

ALLEGATION SUPPORT

INFORMATION SHEET



Caring Families
AOTEAROA

We know going through an allegation of abuse can be very stressful. Our aim is to ensure that you never feel alone throughout this process and you have as much information as possible so you are able to make informed decisions.

The Oranga Tamariki, Allegations of harm (ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation) of tamariki in care or custody policy can be found here: <https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/policy/allegations-of-harm-ill-treatment-abuse-neglect-or-deprivation-of-tamariki-in-care-or-custody/>

When you contact Caring Families Aotearoa for support through the investigation process you can expect us to:

- Explain the investigation process including answering any questions you have.
- Assign a critical support worker to support you until the investigation is completed.
- Provide information and support to enable you to make decisions and guide you through each step of the process until it's completed.
- Maintain the highest level of confidentiality.
- Help you prepare for any meetings or interviews and we can attend these with you as a support person.
- Make referral to a Lawyer if legal advice is required.
- Communicate with Oranga Tamariki and other key people to ensure policy, during the investigation, is followed.
- Offer independent and unbiased information in a professional manner.
- Be non-judgemental.

PLEASE REMEMBER: You have the right to have a Support Person of your choice with you in ALL dealings with Oranga Tamariki. You also have a right to have an Interpreter if you require.



There are two parts to the investigation process, the investigation of the allegation and the caregiver review.

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criticalsupport@caringfamilies.org.nz

0800 693 278

www.caringfamilies.org.nz

ALLEGATION SUPPORT

THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS

1. Oranga Tamariki will provide you with information about the support you can receive from Caring Families Aotearoa and ensure you have time to contact them before they interview you. Call: 0800 693 278 or email: criticalsupport@caringfamilies.org.nz
2. Oranga Tamariki must ensure you have the opportunity to have a support person with you when they tell you about the allegations (this can be your critical support worker from Caring Families Aotearoa).
3. Oranga Tamariki must provide you with detailed and specific information about the allegation (unless the police have asked them not to share these details with you).
4. Oranga Tamariki must advise birth parents or guardians of an allegation of harm as soon as possible unless it could put tamariki, you as a caregiver, or another person at risk of harm. It is important to let your caregiver social worker and Caring Families Aotearoa know of any potential risks of safety as soon as possible.
5. Two social workers (a key and co-worker) will carry out the investigation into the report of concern received by Oranga Tamariki. Your caregiver social worker cannot be an investigating social worker or provide you with support during interviews with the investigating social workers or the police (if they are involved). The social worker for the child may be assigned as a co-worker but this can only happen after consideration has been given to the views of the caregivers and how well the social worker for the child will be able to maintain transparency and fairness through the investigation process.
6. Oranga Tamariki will consider the immediate safety and well-being of the tamariki in your home and will decide whether the tamariki will remain in your care during the investigation. A plan must be developed and implemented to ensure the immediate safety of the tamariki in your care.

Wherever it is safe to do so, Oranga Tamariki must support, strengthen and assist the whānau to care for their tamariki and prevent the need for them to be moved to an alternative living arrangement. Oranga Tamariki must always consider the potential impact the decision to move tamariki could have on their stability, sense of belonging and significant connections, including sibling relationships.

7. If tamariki are moved from your care and they have a relationship with you, then a plan must be considered for contact to occur during the investigation. Any contact must be in the best interests of the tamariki. If Oranga Tamariki determine that contact should not occur, they must record their reason for this.
8. The investigating social workers will interview you about the allegations, you are entitled to have a support person with you of your choice – this could be your Caring Families Aotearoa critical support worker.
9. Oranga Tamariki could talk to other relevant parties for example the school or other members of your whānau regarding the allegation as part of their investigation.
10. Oranga Tamariki will complete a draft outcome report of their findings from their investigation and provide this to you within 25 working days of receiving the report of concern (if it is a core assessment).
This report must outline:
 - The nature of the allegations
 - Details of the investigation
 - Details relevant to te tamaiti (the child)
 - Voice of the caregiver
 - Details relevant to the caregiver
 - The assessment and analysis of the information obtained
 - The findings of the investigation/assessment e.g. substantiated or not
11. You can respond to the draft outcome report in the mode of your choice e.g. email, letter, face to face meeting. Oranga Tamariki will provide you the date your feedback is required so they

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ALLEGATION SUPPORT

can consider your response before the report is finalised (within 35 working days from receiving the allegation – if it is a core assessment).

12. Oranga Tamariki MUST inform you if the allegation has been referred to the police. You can contact Caring Families Aotearoa and we will help you access free legal advice. You are entitled to have a support person present if interviewed by the police.
13. Oranga Tamariki must preserve the mana, integrity and oranga (wellbeing) of you and your whānau throughout the investigation.

Please note there are times when instead of a core assessment (investigation), a full assessment (investigation) will need to be completed. This could be for different reasons, such as a Family Group Conference needing to be held. For more information about this please follow the links below.

When a core assessment is required:

<https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/assessment-and-planning/assessments/intake-and-early-assessment/core-assessment-phase/>

When a full assessment is required:

<https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/assessment-and-planning/assessments/intake-and-early-assessment/full-assessment-phase/>

THE CAREGIVER REVIEW PROCESS

If you are an Oranga Tamariki caregiver, the approved final outcome report will be provided to your caregiver social worker to complete a caregiver review.

If you provide care through another organisation (care partner) e.g. iwi social service or a different foster care agency, they will be told the outcome of the investigation and any additional processes arising e.g. The police are pressing charges. The draft and final outcome reports can only be provided to your organisation if you give permission for Oranga Tamariki to give it to them. Your organisation will complete a review regarding your caregiver status. Once this is complete, they must provide the outcome to Oranga Tamariki. You can request a copy of your agency's caregiver review policy.

Caregiver Review Process for Oranga Tamariki Caregivers

14. Once the outcome report is approved you must have your approval status reviewed by your caregiver social worker.
15. The review is informed by the findings of the investigation. It determines your caregiver status and any support or training needs you may require.

A draft review report must be provided to you within ten (10) working days from when the outcome report was approved. It may also have recommendations regarding any specific needs for current and future tamariki in your care.

16. You will be given the opportunity to respond to the draft review report in the mode of your choice e.g. Email, letter, face to face meeting. Oranga Tamariki will provide you with the date your feedback is required so they can consider your response before the review is made final.
17. The caregiver recruitment and support manager must provide you with a letter confirming the outcome of the review within five (5) working days of receiving the finalised review report.

ONCE THE INVESTIGATION AND THE REVIEW ARE COMPLETED, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

18. Request Oranga Tamariki to review the investigation.
19. Make a complaint/give feedback to Oranga Tamariki:
<https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/contact-us/feedback/>
20. Make a complaint to Caring Families Aotearoa national office.
21. View any written information about you through the Official Information Act 1982 or the Privacy Act 1993.

Caring Families Aotearoa

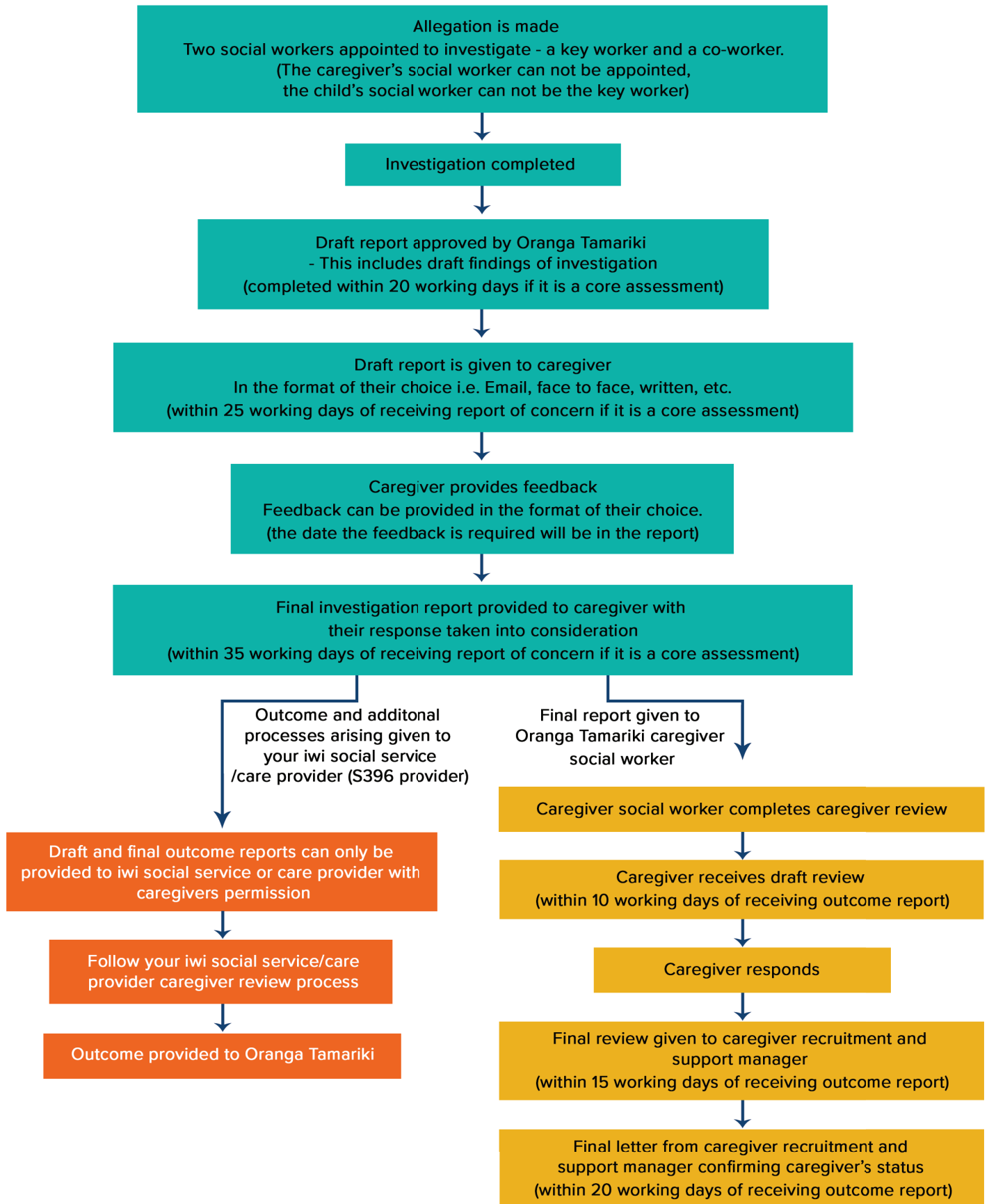
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