



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

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09 MAY 2014

Ms Bronwyn Drysdale
fyi-request-1539-bd17a384@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Drysdale

Thank you for your email of 14 March 2014 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *The number/names and locations of supervised/supportive accommodation providers for vulnerable pregnant women/ or mothers that have infants, who have an agreement with CYFS to provide this service where children are under CYFS care and protection.*
- *What is the proportion of women who come through these services per year over the last five years, on a yearly basis per region?*
- *What is the actual rate of babies that are uplifted from their mothers within the first 60 days of life, due to vulnerable circumstances?*
- *What proportion of these women who are identified as pregnant (or a new mother to a vulnerable infant) is housed in such a facility with their infant, compared to those that have their child removed from their care?*

Child, Youth and Family does not provide supported accommodation services to vulnerable pregnant women, however the support that is available to vulnerable teen parents is outlined further below.

Support for Teen Parents

The Ministry works with families and people in the community to protect children and young people and keep them safe from harm. In every case, the Ministry is focussed on ensuring the immediate safety of the child or young person. At every step the child or young person's safety is paramount and decisions are made in the best interests of the child or young person.

Wherever possible, the Ministry will support a mother to successfully parent her newborn in the family home. From time-to-time it may be appropriate to bring together family/whānau and support services to assist the mother in the community, alongside health practitioners. In a small number of cases the needs of the mother and baby may require them to be referred to specialised supported accommodation through community providers or the health system. These services are accessed on an individual basis.

Teen parents often require additional support. As part of the Budget 2010 decision, the Government directed \$6.2 million towards the Supported Housing for Vulnerable Teen Parents initiative. The initiative addresses the needs of the most vulnerable teen parents and their children by providing specialist supported housing. It aims to help vulnerable teen parents adjust to parenting and develop skills for independent living.

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Under the initiative, Child, Youth and Family provides funding to approved social service providers around New Zealand for up to seven supported houses in high need communities to provide 24 hours a day, seven days a week social support to vulnerable teen parents. These providers work with expectant mothers, as well as mothers with babies and toddlers, to provide services such as an assessment of the mother's ability to care for a baby and concerns for an expectant mother's health that could involve establishing an alcohol and drug-free environment.

This initiative aims to:

- improve the safety and stability of housing for teen parents
- support attachment and bonding between teen parents and their babies
- promote good health, education and social outcomes
- reduce the likelihood of future unplanned teen pregnancies
- enhance life skills and parenting skills for teen parents
- reduce the likelihood of children being placed in Child, Youth and Family care
- support teen parents to successfully transition from supported accommodation to independent living.

Supported Houses

All of the supported houses provide services to expectant mothers and their children and, in some cases, partners. All the providers have a capacity to house up to five teen mothers at any one time, except for Te Whare Karamu in Hastings which has a bed capacity of four. Occasionally, a mother may return for a subsequent visit. The occupancy figures listed below for each provider is the number of mothers, partners and children they have housed up until 30 June 2013.

- Maia House in Whangarei was opened in March 2011 and has housed 15 mothers and 17 children - the average length of stay is 13 weeks.
- Youth Horizons Trust in Auckland was opened on 15 January 2011 and has housed 25 mothers and 23 children - the average length of stay is 14.5 weeks.
- Te Whare O Taonga in Manukau was opened on 17 January 2011 and has housed 23 mothers, 16 children and three partners - the average length of stay was 12 weeks.
- Te Whare Kaupapa Awhina in Rotorua was opened on 7 February 2011 and has housed 17 mothers and 21 children - the average length of stay was 18 weeks.
- Te Aka Ora House in Gisborne was opened on 30 May 2011 and has housed 14 mothers, 15 children and six partners - the average length of stay was 10 weeks.
- Te Whare Karamu in Hastings was opened on 28 March 2011 and has housed 18 mothers and 20 children - the average length of stay was 18 weeks.
- Holly House in Christchurch was opened on 15 December 2010 and has housed 26 mothers and 26 children - the average length of stay was nine and a half weeks.

Teen parents receive parenting, budgeting, life skills and assistance with making plans for their future in education or work - support is extended to partners, either through staying in the house where possible, or through involvement in the programmes.

The mothers who stay at these houses will often present with a wide range of complex issues. Many have a history of involvement with Child, Youth and Family and/or the Courts, and an absence of family/whānau support. Comprehensive parenting assessments may be needed to determine their child's on-going safety.

These providers deliver and have access to a wide range of parenting and life-skills services and programmes to address the needs of children and teen parents identified in individual assessments. All have a strong link with WellChild providers and with other social service agencies. Many of the mothers attend teen parent schools. Intensive Case Workers (where contracted) or other supports delivered by the provider are used to ensure on-going support and continuity of care post exit.

Care and Protection Intervention

There may be times when Child, Youth and Family will have care and protection concerns before a child's birth. Where there are serious concerns about the safety of an unborn child, the Court will grant orders to place them out of their parent's care after their birth. This occurs in very serious situations, where it is determined that there are no other options for ensuring a child's safety.

No child is removed from their parents' care unless there are serious concerns for their safety. Parents may have a history of issues relating to serious family violence, chronic mental health concerns, addictions, previous physical abuse of older children or previous neglect – supervisory or medical. In some circumstances, older children may already be permanently out of their parent's care.

Please find attached a table that shows the number of babies removed from their mother's care within 60 days of birth, broken down by financial year and region.

Assistance through Work and Income

In addition to funded services provided by Child, Youth and Family and partner providers, Work and Income may provide financial assistance to pregnant women during and after their pregnancy. Depending on an individual's circumstances, a pregnant woman may be eligible to receive a benefit payment such as the Accommodation Supplement or a Supported Living Allowance. Work and Income will work with clients to ensure they are aware of other services that are available to help during and after their pregnancy.

Work and Income also administers the Childcare Subsidy and Out of School Care and Recreational Subsidy, which provide financial support for childcare, based on a person's income and the number of children they have. More general information about this is available at: www.workandincome.govt.nz.

I hope you find this information regarding supported accommodation for pregnant women and babies removed from their mothers 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernadine Mackenzie', written in a cursive style.

Bernadine Mackenzie
Deputy Chief Executive, Child, Youth and Family

Total number of infants taken into care within 60 days of birth, broken down by financial year, and region:

Financial Year	Auckland and Te Tai Tokerau Regions	Midlands Region	Central Region	Southern Region	Total
2009	56	27	47	56	186
2010	70	32	53	58	213
2011	56	36	31	66	189
2012	59	28	38	65	190
2013	57	45	41	43	186

Note:

For all tables provided, the Auckland and Te Tai Tokerau regions have been combined to protect the privacy of individuals.

Due to the small number of children it is not possible to draw any trends from the information.