

6 October 2023

s9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email dated 5 July 2023 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting information relating to Youth Justice and Care and Protection Residences about staff training, qualifications, experience and suitability. You have also requested information about staff to young person ratios in Youth Justice and Care and Protection Residences and reviews conducted in relation to those residences.

As you will be aware, after being informed of two serious allegations involving staff and young people in residences, Oranga Tamariki Chief Executive Chappie Te Kani asked me to temporarily join Oranga Tamariki as Deputy Chief Executive Residences (Youth Justice and Care and Protection) and Community Homes. This role was established to provide assurance that tamariki, rangatahi and our kaimahi are safe and the community can have confidence that we are doing the job we need to be doing.

A small independent team was commissioned to undertake a rapid review of our residences and our Oranga Tamariki-run community homes. The report from the review, as well as our response, are available on our website [here](#).

The review makes it clear that changes within residences and associated group homes cannot be undertaken in isolation from the rest of our organisation. The prolonged isolation and lack of integration of residences and group homes within the organisation's wider purpose, strategy, operating model, and workforce is identified as a fundamental root cause of many of the challenges experienced in these environments. It recommends a fundamental reset of the role, vision and purpose of our residences and group homes and an integrated change programme.

One of the insights from the review is that there is a need to lift the level of leadership expertise (especially in first line leadership roles) within these environments through increased investment in induction, professional development, coaching and leadership development.

The review also further reinforces the findings of the Ministerial Advisory Board's Report, Te Kahu Aroha. From this report significant progress has been made on refining our whole of organisation strategy, vision and purpose. However, we recognise there is substantially more work to be done before our vision of a safe, supportive environment for our rangatahi is realised.

We acknowledge that there was a delay in the release of this OIA to ensure accurate and fulsome information could be provided to you. Please find our response to your request for information below.

Training

- 1. An OIA in May 2021 said OT “do not provide targeted training for social workers in YJ residences, but rather provide a range of induction and further training for all staff”. <https://fyi.org.nz/request/14935-training-manuals-and-induction-processes-for-social-workers> Pls advise if that is – still the case; or has changed in any respect, and what respect, since then. If it is still the case, then re the induction and training “for all staff”, does that mean for all OT staff? So that is NOT specific to CPR? or YJR?***

We do not have social worker roles based full time within our residences. Each child or young person has a social worker allocated to them from a site, but in residence they are supported on a day-to-day basis by various residential staff. Residential staff in roles such as case leader or team leader clinical practice may have a social work qualification and hold social work registration.

Youth Justice Residences and Care and Protection Residences are specialised services and have induction packages that are specifically designed to prepare staff to work in these environments.

Our induction training programme 'Te Waharoa' is mandatory for all new staff. Te Waharoa includes a buddy-based mentoring system and modules to support staff working in care settings. Foundation learning modules focus on:

- understanding the world of our young people,
- Māori models of wellbeing,
- child centred practice,
- the pathways young people travel through our system,
- trauma informed practice,
- models of addiction,
- attachment theory and brain development.

The modules give kaimahi a greater understanding of children and young people coming into residences. This programme has recently expanded from four weeks to six weeks. Please refer to **Appendix A – Te Waharoa Schedule** for an outline of the professional development pathway for the first six weeks for all new staff.

In addition to the expanded Te Waharoa induction programme, Youth Justice Residences have been focused on embedding two additional training programmes: Whakamana Tangata and Safe Tactical Approach and Response (STAR) training.

Whakamana Tangata

Since commencing with a pilot programme in 2019 at Te Maioha o Parekarangi Youth Justice Residence we have progressively introduced Whakamana Tangata into all Youth Justice Residences. Whakamana Tangata is a Māori informed approach for working with rangatahi in a relational and restorative way. It is based on five Māori values: Mana, Tapu, Mauri ora, Piringa and Ara Tikanga.

Whakamana Tangata aligns comfortably with Te Whare Tapa Whā, Te Toka Tū Moana, the Oranga Tamariki Māori Cultural Framework and Trauma Informed Practice. It also enacts the intent of Section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act (our practical commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi) within a residential setting.

Whakamana Tangata asks staff to create relationships of social connection and reconnection in the hope that rangatahi begin to practice a new way of relating and a new way of expressing and earning respect. The goal is that on leaving the Residence rangatahi will take these principles and skills into their whānau and communities, helping them as they navigate a future without offending.

STAR

Since our response in May 2021, we have ceased training in the Management of Actual or Potential Aggressions training (MAPA) programme in Youth Justice Residences. We have now introduced STAR across all Youth Justice Residences, which emphasises verbal de-escalation, trauma informed responses, and repairing relationships. Oranga Tamariki is currently deploying STAR 2.0, an enhanced version of STAR. All new Youth Justice Residential staff since August 2022 have received STAR 2.0 training (five days). There are plans in place to roll it out to existing staff to enhance the foundational training they received.

Care and Protection Residences

Within Care and Protection Residences, the Te Waharoa induction programme is built around the Oranga Tamariki Practice Standards, and the framework that is underpinned by four theories, one of which is trauma theory.

Foundation learning modules in Te Waharoa include:

- Ko Wai Au
- Paradigms
- Working for Oranga Tamariki
- Logging on
- Care and Protection Residential Services
- Introduction to Practice
- Practice Tohu, Practice Shift, and Practice Standards
- 3 Worlds Mode
- Multi Agency Approach
- Supervision-Kaimahi Ora

Safety Intervention

Staff are trained in Safety Interventions, an internationally recognised programme licenced to Oranga Tamariki by the Crisis Prevention Institute. The Safety Intervention programme is aligned to principles of trauma informed care and emphasises achieving safety using de-escalation strategies and the lowest level of intervention possible. Safety Intervention provides training for staff to meet and respond to the needs of young people in distress using verbal interventions, non-restrictive safety interventions, disengagement, and holding (restraint).

Alert Programme®

All staff within Care and Protection Residences have access to the trauma informed Alert Programme® online training, Alert Best Self, and as well as local Alert orientation training. The Alert Programme® provides staff with the necessary skills to manage self-regulation as well as use a range of tools and strategies to promote emotionally regulating activities with young people in our care.

Following the announcement of the Rapid Review Oranga Tamariki has added additional leadership with substantial social worker experience to have day to day oversights of the Residences and home. The review does however still note there is a need to lift the level of leadership expertise (especially in first line leadership roles) through increased investment in induction, professional development, coaching and leadership development.

2. *Pls detail what qualification/s if any, is a minimum (at CPR; at YJR) for:*

- ***Staff who have engagement with the young people***
- ***Managers who engage with the staff***

3. *Same as above but as to what is the minimum 'experience' required?*

Please see the information below setting out information on staff positions based full time in both Youth Justice and Care and Protection Residences. We note a number of roles such as nurses and clinical psychologists interact with young people at Care and Protections Residences and Youth Justice Residences, however they are not employed full time directly to these facilities.

Residential Youth Worker/Youth Worker

These staff have engagement with residents.

Residential Youth Worker/Youth Worker are required to have at a minimum, relevant experience and and/or qualifications in Sport and Recreation, Health, Youth Work, Social Work, Teaching, or other relevant tertiary qualification and a clean, current driver's licence. As well, previous work experience in child centred, social services or recreational centred industries or other relevant experience is required at a minimum.

Team Leader Operations

These staff interact with staff and young people in a residence on a day-to-day basis.

Team Leader Operations are required to have at a minimum, relevant experience and/or qualifications in Sport & Recreation, Health, Youth Work, Social Work, Teaching, or other relevant tertiary qualification and a clean current driver's licence. As well as proven experience in effectively coaching, mentoring, leading or managing people and experience at a team leader level in the operations and service delivery aspects of the social services sector within Oranga Tamariki or a comparable organisation.

Residence Manager

These are managers that engage with staff.

Residence Managers are required to have at a minimum, a relevant tertiary qualification (desirable) or other relevant experience will be considered alongside a clean, current driver's licence.

The minimum experience required for a Residence Manager is:

- Proven experience in leading and managing service delivery operations within a social work services or comparable organisation.
- Demonstrated competence and experience in knowledge, understanding and application of determinants and influences in youth offending and rehabilitation.
- Proven experience in business planning, financial management, resource allocation, performance monitoring processes, continuous improvement and risk management.
- Proven and successful people management experience.
- Demonstrated ability to work in collaborative peer and other stakeholder relationships.

4. Pls detail any and all mandatory training according to its title/ its duration and intensity (eg is it a 1-week full-time or 1-year/50 hour total course, etc)/ and the actual externally recognised qualification it results in or contributes to, if any (at CPR; at YJR); for:

- **Staff who have engagement with the residents**
- **Managers who engage with the staff**
- **Tusha Penny told RNZ July 4 the training was “a couple of weeks”. A NZ Herald report put it at 4-6 weeks . Pls clarify –**

Please refer to the answer to question 1.

In addition to training outlined in question 1, all staff who work directly with tamariki and rangatahi are required to complete the following:

- Safety Intervention training (two days annually) results in certification under licence from the Crisis Prevention Institute.
- First Aid (8 hours bi-annually) results in Unit Standards 6401 and 6402.

The training Tusha Penny was referring to in the RNZ interview 4 July was Te Waharoa which has been expanded to a six week full time programme.

5. Ditto as above for ongoing mandatory professional development – any required? what that looks like. –

In Youth Justice Residences, after the initial training, STAR includes seven modules to be delivered in the first year of employment.

In Care and Protection Residences, staff who work directly with tamariki and rangatahi are required to complete a two-day annual Safety Intervention training to maintain certification.

Although not mandatory, there is a suite of other training available to all staff in Residences for ongoing professional development. This area, training, induction and professional development, coaching and leadership development has been identified in the recent review as an area of focus for improvement.

6. ***Pls detail ANY and ALL changes in the above introduced as a result of the age of residents being raised recently to 18.***
7. ***Pls detail all and any training and/or changes in handling physical incidents eg fights, introduced as a result of older/larger youth coming into residences. If none have been, pls make that clear***

In Youth Justice Residences, both Whakamana Tangata and STAR were introduced as part of the response to raising the youth justice age to include 17-year-olds.

Suitability

8. ***Police vetting – pls confirm what mandatory vetting is undertaken. Pls note any additional vetting [eg Teacher Council] or referee checks, say, that are done on applicants or staff moving jobs***

Oranga Tamariki has a Background Checking policy and a Recruitment and Selection policy. Both policies outline the vetting requirements for different roles within our organisation. Specifically, the background checking policy covers requirements for employees and contractors, Children's Workers and Service Providers.

All employees, contractors and service providers require different levels of vetting depending on the role and service that they provide. Reference checks are required for new employees and contractors. For internal movements one reference check is required.

In relation to children's worker roles, a safety risk assessment is completed by the hiring manager to assess the risk the person would pose to the safety of children. The safety risk assessment is a comprehensive review of the required assessment and vetting activities that have been completed through the recruitment process. This includes:

- Identity confirmation, including sighting of two forms of applicable identification
- Review of CV, qualifications or academic records, and other relevant documentation relating to skills and experience
- Verification of appropriate professional registrations (if applicable)
- Interview
- Reference checks
- CYRAS check
- Alias checking Police vetting (NZ and Australia)
- INZ VisaView work eligibility verification
- Internal personnel records check/Serious Misconduct enquiry
- Other checks as may be required by specific roles or situations

Ratios

9. ***Pls detail the mandated residents to staff ratios at different times of day, per facility; and detail any /all change in that since older/larger residents came in***

There is no mandated ratio of staff to young person. Staff to young person ratios within Care and Protection, and Youth Justice Residences are determined by the needs of the young people and the operational needs of each residence.

In Youth Justice Residences there are a range of staff on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If there are any concerns about the safety of children and young people we may have a higher ratio of frontline staff to children and young people from time to time.

Reviews

9. Re No7 above, pls detail if there has been ANY review/s of how the training or changes introduced has been working out. And pls release a copy of any such review

There have been no reviews specific to the introduced training programmes, however as mentioned previously the Independent, External Rapid Review has highlighted this as an area for improvement.

We are refusing this part of your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

10. Tusha Penny said training was “being looked at”. Pls elaborate on what is being looked at, by who, with what aim, and the timeline.

The Independent External Rapid Review was released on 21 September 2023. This review was commissioned by myself as the Deputy Chief Executive Residences (Youth Justice and Care and Protection) and Community Homes. The scope of which was to undertake a high level current state assessment of residences of their operation, performance as well as suggesting change and improvement over multiple horizons.

The review has now been released and highlighted eight specific elements of the residential operating model where improvements are needed over the near term. These include;

- Leadership and governance
- Culture, behaviours, and values
- Rangatahi and tamariki experience
- Workforce management and people development
- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Systems and structure
- Partnerships
- Resources and assets

11. Ms Penny said there had been a “number of reviews done on residences in the past” referring to YJR. Pls release copies of the 3 most recent such reviews she was referring to, external and/or internal.

12. Ditto as 11 but for CPR

The most recent reports for are publicly available on the Mana Mokopuna Children & Young people’s Commission website [here](#).

In July 2021, the Ministerial Advisory Board was asked to review the provision of care in Oranga Tamariki Care and Protection and Youth Justice Residences. Further

information which is available on our website: [Residences Review | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the public. We will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on our 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.

I trust the information provided is useful. I encourage you to raise any concerns about the response with OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman by contacting them on 0800 802 602 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Nāku noa, nā



Mike Bush
Deputy Chief Executive
Residences (Youth Justice and Care and Protection) and Community Homes