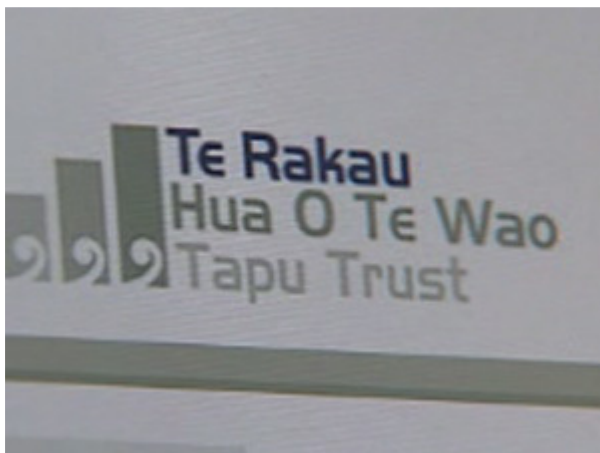


# Trust staff accused of abusing troubled teens

Published: 6:42PM Wednesday June 22, 2011 Source: ONE News

---



Te Rakau Trust - Source: ONE News

Child, Youth and Family has removed children from a high profile programme for troubled youth following allegations staff physically abused teens.

But Wellington's Te Rakau Trust says it was just doing what CYF taught it to do.

The trust has helped troubled teenagers for more than 20 years. It gives the boys - many from gangs - a home and uses performing arts to turn them away from crime and violence.

But ONE News can tonight reveal that trust staff have now been accused of using violence themselves.

CYF said "the allegations involved a range of issues, including the use of inappropriate discipline and restraint practices resulting in physical abuse".

CYF has removed all three teens from the trust's care and suspended \$800,000 in annual funding.

Among the staff interviewed by police was actor Jim Moriarty, who has been acclaimed for his work with troubled teens and prison inmates.

Moriarty strenuously denied any wrongdoing. He explained to police that any use of force by him was in line with a confrontation de-escalation course, funded by CYF themselves, that dealt with calming and restraining young men in the trust's care.

ONE News has been told the course taught a wrist-lock technique to restrain youths while staff reason with them.

The Trust said "any restraint used by [trust] staff was justified on the grounds of self-defence, the protection of staff members, or protecting individual boys from self-harm".

The allegations were thoroughly investigated by police over a period of six months. Police said "from the information obtained and the evidence reviewed, no charges are being laid".

But Child, Youth and Family says the number and nature of the allegations raised serious concerns, "particularly around the way incidents were being managed and restraint was used - that needed to be addressed".

The trust has two months to respond to CYF's decision but says it will work closely with the agency to address its concerns.

Copyright © 2011, Television New Zealand Limited. Breaking and Daily News, Sport & Weather | TV ONE, TV2 | OnDemand