



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

28 OCT 2016

Dear

On 29 September 2016 you contacted the Ministry requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

- *What is the ethnic breakdown of infants (under twelve months) uplifted by Child Youth and Family over the last five years (January 2011 - January 2016)?*

Child, Youth and Family always works in the best interests of the child, young person or infant and any decision to remove an infant from their family is a decision that is not taken lightly. As with all actions taken by Child, Youth and Family, the interests of the child or young person are paramount. If no family member is identified as being able to safely care for the infant, then the infant will be placed with an approved Child, Youth and Family caregiver. Wherever possible and appropriate, the relationship between the infant and their family is maintained and strengthened.

There may be times when Child, Youth and Family have care and protection concerns before a child's birth. Where there are serious concerns about the safety of an unborn child the Court will grant orders to place them out of their parent's care when they are ready to leave the hospital, after their birth. This occurs in very serious situations where it is determined that there are no other options for ensuring the infant's safety.

You may be interested to know that new provisions under the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 that came into effect on 1 July 2016 strengthen guidance on cases involving parents who have previously had a child or young person removed due to abuse or neglect. These provisions apply when parents have no realistic possibility of caring for that child or young person again, or have been convicted of the murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a child or young person in their care and go on to have another child. Further information regarding this and the other changes to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 is available at www.cyf.govt.nz/about-us/news/2016/implementing-changes-to-the-children-young-persons-and-their-families-act-1989.html

The December 2015 final report of the Expert Advisory Panel on Modernising Child, Youth and Family, *Investing in New Zealand's Children and Their Families*, is available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-children/eap-report.html. The report recognised the need to address the over-representation of Māori children in the system.

The investment approach will address over-representation of Māori children, by increasing the focus on those children at the greatest risk of poor life outcomes and enabling investment in the interventions that make the biggest difference. The future system must take a partnership approach with iwi and Māori organisations to provide appropriate wrap-around services for vulnerable Māori families, making better use of the capability and capacity of these organisations to serve the needs of Māori children and young people. This will also enable enhanced long-term relationships with iwi, Māori and community providers to provide more effective support for whānau caring for Māori children. Further information about the Investing in Children programme is available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-children/index.html

One of the key elements of the operating model for the new children's agency, the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki is to put a high degree of specific focus on improving outcomes for Māori children and young people. Further information about the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki is available at: www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-children/new-childrens-agency-established.html

Overleaf is a table showing the number of infants in out of home placements aged less than twelve months for the past six financial years.

The data you have been provided with is by financial year rather than calendar year as this is standard reporting for the Ministry. To include the January 2011 period as specified in your request, the data is for the past six financial years.

In certain circumstances low numbers may potentially lead to individuals being identified. Due to these privacy concerns some numbers have been suppressed. Secondary suppression rules have also been applied when required. Suppressed numbers have been replaced by an 'S'. This suppression is in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act in order to protect the privacy of natural persons. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals outweighs any public interest in this information.

You may be interested in further national and local level data on children and young people in care, which is publically available on the Child, Youth and Family website at: www.cyf.govt.nz/about-us/key-statistics/kids-in-care.html

The number of infants aged less than twelve months in out of home placements broken down by ethnicity, for the previous six financial years.

Ethnicity	Financial year ending					
	June 2011	June 2012	June 2013	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016
Māori	174	182	189	196	183	193
New Zealand Pākehā	127	126	121	117	95	127
Pacific Peoples	32	29	28	31	27	30
Asian	9	12	S	16	S	S
Other European	S	S	S	S	S	S
Other / Multiple Ethnicity	S	S	15	S	14	23
All	350	356	363	373	327	386

Notes:

- These numbers are based on operational data and as such may change over time due to subsequent data entry, therefore data may vary slightly with previously released information.
- Out of home placements exclude placement types - 'Independent Living', 'Remain Home' and 'Return Home'.
- Children and young people (or their family) are asked to self-identify their ethnicity. All ethnic groups identified are recorded, however for the purposes of reporting, only the client's self-identified primary ethnic group is extracted. If a primary ethnic group is not nominated, their ethnicity is reported as "Other/multiple".
- 'S' represents a suppressed cell to protect clients' privacy.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public after ten working days. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response regarding infants in out of home placements with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely


Murray Edridge
Deputy Chief Executive
Child, Youth and Family