Dear [Redacted]

Thank you for your email of 25 September 2018, to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- Are you able to email me some official, written information regarding to what your procedures are after a notification of concern has been received by your call center please

Under section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, any person who believes that any child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the New Zealand Police. These are referred to as reports of concern by Oranga Tamariki.

Reports of concern are received at the Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre (NCC) where they are initially assessed for urgency by an intake social worker (ISW) and sent through to the local site for follow up. The role of the ISW is to gather relevant information from the notifier to establish whether Oranga Tamariki involvement is appropriate. The purpose of the information-gathering is to enable the ISW to make an informed assessment, taking into consideration current risk, harm, safety and strengths, pattern or frequency of the concerns along with any history of involvement. The NCC does not have the role of verifying the information with other sources; the ISW’s role is to establish whether there are clear enough concerns that require a statutory response and referring to the local Oranga Tamariki Site for further assessment.

Individuals who make a report of concern can request confidentiality. In such cases, we will record the information provided and include a flag that the notifier’s details are not to be released. It is important that people feel comfortable making a report of concern so we can receive information as early as possible and act to protect tamariki where necessary.

Each report of concern is then reviewed for urgency by a minimum of two supervisors at what is called a consistency meeting. Supervisors undertake a daily monitoring and review of all reports of concern in the intake queue waiting for allocation. Those daily reviews consider urgency and the priority for allocation and follow up. Case responsibility can be moved between teams to address relative demand. Supervisors
use a number of criteria to make these assessments including immediate risk for the child concerned, any known history and any other local knowledge.

When receiving any report of concern, social workers are required to assess whether care and protection concerns exist for a child or young person. This assessment looks at all aspects of the child’s life, including their relationship with each custodial parent and their behaviour and wellbeing while in the care of each parent/caregiver.

There is a useful flow chart at the following link which visually represents our care and protection service pathway:


A report of concern is not an accusation but a request for Oranga Tamariki to determine whether a child needs care and protection and/or the family needs support. The screening process begins immediately upon receipt of the report. Moderate or lower risk matters are usually assigned to an assessment response (e.g. a Child and Family Assessment) by the relevant Site to review the report of concern, assess safety and risk, identify family strengths and determine what support, if any, is needed.

The Child and Family Assessment is the balancing process through which we substantiate, or otherwise, concerns presented to us. That very process of following up a notification includes steps to confirm the accuracy or otherwise of the concerns raised with us.

I trust this information is useful to you. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us. You can make general enquiries via email to Enquiry@ot.govt.nz.

Oranga Tamariki intends to make the information contained in this letter available to the wider public shortly. We will do this by publishing this letter on our website. Your personal details will be deleted and we will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@ot.govt.nz. If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Steve Groom
General Manager Public, Ministerial and Executive Services