

10 May 2023

**9(2)(a)**

Tēnā koe **9(2)(a)**

Thank you for your email of 11 April 2023 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting data around numbers of children in foster care households and financial payments to them. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Please note we have interpreted foster children as meaning those tamariki in the legal custody of Oranga Tamariki, excluding those in custody for Youth Offending reasons, whether they are placed with Family/Whānau or Non-Family/Whānau caregivers.

I have addressed each of your questions below:

*What is the highest number of foster children living simultaneously at the same dwelling? In which region in this dwelling?*

As at 31 December 2022, the highest number of children in care living simultaneously at the same dwelling is six. We have households across Aotearoa with five or six tamariki in the Central Auckland, East Coast, Lower South, North and West Auckland, South Auckland, Taranaki-Manawatu, Te Tai Tokerau and Wellington regions. We have chosen to use a range in the numbers five to six to protect the privacy of tamariki and caregivers.

Please note in most cases the reason a number of tamariki are living together in a single household is to enable sibling groups to be cared for together. Tamariki in care have told us staying connected to their siblings is critically important, and Oranga Tamariki seeks to keep siblings together whenever it is safe and achievable to do so. Caregiver assessments consider, amongst other things, the capacity of caregivers to meet the needs of all tamariki who may be in their care, and what support they may need to do so effectively. Support provided to caregivers under their support plans can include learning, respite care, additional visits to tamariki and caregivers and involvement in care support networks.

*What is the highest amount paid to a household to care for foster children?*

The highest amount paid to one household for this current financial year to date (1 July 2022 to 21 April 2023) is \$141,433. Please note payments to caregivers are not remuneration. They are reimbursement payments to enable caregivers to meet the needs of tamariki in their care. Most payments to caregivers are provided through the Foster Care Allowance which is set at the same level as the Unsupported Child Benefit and the Orphans Benefit. A higher foster care allowance is used when a caregiver requires additional and specific financial support to meet the needs of tamariki in their care. More information regarding this is available on our website at [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/caregiving/financial-help/caregiver-allowance/](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/caregiving/financial-help/caregiver-allowance/).

*How many households have over ten children in their care simultaneously?*

*How many households have over 20 children in their care simultaneously?*

As at 31 December 2022, there were no households with over 10 or over 20 children in care living in them. As advised above in response to your first question, the highest number of children in care living simultaneously at the same dwelling is six.

*Which region has the highest number of children in foster care? Which region has the least?*

As at 31 December 2022, the East Coast had the highest number of tamariki in Family/Whānau and Non-Family/Whānau care types, and the Upper South had the least. Please see the table detailing regional numbers attached as Appendix One.

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](mailto: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](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Nāku noa, nā



Rachel Leota  
**Deputy Chief Executive Service Delivery**