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Tēnā koe Arran

Thank you for your correspondence of 10 June 2024, sharing Aroturuki Tamariki – the Independent Children's Monitor's (the Monitor) finalised report, *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*.

The Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora and Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora acknowledge the Monitor's system-wide role to monitor progress against recommendations outlined in:

- the independent review of the children's system response to abuse report, *Ensuring strong and effective safety nets to prevent abuse in children*, led by Dame Karen Poutasi, and
- the health system report, *Review into the death of Malachi Subecz*, led by the Ministry of Health.

This letter primarily responds to the Monitor's findings regarding the health system review recommendations. Our response to the Monitor's findings regarding the independent review recommendations can be found in the 'Progressing Dame Karen Poutasi's recommendations' document provided to you by Oranga Tamariki. As noted in that response, agencies are working together on changing the system to better protect children.


The five recommendations in the health system review are the joint responsibility of both Health New Zealand as the operational arm of the public health system, and the Ministry of Health as the chief steward of the health system. We note that these recommendations largely align with and informed those of the independent review.

Across both reviews' health agencies are:

- working towards linking medical records held in different parts of the health sector to enable health professionals access to a complete picture of a child's medical record,
- working towards joining the Child Protection Protocol and working with Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police on participating in joint training and accessing paediatric expertise,
- reviewing health system processes following a non-accidental child death to consider whether there is a need for the system to have better visibility of these cases and processes to draw lessons from them,
- supporting children's agencies to improve the report of concern process to incorporate multi-agency review and the sharing of findings with relevant agencies,
- working with children's agencies to consider whether the evidence justifies frontline health workforces being mandated to report suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki, and
- doing cross-agency work on a Gateway service redesign to improve the effectiveness of the current service before considering whether this could be expanded.

We are committed to working alongside other children's agencies to strengthen the child protection system and ensure that children at risk of harm are visible and made safe. The Ministry of Health and Health New Zealand welcome our continued collaboration with the Monitor on this important work.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Diana Sarfati
Director-General of Health
Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive
Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora