

15 July 2020



Thank you for your email of 17 June to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- *I was given this data in March for the FY18/19, so I'm hoping to get the latest figures recorded in the same way. Attached is the OIA request for reference and Table One is what I'm looking at.*

On 24 June 2020, we contacted you to clarify the timeframe for your request and informed you we could provide the data requested until 18 June 2020. On 26 June 2020, you clarified your request as follows:

- *For clarity's sake and so I have one number set to refer to, can I please get the figures from 1 July 2018 to 18 June 2020.*
- *Can the figures please be broken down by placement type and by year.*

When tamariki and rangatahi are unable to live with their parents at home, we need to find them a safe, stable and loving home at the earliest opportunity, with a family who will be there for them now and in the future. This requires a planned and supported approach towards care placements. We need to ensure tamariki and rangatahi in care get the support and services they need, and are able to sustain important relationships, such as with their family/whānau, siblings and friends, regardless of where they are living.

In some circumstances, tamariki and rangatahi may be placed in an interim placement. In the past, the word 'inappropriate' has been used to indicate that a placement is less than ideal – with an understanding that the placement is the safest interim placement option and the best place for them to be while we find them a more permanent and stable placement that meets their needs. As such, we now call these interim placements to better reflect the situation. Tamariki and rangatahi may be placed in an interim placement due to an emergency situation or because they have exhausted all other placement options. In other cases, rangatahi may have self-placed themselves, or their whānau caregivers may have chosen to place themselves and their tamariki in a motel.

Where Oranga Tamariki make the decision to place tamariki and rangatahi in such accommodation, this decision is made by their social worker in consultation with the

supervisor and must always be approved by a manager. Tamariki and rangatahi in these circumstances will have an adult assigned to supervise them whilst they are in the placement. In some cases, this adult will be been a whānau member. Planning takes place to ensure that the placement is safe for the young person.

Oranga Tamariki does not take the usage of these placements lightly – we work hard to explore every other possible option for our tamariki and rangatahi before considering interim placements. If we need to use these placements, we work to ensure it is in the child’s community so that schooling, sport and whānau (if appropriate) are nearby.

Tamariki and rangatahi who remain in these interim placements for a longer period of time often have complex needs that make it difficult to find safe and stable placements for them. Our social workers continuously work to identify placements that will not only meet the young person’s needs, but also be a stable long-term placement solution for them.

Since the creation of Oranga Tamariki we have worked to reduce the need for interim accommodation options, such as motels. To this end we have:

- established more placement capacity reflective of the needs and characteristics of tamariki and rangatahi not able to be placed
- increased visibility of available placements to improve coordination, utilisation, and access
- promoted evidence-based practice that increases placement stability for tamariki and rangatahi.

We also developed the Care Options Visibility Tool (COVT) to show all non-kin placement options at a site, regional and national level including residences, contracted providers and family group homes. This provides a detailed picture of the supply of caregivers, the demand for care, and whether the skills and abilities of caregivers match the needs of tamariki/rangatahi requiring care.

Please see the below table for the data you have requested. For ease of comparison, as per your request, the figures for the 2019 and 2020 Financial Years have been placed next to each other.

**Active interim placements and distinct number of young people placed from 1 July 2018 to 18 June 2020.**

Placement type	Placements active		No. of distinct Young People	
	F2019	F2020*	F2019	F2020*
Motels and hotels	295	246	230	188
Unapproved placements with safety concerns	45	13	43	13
Oranga Tamariki site offices	9	1	8	1
Other	69	20	64	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>216</b>

\* 1 July 2019 to 18 June 2020

This information is operational level data and may differ from data previously provided. Operational data is subject to change as a result of backdated entries or corrections.

The data includes the number of distinct placements and the number of distinct tamariki and rangatahi in these placements. Some tamariki and rangatahi have more than one of these placements. The total number of distinct tamariki and rangatahi placed in interim placements is not the sum total across each placement type, as some tamariki and rangatahi have been in more than one type of placement.

'Active placements' refers to the number of placements that were active in the time period, rather than the number of placements made. For example, a child placed on 28 June 2019 and who remained in the placement until 12 July 2019 will also be included in F2020, even though the placement began in F2019.

Additional information about the placement types featured in the table, have been outlined below.

- Unapproved placements with safety concerns are unapproved placements where the caregivers/family have not been approved as caregivers, and where there are live safety concerns. In each case, the safety concerns are assessed by the site and a plan is put in place mitigate these risks.
- The overwhelming majority of 'Other' placements involve the young person being placed in a Family Home or house with staff.
- In exceptional circumstances where no other options are available, social workers may take tamariki/rangatahi to a children's room in one of our offices while they continue to look for alternative options. This option is utilised as a last resort. The one placement that occurred in F2020 was for a single night only.

Oranga Tamariki intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. We will do this by publishing this letter 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.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@ot.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz). If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. 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



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