

3 May 2023

9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe^{9(2)(a)}

Thank you for your email of 31 March 2023 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki). Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

You have requested:

- *A copy of all current internal Complaints Procedures and Policies*
- *A copy of all current internal Investigation Procedures and Policies*
- *Any Procedures and policies addressing the use of Family Group Conferences for whānau who are not going through court processes and still have custody of their child.*

Oranga Tamariki values feedback both good and bad and are committed to responding to feedback and working with individuals to resolve concerns.

As part of our complaints system, we have processes in place to ensure responses to whānau feedback and complaints are completed appropriately, in a timely, fair, and tamariki focused way. We understand all whānau are unique, and the issues raised are often complex and of a sensitive nature. We take this into consideration, so each investigation and response are unique to the concerns raised.

When the Feedback and Complaints team receive an issue from tamariki, whānau, or members of the public, the team logs the issue, acknowledges receipt of the issue, and then allocates the matter to the appropriate part of Oranga Tamariki to investigate and address. This usually falls under two pathways, complaints addressed by the Site and complaints addressed centrally.

The pathway for complaints addressed by site is:

- Complaints addressed by site relate to issues around whānau experiences with specific sites and social workers. The complaint is usually allocated to the site staff that have the current knowledge of the case and have built

IN-CONFIDENCE

relationships with the whānau and is overseen by the site manager. We consider that by raising issues directly with the people involved ensures transparency and a quicker resolution to concerns.

- Any areas identified as needing to be resolved or learnings for social work practice are passed on to staff at the local site, including the Site Practice Leader working with staff when appropriate.

The pathway for complaints addressed centrally is:

- Complaints which are assessed by the Feedback and Complaints team as complex in nature are allocated to the Complaint Management team in National Office, who are a dedicated complaints team that sit outside of site.
- The Complaints Management team then conduct a complaints investigation. The complaint is usually allocated to a senior advisor who will contact the person who made the complaint, staff from the sites involved, and review other case information as needed to complete the investigation.
- Similarly, to the above pathway, at the end of the Complaints Management investigation, as part of the complaint resolution, Complaints Management work with the Site to create a plan to address any identified issues.

With both complaint pathways, the complainant receives a formal outcome of the complaint investigation via a letter or as part of a hui-a-whānau. As part of the outcome, apologies can be offered and in some cases options to further address the concerns.

If the complainant considers the issues remain unresolved or would like their complaint explored further, there is an additional process where they can approach the Feedback and Complaint team again. The team will then assess the previous complaint to ensure that the complaints process followed was appropriate.

Further information on our statutory obligations is outlined under the Oranga Tamariki Children's and Young People's wellbeing Act 1989 available [here](#).

Please find attached as Appendix One, a diagram showing the complaints process (*Feedback Resolution Process*).

In addition to our own internal complaints process, there are external bodies able to consider complaints and concerns about Oranga Tamariki. This includes the Office of the Children's commissioner (OCC), Social Worker Registration Board (SWRB), Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

Relevant policy and guidance addressing the use of Family Group Conferences (FGC) can be found in the below links which are made publicly available [here](#). Therefore, we are refusing this part of your request under section 18(d) of the Act, as this information is publicly available.

- [Family group conferences for care or protection concerns | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [Care and protection family group conference | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [Social worker referral for a care and protection family group conference — section 18\(1\) | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)

IN-CONFIDENCE

- [Preparing for the care and protection family group conference | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [Family group conference to consider if a tamaiti or rangatahi is in need of care and protection or assistance – section 28\(b\) | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [People entitled to attend a care and protection family group conference — section 22 | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [Holding the care and protection family group conference | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [Developing a plan at the care and protection family group conference | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [Review of the care and protection family group conference plan | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)
- [About family group conferencing | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)

Oranga Tamariki intends to 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



Julie Miller

**General Manager Monitoring and External Relationships
Quality Practise and Experience**