



**OPEN HOME
FOUNDATION**
TE WHARE KAUPAPA ĀWHINA

17 January 2024

Minister for Children
Private Bag 18041
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

National Office
P O Box 31036
Lower Hutt

Dear Minister Chhour

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the Independent Children's Monitor report regarding the health and dental needs of children and young people in the custody of the Director of the Open Home Foundation of NZ.

Whilst we were generally happy that the vast majority of Tamariki in OHF custody had access to annual health and dental checks, (79%/75%), the report highlighted (for us) a number of areas needing clarification in order to ensure children and young people in care and custody are best served by the health and dental systems. We also believe that future such reports would gather better/more informed information should the following areas be clarified.

These areas are;

- Clarifying the objective of the annual health checks and what specific areas must be covered? There appears to be no existing guidelines for PHO regarding these checks.
- Notwithstanding privacy of the young person, is there a way of identifying with the PHO where a child or young person is in state or agency custody? We would also see significant benefit of such children and young people having priority within the health/PHO system.
- Children and young people in the care/custody of Oranga Tamariki have access to Gateway assessments. For reasons unbeknown to OHF, children/young people in OHF care/custody are not entitled to Gateway assessments. This anomaly leaves children and young people in the care/custody of s.396 providers disadvantaged. We would like to see universal access to Gateway assessments for all children and young people in care/custody regardless of the agency holding the custody/care orders.

Gaining clarity of the above would enable OHF to provide more purposeful and accurate data for the Monitor and it would also we believe, better serve the health outcomes for children and young people in care and custody.

Nga mihi



Don Irwin
Chief Executive



Trish McConnell
Board Chair