

18 October 2022

Section (9) (2) (a)

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Our ref: OIA 98256

Tēnā koe Section (9) (2)

Official Information Act request: Oranga Tamariki Action Plan

Thank you for your email of 10 August 2022 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), information relating to the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan. Specifically you requested:

Ministry of Justice's plan of implementation / work to date relating to the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, as mentioned in the 4th April 2022 Oranga Tamariki Action Plan Cabinet Papers.

On 19 August 2022, we wrote to you to clarify and refine your request. On 22 August you clarified your request as follows:

At the least / as a start point, we are particularly interested in the plan to implement the commitments under the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, and workings pertaining to the plan.

On 16 September 2022, we wrote to you extending the time for responding by 20 days to allow for consultation.

The Ministry has committed to four short term practical actions to contribute to the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, which are outlined below.

Implement and evaluate new Kaiārahi roles

The Kaiārahi Family Court Navigator role was established to help whānau/families with information, guidance, and support about Family Justice Services and on their journey through the Family Court. While Kaiārahi will not provide legal advice, the service is free and will support whānau by:

- Accessing support in the community to help families reach agreement about the care of their children.
- Helping parties understand the Family Court and support them through their journey.
- Supporting community groups that work with whānau/families.

Recruitment for the Kaiārahi roles began in March 2021 with most on board from July 2021. They then completed an induction, which included technical training in the Family Court and training in understanding and responding to family and sexual violence, as well as building relationships with local court staff, judiciary and community groups and service providers that support families.

The Kaiārahi service has been available in the community since 10 January 2022 and since then, their services have been used by people who are considering making an application to the Family Court as well as those who have already filed proceedings.

The Ministry has 47 Kaiārahi based in the following court locations: Kaitaia, Kaikohe, Whangārei, North Shore, Waitākere, Auckland, Manukau, Papakura, Pukekohe, Rotorua, Tauranga, Hamilton, Whakatane, Hastings, Napier, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Whanganui, Palmerston North, Masterton, Porirua, Hutt Valley, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru, Dunedin and Invercargill. Four vacancies are still to be filled in New Plymouth, Hastings, Blenheim and Christchurch.

It is intended that an evaluation of the Kaiārahi role will take place 12-18 months from go-live with success being best measured through an evaluation of people experiences, the scope of which is still to be determined.

Expanding the Young Adult List

The Ministry has supported the judiciary to expand the Young Adult List to the Gisborne and Hamilton District Courts, as part of Te Ao Mārama – the District Court Heads of Bench vision for the future of the District Court. The List recognises that individuals aged 18 to 25 have a unique set of developmental vulnerabilities and needs. The List adjusts court processes to support young adults to understand what is happening and helps them feel understood by those making decisions about them. The List may provide some young adults with an opportunity to address their underlying needs by connecting them with community service providers.

The first Young Adult List was set up in Porirua and it is now being extended to other areas. In Gisborne, the first phase of the Young Adult List began in May 2022. It features best practice elements such as the use of plain language, an improved informed sharing protocol and active, solution-focused judging. The second phase was launched in September 2022 which grows the List by providing pathways to refer young adults to community providers who can provide support programme services such as driver licensing, counselling, and alcohol and drug substance abuse services. In Hamilton, phase one of the List began in June 2022 with phase two expected to begin before the end of the year. You can read more about the Young Adult List at: justice.govt.nz/courts/criminal/young-adult-list

Identify options to increase access to family violence safety programmes for children

The Family Violence Sexual Violence Operational Improvements work programme includes projects to improve the experience of participants (particularly victims and children) in family violence and sexual violence proceedings in the District Court. This involves offering earlier and more consistent access to safety programmes for children both in family violence criminal proceedings and through protection orders made in the Family Court. The Ministry is

in the early stages of planning this work and scoping the capacity and resourcing needs of providers and court staff to increase access to these programmes.

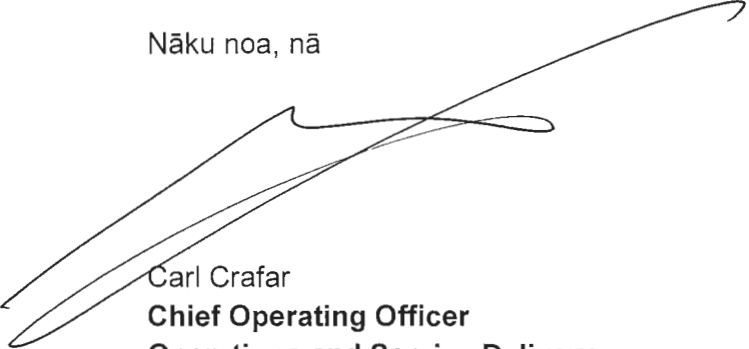
Development of Court Familiarisation Resources

The Ministry's Court Familiarisation Resources project will deliver resources for victims of sexual violence to help them prepare to give evidence in a trial. The Ministry has initiated work on the problem definition and user needs to inform project planning and a provider has been sourced to do this work.

If you are not satisfied with my response, you have the right to complain to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at:

info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

Nāku noa, nā



Carl Crafar
Chief Operating Officer
Operations and Service Delivery