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Tēnā koe Rodney

Thank you for your email, received on 29 October 2024, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting information on governance systems. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

You have requested:

- *Standards that Oranga Tamariki assesses against in terms of governance of its services, such as quality. In particular, how are the consumer/child-facing aspects of OT assessed and against what standards.*
- *What systems and processes are in place to build capacity in the consumer-facing workforce, and what credentialing systems are in place to ensure that consumer-facing capability meets professional and regulatory standards?*
- *Outline what proportion of roles that require a social worker, are currently filled by a social worker. Outline the process for establishing whether workers have suitable capabilities to fill a role that would otherwise require a registered social worker.*
- *Outline the process to develop and implement training for social workers to undertake court-based work. Provide advice on any training program to upskill a proportion of social workers in court-based work, such as training in law.*
- *Outline the risk and incident management systems that OT has in place, and what industry standards these are based on.*
- *Provide any reviews that assessed the balance of registered social workers or other clinicians within the organisation and any risk assessments undertaken to address an imbalance between people who have little or no health /social experience with those who do.*

I have addressed each of your following questions below:

- *Standards that Oranga Tamariki assesses against in terms of governance of its services, such as quality. In particular, how are the consumer/child-facing aspects of OT assessed and against what standards.*

Oranga Tamariki has a system of self-monitoring designed to support our understanding of the extent to which key standards of practice are being met. These

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include the Oranga Tamariki Practice Standards which can be found [here](#), which set out the foundational expectations for frontline practice with children, young people, and their families and whānau, and core regulations that underpin Oranga Tamariki such as the National Care Standards (and Related Matters) Regulations 2018 (the Care Standards) found [here](#). These standards enable Oranga Tamariki to lift the quality of care for tamariki and rangatahi and offer better support to our caregivers.

We also monitor our Care and Protection and Youth Justice residences' compliance with the Residential Care Regulations (1996). These visits are conducted annually.

To provide a comprehensive view of practice, our self-monitoring draws on a range of sources of data, information, and insight. These include:

- structured data from Oranga Tamariki case management systems, which provides information at the population level for all children and helps us understand with respect to particular requirements whether practice expectations were met (e.g., whether all children in care have an assessment of their needs, and a plan in place to address those needs)
- insights generated from manual reviews of practice in a sample of cases, which provide a richer and deeper picture of the quality of practice and helps us understand the experience of those receiving Oranga Tamariki support and whether practice met their needs and expectations.

Oranga Tamariki has developed a new performance system, Hine Wawata, that includes an outcomes framework designed with care experienced youth. The system is set out in the Oranga Tamariki Strategic Intentions 2024/25-2029/30 which can be found [here](#). Hine Wawata sets out the outcomes Oranga Tamariki needs to meet to ensure the safety of children, young people and their families. It identifies the key performance areas – and shows the strategic shifts being progressed to improve these performance areas.

Oranga Tamariki reports publicly on our performance in delivering services and support to children, young people, and their families and whānau, via the Oranga Tamariki Annual Report [here](#). We also provide quarterly updates on our progress against key measures within a year through quarterly performance reports. This year, our Annual Report includes the 'Report on Compliance with the National Care Standards Regulations' for 2023/24. This specifically assesses our practice with children in care.

Oranga Tamariki services are also reviewed on an ongoing basis by a range of external monitors, including:

- Mana Mokopuna | Children and Young People's Commission listens to the voices of tamariki and rangatahi, and their whānau, in monitoring the system. This includes checking if the needs of tamariki and rangatahi are being met, services are being delivered effectively, and outcomes improved. More information about the role of Mana Mokopuna in the oversight system is available [here](#).
- Aroturuki Tamariki | Independent Children's Monitor (the Monitor) advocates for the interests, rights and wellbeing of all mokopuna (children and young people), including those in the Oranga Tamariki system and where needed, helps mokopuna and their whānau navigate the system to resolve problems. More information about the role of the Monitor in the oversight system is available [here](#).

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- Tari o te Kaitiaki Mana Tangata | Office of the Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) looks at complaints about the acts and decisions of central and local government agencies, and Oranga Tamariki's care or custody providers. More information about the Ombudsman's role in the oversight system is available [here](#).
- *What systems and processes are in place to build capacity in the consumer-facing workforce, and what credentialing systems are in place to ensure that consumer-facing capability meets professional and regulatory standards?*

In 2023 Oranga Tamariki undertook a trial of a new role, Allied Support Worker, to assess if this would assist social work staff. The role was designed to undertake tasks that were deemed not to require a registered social worker. For example, Allied Support Workers involved in the trial completed activities such as transporting children and young people to appointments and supporting the organising of Family Group Conferences. The trial was successful. Many of the Allied Support Workers were people who were in the final stages of completing their social work qualifications and were able to work as Allied Support Workers until they achieved registration.

- *Outline what proportion of roles that require a social worker, are currently filled by a social worker. Outline the process for establishing whether workers have suitable capabilities to fill a role that would otherwise require a registered social worker.*

It is mandatory for Social Workers to be registered. Oranga Tamariki only employs registered Social Workers to work in Care and Protection, Care, or Youth Justice Social Worker roles. This requirement is specified in the position description.

In some cases, employees who have just recently completed a social work qualification will be provisionally registered. They are required to complete 2,000 hours of supervised practice to gain full registration. To find out more about how the registration process works you can read more on the Social Work Registration Board's website at Social Workers Registration that can be found [here](#).

There are other roles within Oranga Tamariki that work directly with children, young people and families that do not require a social work qualification or registration, for example Family Group Conference Coordinators, and Youth Workers.

- *Outline the process to develop and implement training for social workers to undertake court-based work, such as training in law.*

All professional learning development for practicing staff is the responsibility of the Chief Social Worker / Professional Practice Group. We have an internal professional development team whose role is to design and deliver learning and development content and programmes. Generally the content for these programmes will draw from existing practice content that has been signed off by the Chief Social Worker. Subject Matter Experts (such as lawyers, experienced practitioners and experts in particular areas of practice such as disability) both contribute directly to the development of learning and professional development material and its delivery.

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New social work kaimahi take part in the Puāwai professional development programme. This programme has components that cover the requirements of legal and court related work. For example, week three covers the importance of statutory social work, and the purposes and principles; week six case recording in a statutory environment; and week fourteen, which is role specific learning, is dedicated to court and legal learning.

Additional learning electives, for example with a focus on practice around Family Group Conferences, Privacy and Information sharing and wider aspects of the legislation within which we work are already available within our internal learning system myLearn or under development as we continue to grow our professional development offer for all social work staff. Regional and residence learning facilitators play a role in supporting an understanding of local learning needs and the delivery of additional professional development which happens within sites, teams and regions. .

We are also in the process of a national roll out to support all practice staff to complete a series of site based 'learning cycles' which are introducing the organisation's practice approach and its core practice framework, models and tools. This includes a focus on understanding our core statutory obligations.

In addition to formal learning and professional development, social workers and other staff are able to access practice policy and guidance on line within our Practice Centre. This includes specific information about court processes, the legislation and how it is to be applied in a range of contexts. These policies are regularly reviewed and key messages are proactively promoted through regular communications channels with our staff.

All Social Workers also have access to and are supported by our Legal Services Team when they are required to participate in Family or Youth Court related work.

Oranga Tamariki Social Workers are required to participate in frequent supervision. This is an opportunity for experienced Supervisors to help staff enhance their knowledge and skills across all areas of their practice including legal and court related work. Each site also has a practice leader who supports in the provision of assurance and advice on complex case related matters. Specialist practice support on a case by case basis is also available through the office of the Chief Social Worker.

Social Workers also participate in peer supervision and have the opportunity to learn and develop from the experience of their peers.

- *Provide any reviews that assessed the balance of registered social workers or other clinicians within the organisation and any risk assessments undertaken to address an imbalance between people who have little or no health /social experience with those who do.*

Successive reviews (such as the Rapid Review into residences and group homes, Dame Karen Poutasi review and Te Kahu Aroha) have reflected clear insights about the needs of the professional workforce within Oranga Tamariki and across the social work sector more generally to have a stronger focus on capability uplift and effective

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professional development and ongoing learning commensurate with roles and experience.

However, we have not identified any reviews that specifically assessed the balance of registered social workers or any risk assessments undertaken to address an imbalance between people who have little or no health/social experience with those who do and as such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act as this information does not exist.

Oranga Tamariki has ongoing work underway to understand its current and future workforce requirements, including the role of social workers, other professionally qualified roles and support roles such as the allied support role described above.

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

I trust you find this information useful. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise them with Oranga Tamariki. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Nicolette Dickson

**Te Tumu Tauwhiro Chief Social Worker**  
**Deputy Chief Executive Professional Practice Group**