# Child, Youth and Family Residential Care Regulations Inspection Report: 2013

## Epuni Residence

Epuni is a care and protection residence located in Wellington which provides 24-hour safe and secure care for up to 20 children and young people aged from 10–16 years.

Staff at the residence aim to provide children and young people with the best possible opportunities to improve their life outcomes and realise their potential. 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
* assessments which inform our planning and interventions to meet the individual needs of each child and young person
* practice and relationships that are informed by the values, beliefs and protocols of family and whānau
* 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.

Fifty seven full-time permanent staff work at Epuni, which is one of four care and protection residences run by Child, Youth and Family operating within New Zealand. The other three are Whakatakapokai in Auckland, Te Oranga in Christchurch and Puketai in Dunedin.

### 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.

Staff provide 24-hour care and custody for some of the most challenging and vulnerable children and young people who are admitted when there is a concern for their safety or if their continued behaviour in the community is putting themselves or other people around them at significant risk.

### 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 October 2013

### 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 2013 Epuni achieved an 81.1 percent rate of compliance across the six parts of the regulations, for those provisions tested on the inspection.

### 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 Epuni.
* An improvement plan was developed to address the identified 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 children and young people included:

* the assessment of the mental health needs of the children and young people admitted to the residence and their subsequent access to appropriate services
* individual care plans completed in a timely manner and in consultation with family and whānau
* staff commitment to improving practice within the residence.

### Areas for improvement

Areas where improvement was required included:

* the management of secure care processes
* ensuring care plans addressed all issues relevant to a child or young person, and that children and young people had access to services to meet their educational and spiritual needs
* explanations to children and young people of the behaviour management system
* ensuring children and young people have a good level of contact with their family and whānau
* improving the medication administration recording systems and the sharing of information between the health provider and residence staff
* ensuring only approved punishments and sanctions were applied in the management of children and young people’s challenging behaviour
* ensuring children and young people’s property, in particular their clothing, was safeguarded from other children and young people
* improving communication and relationships between the various staff groups within the residence to ensure children and young people experienced a consistency and quality of care
* the management of staff training and development, including knowledge of search processes
* ensuring six monthly reviews of security and emergency management plans
* the functioning of the community liaison committee
* developing and implementing a compliance monitoring system.

### Service delivery response

In response to the identified areas for improvement, Child, Youth and Family has taken the following actions at Epuni:

* provided refresher training for all staff on secure care management practices
* implemented an enhanced process for monitoring care plans to ensure plans contain all relevant information and details of services to be provided to children and young people
* increased the range of other professionals attending multi-agency meetings to ensure an effective needs-led approach to care planning
* set up a staff focus group to design and implement a new behaviour management system
* implemented a new admission process for young people, including a written resource to provide information on the behaviour management system in place at the residence
* identified additional opportunities for young people to have contact with whānau, and scheduled staff training sessions to support enhanced identification and recording of whānau contact
* developed a communication strategy between staffing groups, including strategies to highlight young people’s views and voices
* implemented plans for the routine reviewing of security and emergency management plans
* commenced communication with community liaison committee members regarding the ongoing role and functioning of the group
* reviewed the information sharing protocol between the health provider and residence staff, and re-affirmed the roles, responsibilities and expectations between both parties
* provided staff with refresher training on care practices, including searches and secure care processes
* reviewed and strengthened the compliance monitoring system.