

16 July 2026

s9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email, received on 19 June 2026, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting information about Reports of Concern (RoCs) made to Oranga Tamariki regarding dental issues. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Please see our responses to your individual queries below:

The number of reports of concern referred from dental practices, schools, oral health services, or related health professionals related to dental decay. We would prefer the data limited to children age 14 and under but if this is not possible, ignore this age limit.

Please see table 1 below for the number of RoCs made to Oranga Tamariki with a dental therapist being the notifier. Please note that we are unable to provide the ages of the children in the RoCs as our systems do not retrieve information to that level of specificity.

Table 1: number of RoCs made by Dental Therapists

Calendar Year	Number of RoCs made
2021	S
2022	8
2023	S
2024	7
2025	6
2026	7

Please note that where the number of young people is low or can be calculated and demographic information provided may result in identification, this has been withheld – represented in the table with an ‘S’ – in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the Act, in order to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Please provide any information held regarding reports of concern, referrals, or notifications made to Oranga Tamariki by dentists, oral health services, school dental/oral health staff, schools or education providers, other relevant health professionals where concerns regarding child neglect, child welfare, safeguarding, or wellbeing arose in relation to a child's dental condition or treatment needs.

Where available, please provide annual totals and any available breakdowns by referral source.

Oranga Tamariki does not hold this information in an easily retrievable manner. To obtain this information would involve a manual search of a large number of files. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(f) of the Act, in that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Copies of any policies, guidance documents, briefings, reports, research papers, reviews, analyses, or internal documents produced or held within the past five years relating to:

- *Severe dental disease requiring multiple extractions in children*
- *b. The relationship between severe dental disease, dental neglect concerns, and child wellbeing*
- *c. Guidance provided to dental or oral health workers regarding recognising, responding to, escalating, or reporting signs of neglect or child welfare concerns to Oranga Tamariki*
- *d. Any internal guidance used by Oranga Tamariki staff relating to dental neglect, oral health concerns, or dental conditions as indicators of child wellbeing concerns*

We do not hold specific documents in scope of this query; however, we are able to provide the following links for our policies and resources around neglect and dental care:

[Oranga Tamariki definition of neglect](#)
[Oranga Tamariki resources about health and dental care](#)

Please see the following links for our policies for tamariki and rangatahi under the care of Oranga Tamariki:

[Support for tamariki and rangatahi in care or custody of Oranga Tamariki](#)
[Supporting tamariki and rangatahi with their health needs](#)
[Medical examinations and treatment](#)

Aroturuki Tamariki, the Independent Children's Monitor, undertook a review of Access to Primary Health Services and Dental Care in 2023. Please see this review [here](#), and our response [here](#).

You may also be interested in the Health NZ 'Enhanced Visibility' project, and we anticipate this will help to better understand the health and dental needs and treatment for tamariki in care. Further information on this project can be found [here](#).

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

I trust you find this information useful. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise them with Oranga Tamariki. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Simon Harding
Chief Advisor, Tamariki and Whānau Services
Oranga Tamariki