

09 AUG 2018

Ms Dorothy Taare-Smith  
[fyi-request-8275-048e6eba@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-8275-048e6eba@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Taare-Smith

Thank you for your e-mail of 8 July 2018 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *How many children/young people are currently in Oranga Tamariki care with a diagnosed intellectual disability?*
- *What training and support is currently being offered to caregivers to manage and support a child with complex behavioural, communication and/or sensory issues?*
- *If offered by Oranga Tamariki, how often does the caregiver receive training to support children with an intellectual disability?*

I will address the matters you raised separately.

- *How many children/young people are currently in Oranga Tamariki care with a diagnosed intellectual disability?*

A number of children and young people in care have very high and complex needs that may or may not also be aligned with a formal diagnosis, this includes children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and no assessed Intellectual Disability, other neuro-developmental disorder such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and other significant and chronic or acute mental health issue.

This information is captured in individual children's files. I refuse this part of your request pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act as the information cannot be made available without substantial manual collation or research. To collate this information would require our staff to manually review thousands of case files and determine if a child has an intellectual disability. We estimate that this could take more than 4,000 hours of staff time. I do not consider that fixing a charge or extending the time limit under sections 15 and 15A of the Act would enable the request to be granted.

- *What training and support is currently being offered to caregivers that manage and support a child with complex behavioural, communication and/or sensory issues?*

Oranga Tamariki will ensure caregivers have access to the relevant specialised professionals/providers available through universal services who are able to offer the

required training and support as outlined under Section 141 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

If a child has a formal diagnosis of a disability they and their caregivers have access to Disability Support Services (DSS) through the Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) services of the Ministry of Health. More information about the NASC can be found here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/getting-support-disability/needs-assessment-and-service-coordination-services>

Oranga Tamariki ensures that the caregivers and child are supported to access all entitled services. Oranga Tamariki will check that a referral has been made for a needs assessment with the NASC, which is the first port of call.

This may include requesting a referral through to EXPLORE behavioural support services (a national service contracted by the Ministry of Health and accessed through NASC provision). More information about the behavioural support services can be found here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/types-disability-support/behaviour-support-services>

If a child has complex behavioural, communication and/or behavioural issues NOT associated with a formal diagnosis (and therefore not entitled to DSS through the NASC, or the DSS provision through the NASC is not considered sufficient to support a child's additional complexities), a more individualised approach will need to be applied.

This could include contracting in behavioural supports through relevant Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) or individual professionals including Psychologists, Counsellors, or Occupational Therapists. More information whether a child meets requirements for disability support can be found here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/getting-support-disability/am-i-eligible-ministry-funded-support-services>

If a child has high and complex needs that cannot be met by universal services, consideration will always be given for referral through to the High and Complex Needs Unit for increased co-ordination and service development.

As part of the care plan for each child, other respite arrangements and/or additional in home support for caregivers may be arranged if they are not entitled to these services through DSS provisions via the NASC. Each plan is different and can vary according to a child's needs.

After a referral has been made, NASC will report back to Oranga Tamariki about this.

- *If offered by Oranga Tamariki, how often does the caregiver receive training to support children with an intellectual disability?*

Oranga Tamariki provides training for all caregivers through care teams. Additional training is available through the National Caregiver Training Programme. If specialised training is required for individual children they will access this resource either through the Ministry of Health provisions/NGO services, or via an individualised support package as detailed above. You can find more information about workshop schedules and resources in this link:

<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/caring-for-someone/support-and-training/caregiver-resources/>

Oranga Tamariki is putting better support mechanisms in place for existing caregivers and is part of the work we are doing to prepare for future recruitment drives nationally and regionally. We are:

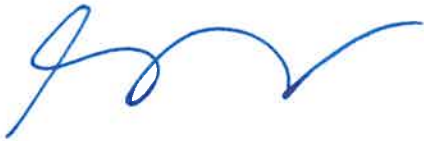
- Reviewing our current caregiver induction programme to ensure our caregivers are getting everything they need to provide a safe and loving home;
- Increasing caregiver access to specialised training and resources including our new nationwide 24/7 support line and targeted support for those with higher needs children and young people;
- On 14 May 2018, our 24/7 dedicated support line for caregivers was opened up to all caregivers nationwide following a successful trial period. The phone line connects caregivers to a team of social workers who can provide immediate guidance and advice, around the clock. Feedback from caregivers has been very positive. For example, one told us the service has been a lifeline and instrumental in getting fast social work follow-up. Another said they appreciated the call back by staff and their frontline social worker followed up straight away to put extra support in place;
- Providing 300 caregiver families with access to evidence-informed programmes to help them manage difficult behaviours in the children they care for; and
- Exploring new support options such as local peer support networks, building stronger partnerships with iwi and professionals, and facilitating better access to specialist advice. Caregivers, service providers and frontline staff in Auckland, Palmerston North and Porirua are currently co-designing pilots.

We intend to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. We will do this by publishing this letter on the Oranga Tamariki 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.

Yours sincerely



Steve Groom

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