October 2016, 77 percent of Child, Youth and Family frontline social workers were registered.

Note that there are some roles within Child, Youth and Family where being a Registered Social Worker is a requirement of the role; these include Practice Leader, Regional Care and Protection or Youth Justice Practice Advisor and certain positions in the Office of the Chief Social Worker.

Further information can be found online at:

www.parliament.nz/resource/enNZ/51DBSCH_SCR71955_1/170b828c8c569c2b9b33e5dc08749ee79df34450

Further information about the Social Workers Registration Board can be found online at: www.swrb.govt.nz

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry 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@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Murray Edridge

Deputy Chief Executive, Child, Youth and Family.