

# SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN CARE

QUARTER ONE – JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2018

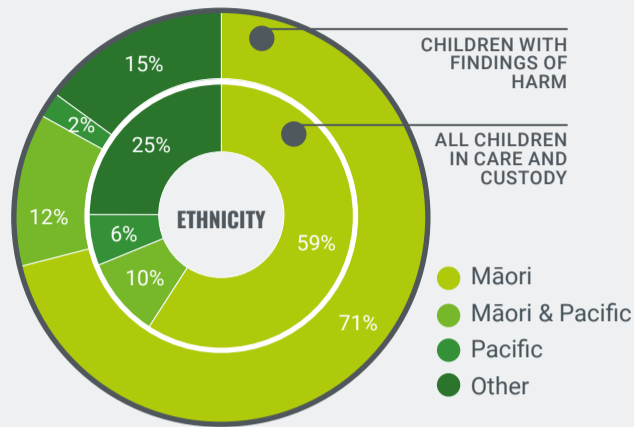
## Individual children with findings of harm



The numbers reported in a given period are based on the date the findings are determined, not the date of the harm experienced by the children.

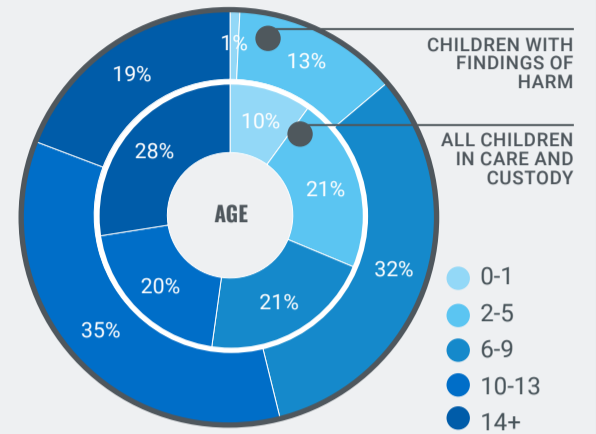
In this quarter 89% of findings related to incidents that occurred within the previous 9 months.

The number of tamariki Māori with findings of harm whilst in care is proportionately greater than the number of tamariki Māori in care and custody.

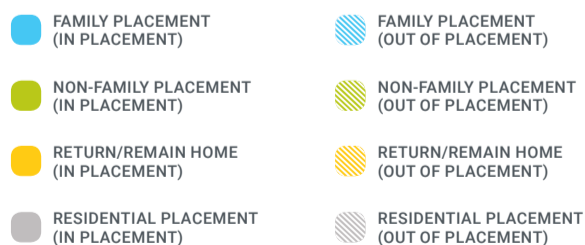
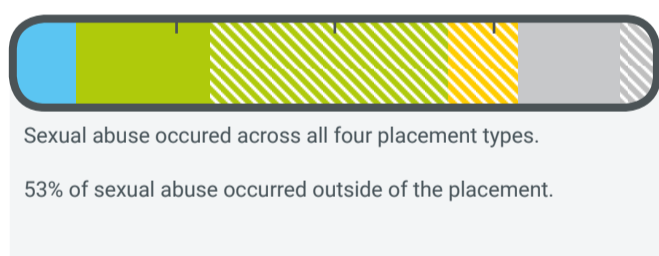
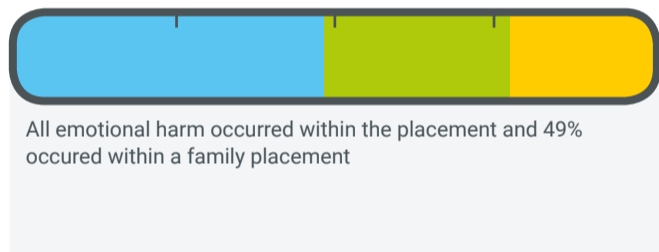
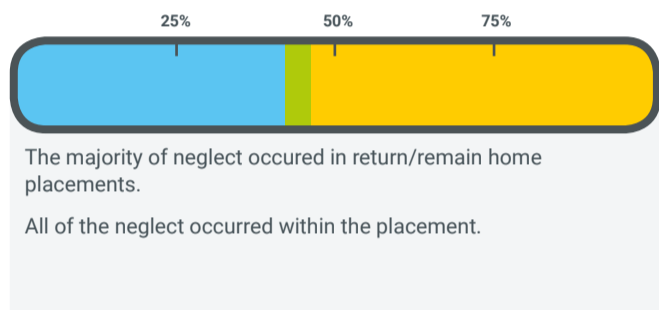


The largest group of children experiencing harm are aged between ten and thirteen years (35%).

This is proportionately greater than the number of children in this age group in care and custody (20%).



## Findings of harm by placement type

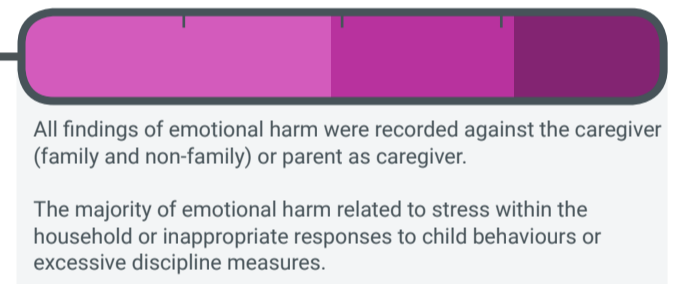
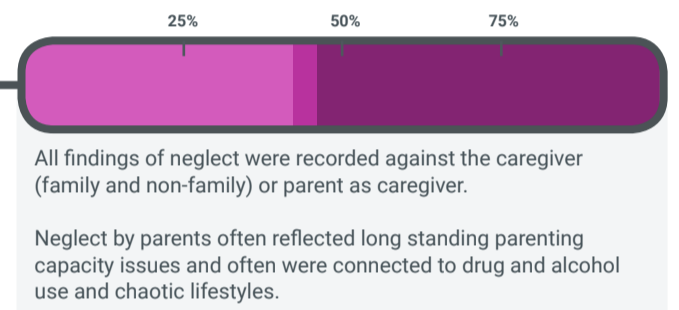


## Findings of harm by abuse type



The number of findings across all abuse types is greater than the number of individual children harmed. This is because some children will experience more than one incident of harm or an incident of harm may have more than one finding recorded, either because there are multiple abuse types and/or multiple alleged abusers.

## Findings of harm by alleged abuser type



## Actions taken to secure the immediate safety of children, and the plans put in place to address the impact of the harm experienced

In most cases children were removed from placements where abuse had occurred. In some instances this was not necessary to secure safety and appropriate safety planning was put in place. During this quarter we have given feedback where necessary to improve safety planning for children.

## Actions taken in regard to the alleged abuser

There are a range of possible outcomes for alleged abusers. Some will face criminal charges and be prosecuted and those decisions are managed by the police. In addition where an alleged abuser is a caregiver they are subject to a reassessment and where appropriate, reapproval process.

This enables ongoing risks to be managed. During this quarter we have given feedback where necessary to improve consistency in recording and notification mechanisms and to ensure that support plans for caregivers are being appropriately actioned and that any staff members have been appropriately managed.

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## Review Methodology:

The safety of children in care unit is responsible for reviewing and reporting on all findings of abuse related to all children in care. Children in care are defined as being subject to a custodial order or legal agreement under the Oranga Tamariki Act. For this review all placement arrangements are considered including those where children remain at home and those where they live independently.

We report on findings across all abuse types (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect). We also report on all categories of alleged abusers.

This is the first quarter using the new measurement methodology.

Over the next year we are building a baseline of data. We do not yet know if the data for this quarter is representative either in volume or type of harm or characteristics of those involved.

## Opportunity for continuous improvement:

The manual review of findings enables a thorough analysis of casework practice in real time. Real time review allows for regular feedback to ensure robust management of continuing safety issues on an individual basis and enables the learnings from emerging trends and patterns to inform continuous practice improvement across Oranga Tamariki.

## Terminology:

### Harm/abuse types:

#### Physical:

A situation where children have sustained an injury or were at serious risk of sustaining an injury. Injuries may be deliberately inflicted or the unintentional result of the alleged abuser's behaviour (e.g. shaking an infant). Physical harm may result from a single incident, or combine with other circumstances to justify a physical harm finding.

#### Sexual:

Any action where an adult or a more powerful person (which could include other children) uses children for a sexual purpose. Sexual harm doesn't always involve bodily contact. Exposure to inappropriate sexual situations or to sexually explicit material can be sexually abusive, whether touching is involved or not. Children may engage in consensual sexualised behaviour involving other children as part of normal experimentation; this is not considered sexual abuse.

#### Emotional:

A situation where the mental health, social and/or emotional functioning and development of children has been damaged by their treatment. This often results from repeat exposure to negative experiences, particularly in a context of insecurity. Witnessing intimate partner violence may constitute emotional harm if the functioning, safety, or care of the children has been adversely affected or put at risk.

#### Neglect:

Failure to provide children with their basic needs – physical (adequate food or clothing), emotional (lack of emotion or attention), supervisory (leaving a child home alone), medical (health care needs not met), or educational (failure to enrol or chronic non-attendance at school). Neglect can be a one off incident, or may represent a sustained pattern of failure to act.

This bar shows the number of individual children with findings of harm during the quarter. As the chart reflects individual children, any individual with more than one finding will only be counted once.

The numbers reported in the quarter are based on the date the findings are made, not the date of the harm experienced by the children. This reflects the fact that in many cases harm is only disclosed many months after the event and children may not accurately be able to recall dates that the harm occurred.

These graphs show the ethnicity and age breakdown for individual children with findings of harm during the quarter (outer circles), compared to the ethnicity and age breakdown of individual children in care and custody in the preceding 12 months (inner circles).

These bars show, for each type of abuse that has occurred, the findings of harm by placement type by percentage.

The blue reflects family placements, the green non-family placements, the yellow return/remain home placements, and the grey residential placements. These placement types have been further detailed to demonstrate where the harm occurred i.e. in placement or out of placement.

The harm experienced by children in care is not always perpetrated by their caregivers. In some circumstances children were harmed away from their current placement, for example children physically harmed by parents during a contact visit, or children sexually abused whilst absconding. As such, this report includes harm that occurs outside of placement.

For the purposes of this work, placement types have been grouped into the following:

#### Family placement:

An out of home placement where children has been brought into the custody of the Chief Executive, and supported to live with a member of their family as their caregiver (who has been assessed and approved).

#### Non-family placement:

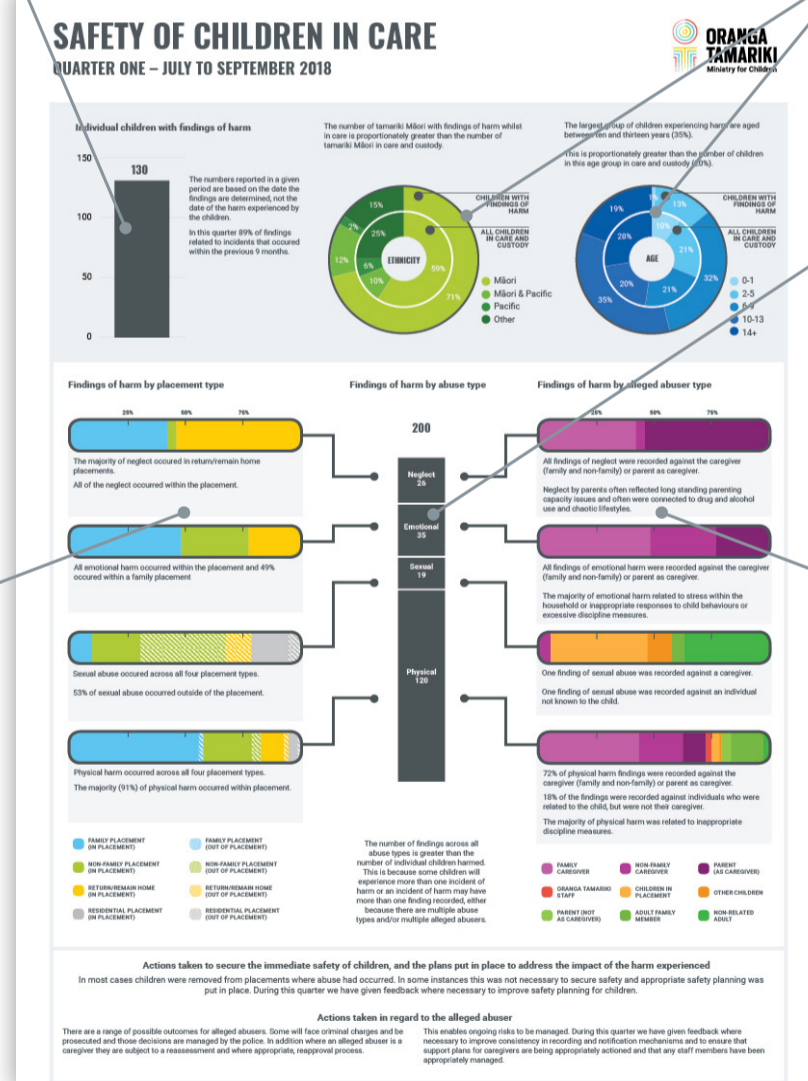
An out of home placement where children have been brought into the custody of the Chief Executive and supported to live with unrelated caregivers who have been assessed and approved as caregivers. This placement type includes NGO Support Services, family/group homes and independent living situations).

#### Return/remain home placement:

Where children are in the legal custody of the Chief Executive but remain in the care of their immediate family (usually parents). These placements are most commonly used where we are attempting to support the reunification of a family, while still maintaining legal custody.

#### Residential placement:

An out of home placement that provides a secure living environment for children who are in the custody of the Chief Executive (includes care and protection and youth justice).



This shows the number of findings of harm by abuse type during the quarter. This graph reports on all findings, including where an incident of harm has more than one finding recorded, or where one child experiences more than one incident of harm. Because of this, some children will appear more than once.

These bars show, for each type of abuse that has occurred, the findings of harm by alleged abuser type by percentage.

The purple shades reflect instances where the alleged abuser was a caregiver (family or non-family), or parent as caregiver. The dark orange relates to Oranga Tamariki staff, the lighter orange shades relate to children in placement or other children. The green shades relate to parent (not as caregiver) and other adults.