# Child, Youth and Family Residential Care Regulations Inspection Report: 2012

## Te Au rere a te Tonga[[1]](#footnote-1) Residence

Te Au rere a te Tonga is a youth justice residence located in Palmerston North which provides safe and secure care for up to 30 young people aged from 14–17 years.

The Turitea unit enables up to six young people at any one time to further develop their independent living skills.

Staff at the residence aim to provide young people with the best possible opportunities to turn their lives around. To help achieve this, Child, Youth and Family provides:

* a safe, structured environment which maximises learning opportunities
* evidence-based programmes to stabilise and address behaviour including programmes focused on reducing re-offending
* assessments which inform our planning and interventions to meet the individual needs of each child and young person
* interventions that engage children and young people in a supportive, constructive process of change
* a comprehensive plan to transition children and young people successfully back into education, training or employment opportunities and to permanent and stable care.

Over 90 full-time permanent staff work at Te Au rere a te Tonga and the residence is one of four youth justice residences operating in New Zealand. The other three are Korowai Manaaki in Auckland, Te Maioha o Parekarangi in Rotorua and Te Puna Wai ō Tuhinapo in Christchurch.

### Background

Child, Youth and Family provides residential care for a number of children and young people under section 364 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989.

The majority of children and young people who commit offences are effectively dealt with in the community by the youth justice system. Youth justice residences provide services for children and young people whose offending behaviour is such that they pose a significant risk to themselves or others.

### Inspection Reports

Each residence is assessed every calendar year by the Office of the Chief Social Worker to ensure:

* compliance with the regulations as specified in the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Residential Care) Regulations 1996 (the Regulations)
* compliance with section 384 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989
* the provision of safe, appropriate care for children and young people.

A report is produced summarising the findings of the inspection that focuses on any non-compliance identified, and residences are required to develop a response to the report that addresses these areas for improvement.

## Inspection summary as at March 2012

### Scope

The residential care regulations are about the safety and wellbeing, and upholding of the rights of, children and young people placed in a Child, Youth and Family residence. They also outline expectations about management and inspection of the residences.

Each inspection covers the six parts of the regulations, namely:

* Part 1: Rights of children and young persons in residences
* Part 2: Limitations on powers of punishment and discipline
* Part 3: Management and inspection of residences
* Part 4: Searches
* Part 5: Secure care
* Part 6: Records.

In 2012 Te Au rere a te Tonga achieved a 93.5 percent rate of compliance across the six parts of the regulations, for those provisions tested on the inspection. This was an excellent result for a youth justice residence that was undergoing extensive redevelopment while providing care for over 170 young people in the preceding 12-month period.

### Overall

* Not all provisions of the residential care regulations and section 384 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 apply to every residence, on every occasion.
* Due to the nature of some regulations, non-compliance in one area can mean automatic non-compliance with other regulations as they are inherently linked.
* The inspection identified areas of strength as well as areas for improvement for Te Au rere a te Tonga.
* An improvement plan was developed to address the areas of improvement and the result of this plan is outlined below.

### Areas of strength

Areas where the inspection found evidence of good practices and processes that were promoting the wellbeing and safety of young people included:

* a well-functioning senior management team providing strong leadership and demonstrating a clear commitment to ensuring the rights of young people were upheld in the residence
* timely initial assessments of young people
* good case management involving family and whānau and the education provider
* the management of challenging behaviours
* life skills development and vocational training opportunities
* appropriate management of records.

### Areas for improvement

Areas where improvement was required included:

* improving the sharing of information between the health provider and residence staff
* ensuring that the behaviour management system was explained to young people in age-appropriate and effective ways, that only approved punishments and sanctions were applied in the management of young people’s challenging behaviour, and that all details were fully documented in the daily log
* ensuring that secure care was only used where appropriate grounds for admission existed and not as a punishment or sanction, and that daily reviews of young people’s placement in secure care were completed with the participation (where practicable) of the young person
* updating the security and emergency management plans and reviewing these plans every six months
* ensuring that staff understood the regulations, and strengthening the compliance monitoring process.

### Service delivery response

In response to the identified areas for improvement, Child, Youth and Family has taken the following actions at Te Au rere a te Tonga:

* reviewed the information sharing protocol with the health provider, and implemented ongoing oversight by the national clinical manager
* provided refresher training for all staff on the behaviour management system and its associated practices
* scheduled and implemented ongoing team training days with a particular focus on punishments, sanctions and consequences for managing challenging behaviour, search and seizure processes, and the management of secure care
* scheduled and held six monthly reviews of security and emergency management plans
* established monthly regulations review meetings of the senior management team, to support an enhanced focus on compliance monitoring.

1. Prior to November 2012 was known as Lower North Youth

   Justice Residence [↑](#footnote-ref-1)