

3rd September 2021

s9(2)(a)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

s9(2)(a)

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request for – Children admissions to Hospital

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 2nd August 2021, you requested the following information:

1. **What is the DHB's policy regarding children in care being**
 - a) **admitted to hospital and**
 - b) **admitted to hospital in lieu of a care placement?**
2. **Are children in care admitted to hospitals if placements cannot be found?**
3. **How many children in care are currently in hospital in the DHB?**
4. **Are there any children in care currently in hospital in the DHB?**
5. **Please provide figures for the past 5 years showing the number of children in care admitted to a DHB hospital, length of stay and reason for being admitted to hospital.**

Counties Manukau Health Response:

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

1. **What is the DHB's policy regarding children in care being**
 - a. **admitted to hospital and**
 - b. **admitted to hospital in lieu of a care placement?**

The DHB does not have a policy regarding children in the care of Oranga Tamariki being admitted to hospital including those that do not have a care placement. We only admit children who have unexplained and/or concerning injuries that require further clinical investigation and overview. We complete an immediate safety assessment from a clinical and risk perspective for each child. Oranga Tamariki (OT) become involved when a Report of Concern is completed or if OT bring

the children to the Emergency Department with obvious injuries/concerns. A child will remain in hospital only for as long as investigations and or treatment are completed, and safety is established for discharge back to the community.

2. Are children in care admitted to hospitals if placements cannot be found?

We have had no situations where a child or children have been admitted to hospital without a medical reason. There have been occasions where a child has stayed in hospital longer than clinically required where a place of safety in the community took longer than expected. The longest stay due to this would be 5 days (in particular if the child was admitted at the end of the week and no placement was secured before the weekend).

3. How many children in care are currently in hospital in the DHB?

At this present time, we have no children in the DHB who are in the care of OT. This can change on any given day dependent on the reason for presentation to hospital be it with injuries (accidental or non-accidental), acute surgery, planned surgery or a medical condition.

4. Are there any children in care currently in hospital in the DHB?

Refer to response to question 3.

5. Please provide figures for the past 5 years showing the number of children in care admitted to a DHB hospital, length of stay and reason for being admitted to hospital.

We are unable to provide detailed figures for the past 5 years as these can only be sourced by reviewing each individual clinical records. We have, therefore, determined to decline this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

Children who are in the care of Oranga Tamariki present to hospital for a variety of reasons as mentioned under question 3. Their length of stay will be determined by their clinical need. Occasionally, as mentioned under question 2, a child may have a longer length of stay if they cannot be discharged to a place of safety.

I trust this information answers your request. You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely



**Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health**