

14 August 2026

s9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Thank you for your email, received on 6 August 2026, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting information on modelling and monitoring relating to numbers of Reports of Concern (RoCs) and social worker caseloads. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

I have responded to each part of your request below.

information on any modelling or advice Oranga Tamariki has produced about potential increases in reports of concern associated with implementing recommendations from the Dame Karen Poutasi review

Oranga Tamariki has undertaken analysis and modelling to support consideration of the potential impacts arising from recommendations associated with the Dame Karen Poutasi review.

This work modelled how proposed changes could affect the volume of RoCs received by Oranga Tamariki and the resulting demand across service delivery activities, including core assessments, family group conferences, and care placements. The modelling was informed by average resource inputs required at each stage.

As publicly announced through Budget 2026, the Government agreed funding to support a phased rollout of mandatory training for children's workers and to ensure the child protection system has capacity to respond safely and effectively to anticipated increases in RoCs associated with these changes.

Some recommendations arising from the Dame Karen Poutasi review remain subject to ongoing policy and legislative development. The modelling and associated advice were prepared to support consideration of implementation options and potential impacts. Release of this information would be likely to prejudice the confidentiality of advice currently under consideration by Ministers and officials and undermine the orderly and effective conduct of ongoing policy and legislative decision-making.

Further, the modelling includes assumptions, expert judgement, and scenario testing prepared by officials to assess the potential impacts of implementation options. Release of this information would be likely to inhibit the future free and frank expression of opinions by officials when developing and testing policy options, implementation approaches and potential demand scenarios.

As such, while we can confirm that modelling and related advice were prepared, the underlying modelling outputs, assumptions, scenario analyses and associated advice is withheld in full under the following sections of the Act:

- section 9(2)(f)(iv), to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials
- section 9(2)(g)(i), to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty

In making this decision, we have considered the public interest in release of the information, as required by section 9(1) of the Official Information Act. We recognise there is a public interest in understanding how Oranga Tamariki prepares for and manages changes in demand for child protection services. We have sought to meet that public interest by providing information about the nature and purpose of the analysis undertaken. However, we consider that the need to protect ongoing policy, legislative and funding deliberations outweighs the public interest in release of the underlying modelling and advice at this time.

information on any monitoring that Oranga Tamariki has done regarding social worker case load levels and the trends this is showing over time.

Oranga Tamariki has several data tools that enable accessible consistent monitoring of social worker caseload levels.

A Workload Management Framework was developed and agreed in the 2025 Collective Bargaining process, which categorises social worker caseload ranges into green, orange, and red levels. Different caseload ranges have been agreed for care and protection, caregiver, adoption, and youth justice social workers across the three levels.

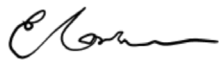
The overall Social Work workforce has maintained a relatively stable caseload distribution across the past 12 months where, on average, two-thirds of all social workers were managing caseloads in the green range. Analysis does indicate that youth justice social workers are trending upwards in the red category, and this will continue to be monitored.

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. If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz. 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 or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



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