

27 August 2021

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Re: Official Information Act request – children in care admitted to hospital

I refer to your Official Information Act request received dated 2 August 2021 requesting the following information:

You clarified that when you referred to “care”, you meant state care of any kind.

- 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?**

Children are not admitted to Starship Hospital in lieu of a care placement.

Children who are in care may be admitted to Starship Hospital if there is a medical need. When it is clinically appropriate for a child who is in care to be discharged, we notify the appropriate agency of the proposed discharge date. Occasionally there may be a delay in a child being discharged while Oranga Tamariki confirms a safe place for the child to be discharged to.

These situations are covered in the national memorandum of understanding (MOU) between District Health Boards, Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police, which states:

“Children admitted to hospital for conditions caused by abuse or neglect should not remain in hospital once they are medically ready for discharge. The DHB will give Oranga Tamariki and the Police at least 24 hours’ notice of a child’s proposed discharge date. If Oranga Tamariki or the Police request that the child remains in hospital after this discharge date then negotiation around the cost and supervision arrangements (if required) will occur.”

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

No, we do not admit children in care in lieu of a care placement.

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

Auckland DHB does not record whether or not a child is under the care of the state. While this information may have been collected and recorded in a child's clinical records we have determined not to undertake a review of those records for the purposes of this request in order to protect the privacy of those children – s9(2)(a) OIA, and because validation of that information would require substantial research – s18(f) OIA.

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

As above – please see answer 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.

As above – please see answer 3.

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 response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE

Chief Executive of Te Toka Tumai (Auckland District Health Board)