

24 January 2020

Hon Tracey Martin  
Minister for Children  
Private Bag 18041  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington 6160

By email: [t.martin@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:t.martin@ministers.govt.nz)

Tēna koe Minister Martin

## RE: FIRST REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHILDREN'S MONITOR

Thank you for your letter dated 9 December 2019 and the enclosed copy of the first Independent Children's Monitor Report: Agency Compliance with Regulations 69 and 85 of the Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations - 6 December 2019.

Barnardos' commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care is our priority. We are conscious that our responsibilities with regard to those children and young people in Barnardos' legal custody and care are significant, and we remain committed to doing everything necessary to ensure their safety and wellbeing and to enable positive outcomes in their lives, including through the implementation of the National Care Standards and Related Matters Regulations (the Care Standards).

Barnardos therefore welcomes and acknowledges the role and function of the Independent Children's Monitor (ICM) and what it brings to Aotearoa to support and ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the Oranga Tamariki system.

Barnardos has read and reviewed this first report from the ICM which covers the three-month period from 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019. We are appreciative of the observations on our systems and practice and have noted the areas of focus for future monitoring by the Monitor which is helpful.

We are mindful that the ICM is new and in the early phases of its work, and we understand that its engagement with the sector will take time. Barnardos has had a positive engagement with the ICM to date and looks forward to an on-going relationship that is underpinned by constructive and open dialogue and collaboration, utilising collective strengths across the system to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people and their families.

We will be taking the opportunity our engagement with the ICM offers to provide feedback on this initial phase of the work with the aim of contributing to strengthening process and practice into future. In particular we would want to highlight:

- the importance of an underpinning philosophy of continuous practice improvement;
- the need to highlight evidence-based practice models, methods and theories which support children and young people, and strengthens their links with and place in familial and whānau systems;
- the need for an assessment framework that achieves the right balance between promoting practice quality and compliance;

- the need to consider how the ICM role melds and compliments that of other reporting agencies, e.g. the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the Education Review Office, and the requirements of service provider contract reporting, and Social Service Accreditation; and
- consideration of issues of scale (OT cares for 6000+ young people – Barnardos cares for less than five).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this first report. Barnardos looks forward to continuing constructive discussions in this early phase of the ICM's work and beyond. We continue to encourage the Independent Monitor as it continues with its mahi to ensure that the lives of children and young people and the impact of decisions affecting them are kept central to its focus. This will be for the benefit of their lives now and into the future, and those of their whānau and families.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Mike Munnelly  
Chief Executive