

# Strategic Intentions



2024/25 – 2029/30





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# Minister's foreword

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Children deserve to wake up in the morning and feel safe and loved. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is my top priority as Minister.

I am confident that Oranga Tamariki is on a pathway to lifting performance standards and driving efficiency in its operations.

Oranga Tamariki is an enabler within the wider Children's System, which includes many agencies and service providers. Government does not have all the answers. But the work of frontline social workers, community providers and strategic partners is essential to do better for children every day.

Oranga Tamariki is enabling communities by partnering with, and investing in, strategic partners to devolve resources and decision-making powers to those who understand their communities and their whānau and to prevent children from needing state care.

Oranga Tamariki needs to be positioned to deliver against the expectations that all New Zealanders have of social work and services that protect children. Things like frequent visits to children in care, and timeliness to respond when Oranga Tamariki receives a report of concern about child safety.

Caregivers play an essential role in providing safe, loving, and stable homes for children and young people who, for whatever reason, are not able to live with their family. There is more that can be done to make caregiving more attractive and allow caregivers to make more decisions for children in their care.

More must be done to address youth offending, so that children and young people have the support they need to turn their lives around. This has been a driving factor behind developing a target to reduce the number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour by 15 per cent. This means being innovative and disciplined in directing resources across a number of agencies to make the greatest impact on outcomes.

Oranga Tamariki has plans to improve complaints and management practices, to progress my legislative priorities, and to introduce Military Style Academies.

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the government.



**Hon. Karen Chhour**  
Minister for Children

29 October 2024

# Chief Executive's statement

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Oranga Tamariki is responsible for caring for and protecting our most vulnerable children and young people. To do our job, and to ensure we meet the expectations of the Government, New Zealanders and the children and young people that depend on our support, we must be a high performing agency. We must ensure we focus on our core purpose and get the basics right.

Only then can we deliver on our strategic intentions set out clearly in this document.

There are two parts to what is presented. The first looks at the immediate years and practical delivery of changes that need to be embedded following the restructure. These include refocusing the Ministry on its core business and getting the basics right.

To ensure we are able to deliver on the first part of our strategic intentions, we must set targets, measures and hold ourselves to account.

We are prioritising action in three key areas: delivering our core purpose; embedding our new organisational culture; and getting the basics right – by focusing on integrity, accountability and fiscal sustainability.

Success against these immediate priorities will set us up to deliver on our longer-term intentions, including improving systems and capabilities for our workforce, better commissioning and investment, and enabling our community partners to do more to support children and young people.

The work we will do will ensure we are a high performing Ministry that builds its capability to ensure it can meet the needs of those who need us to do better as well as the expectations of both the New Zealand Government and New Zealanders.

As Acting Chief Executive, I want to acknowledge Chappie Te Kani and his leadership team and their commitment to change.

But change without a plan and discipline to stay the course will see Oranga Tamariki continue to move in circles.

These strategic intentions set the direction moving forward. They are clear and achievable and it is now up to the entire team to stay focused and set their sights clearly on the future.

I have no doubt that these strategic directions will help deliver a better future state of Oranga Tamariki.



**Andrew Bridgman**

Acting Secretary for Children/Chief Executive  
Oranga Tamariki

29 October 2024

# Chief Social Worker's foreword

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Quality social work and professional practice makes a positive difference, whether by Oranga Tamariki, by our partners, or those working in the community, especially when we all work together collaboratively.

Preventing the escalation of harm experienced by tamariki, rangatahi and whānau unites us in our goal to deliver quality practice. We are all committed to supporting children and young people to move away from offending behaviour that causes harm to themselves, their whānau, and the communities they are part of.

Through a focus on quality practice and the introduction of our new practice framework and approach, we are working with children, young people and their families to better understand their strengths, needs and wellbeing, within the context of family and whakapapa connections.

This focus has contributed to a reduction in the number of tamariki in state care, with more children being safely supported to remain within their family, whānau, hapū and iwi. In 2019 we had more than 6,500 tamariki in our care. In 2024 this decreased to around 4,200 tamariki in our care. This has been achieved through the collective efforts of our kaimahi, caregivers and iwi and community partners.

But so much of what we do can easily get lost.

It is often difficult for us to see the immediate impact in the life outcomes of those we've worked alongside, as tamariki and young people grow, develop and flourish. The evidence of our improved practice is seeing the oranga of children and their families strengthened.

The real work we do is about the daily focus of our social workers, youth workers, and wider practice workforce to support tamariki and whānau. This means how we work together to find solutions to keep a child safe from harm. How we talk and listen to a child to understand their needs and the aspirations of their whānau and how we work with others to ensure that children have what they need to be safe and well.

As this document outlines, our focus is on enabling our professional workforce to do their jobs to a high standard. We have made excellent progress in embedding our Practice Approach and this will continue to drive consistent quality social work and professional practice across the motu. We are building and developing the right workforce to meet current and future needs. We are investing in modern systems and tools to help our social workers manage their work and efficiently access the information they need to support tamariki and whānau. We are developing innovative and joined up ways of working within and alongside communities.

I am proud to be the Chief Social Worker and I am excited about the mahi ahead.



**Nicolette Dickson**

Chief Social Worker and Deputy Chief Executive  
Professional Practice

29 October 2024



# Strategic Framework

## VISION

All children are safe, loved and nurtured by whānau, hapū, and iwi, supported by thriving communities.

### NGĀ WAWATA – OUTCOMES OF TAMARIKI & RANGATAHI

#### MANA WHĀNAU EMPOWERED WHĀNAU

**Generations of whānau**  
Whānau are supported and connected on their journey, developing the tools they need for whānau to be whānau for generations.

**Tamariki can be tamariki**  
Tamariki are provided safe environments where they are comfortable to be themselves and tamariki can be tamariki.

#### MANA TAMARIKI CONFIDENT CHILDREN

**Better life outcomes**  
Tamariki experience personalised support that prepares them for their life journey and sets them up to experience better life outcomes.

**Tamariki chart their own futures**  
Tamariki influence the decisions made about them and grow into empowered young adults who chart their own futures.

#### MANA HĀPORI THRIVING COMMUNITIES

**Communities look after their own**  
Tamariki can find the communities where they feel they belong, and communities look after their own.

**Safeguarding tomorrow**  
Partners experience genuine partnerships, so they can deliver the services tamariki and whānau need, to safeguard their tomorrow.

## PURPOSE

We serve those children, young people and families who come to our attention. We focus on keeping them safe and preventing them from coming into care or custody by ensuring the children's system provides support to families.

### HE RINGARINGA MŌU – OUR ORGANISATION PERFORMANCE

#### PRACTICE PROTECTS

**Safety is paramount**  
We work relationally, inclusively and restoratively with tamariki, rangatahi and whānau taking action to protect the child every time we are concerned about safety and wellbeing.

**Oranga is a journey**  
Tamariki-whānau oranga and its potential is protected

#### PARTNERS AND PROVIDERS DELIVER

**Partnership-led**  
We build strong locally-led partnerships and relationships with iwi-Māori, community groups and service providers enabled by a nationally coordinated Children's System.

**Generationally-focused**  
Tamariki, rangatahi and whānau can access the right supports and services they need, when they need them, for as long as they need them.

#### THE SYSTEM PREVENTS

**Prevention every time**  
We prevent the escalation of involvement for all tamariki and rangatahi that come to our notice, including those in care, custody, or offending

**Prevention every where**  
Every opportunity is used to prevent and address harm

### OUR ROLE AND SHIFTS

#### WHAKAPAKARI KAIMAHI ENABLE OUR PEOPLE

We deliver a high-performing, highly trusted statutory care and protection and youth justice agency

#### MANA ŌRITE ENABLE OUR PARTNERS

An enabler and coordinator for Māori and communities

#### RATO PŪNAHA LEAD THE SYSTEM

We lead and drive the wider children's system

## OUR VALUES

We put tamariki first

We believe aroha is vital

We respect the mana of people

We are tika and pono

We value whakapapa

We recognise that oranga is a journey

# Strategic Delivery Plan

Sequencing of priorities over the medium term

## SHORTER TERM

2024/25-2026/27

## MEDIUM TERM

2027/28-2029/30

### WHAKAPAKARI KAIMAHI ENABLE OUR PEOPLE

Embed improved Practice Approach

Implement our focused structure  
and operating model

Invest in modern tools and systems

Grow and develop the right workforce

### MANA ŌRITE ENABLE OUR PARTNERS

Enhanced commissioning and contracting  
of partnered services

Support locally led innovation  
by enabling communities

Support caregivers and  
partner-led care responses

Target support to our priority populations

### RATO PŪNAHA LEAD THE SYSTEM

Reduce serious and persistent youth offending

Activate the new Oranga Tamariki Action Plan at local and national levels

Respond to child abuse and harm, the first 2,000 days, family violence and sexual violence

Amplify, listen and respond to the voices  
of children and young people

Develop and mature data and insights to enable  
continuous improvement learning systems

# Introducing our new Strategic Intentions

This document – our new Strategic Intentions – describes our strategy, operating model and performance system for the next five years.

Our new Strategic Framework (page 8) connects our vision and purpose to our outcomes and organisational performance, in line with our three roles and shifts which are supported by our values. Our Strategic Delivery Plan (page 9) then summarises what we will deliver to achieve our shifts, organisational performance and outcomes over the shorter and medium terms.

At its core, our strategic direction involves building strong locally-led partnerships with iwi-Māori, community groups and service providers. This means resourcing and enabling a wider response and coordinating across the children's system while focusing our delivery effort on only the most complex situations within our broad responsibilities.

The outcomes we want to achieve, and how we will measure progress towards them, are described on pages 16-23. The following section (pages 25-34) outlines our short and medium-term delivery priorities – what we want to achieve over the next five years and why. These delivery priorities support our taumata and will help us progress toward our outcomes and three strategic shifts:

- Whakapakari Kaimahi – Enable our people
- Mana Ōrite – Enable our partners
- Rato Pūnaha – Lead the system.

Our new Strategic Intentions also supports:

- our roles and responsibilities described on page 11
- the children and young people we serve, described on (pages 36-42).

## Our journey so far

We have made good progress since our establishment as a standalone agency in 2017, but recognise there have been system failures and critical gaps that need to be addressed to protect children at risk. The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care in their final report Whanaketia – Through Pain and Trauma, From Darkness to Light clearly shows the State failed in

its duty to keep children in its care safe from harm. Whanaketia is a call for change for children in care.

Since 2021 we implemented a fundamental shift in how we work with children and families with a new practice framework and practice approach, establishing strategic partnerships with iwi and Māori organisations, and supporting innovative community-led approaches to child protection. More recently we have carefully considered the recommendations of many reviews and listened to the voices of children, young people, families and partners about how we need to change. We have also advanced our strategy and planning to deliver on new Ministerial and Government priorities.

## Government and Ministerial priorities

Our medium-term delivery priorities reflect key government and ministerial priorities including:

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, including meeting National Care Standards<sup>1</sup> for children in care (page 25).
- Early intervention and support for children in the first 2,000 days of their lives (from conception to 5 years) (page 32).
- Reducing youth offending and reoffending to meet the Prime Minister's target for this (page 31).
- Implementing a social investment approach to commissioning and investment in social services (page 33).
- Strengthening the Enabling Communities work and support for locally led solutions (page 29).
- Supporting caregivers including to give them more autonomy and make caregiving more attractive (page 29).
- Supporting children who have experienced family violence and sexual violence (page 32).
- Strengthening our complaint management and responsiveness (page 33).

<sup>1</sup> Sets out the standard of care that every child and young person needs to do well and be well, and the support all caregivers can expect to receive. Read more here: <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/national-care-standards/>

# Our roles and responsibilities

Oranga Tamariki has a core delivery role as a social work practicing organisation as well as leadership, enabling and advocacy roles across the children's sector, recognising that we cannot be solely responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in New Zealand. The needs of children are influenced by complex social and economic factors at the family, whānau, community and societal levels, including parental income, social supports and mental health. Addressing these needs, and reducing concerns about child safety, therefore requires a coordinated, system-wide response.

We administer the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, which is about promoting the well-being of children, young persons, and their families and communities through:

- Providing or engaging services
- Working to prevent harm, including harm from offending, by working with children and assisting families
- Assisting families to care for their children and maintaining and strengthening family connections
- Ensuring care for children who need to be removed have a safe, stable and loving home as quickly as possible and support to address their needs
- Responding to offending
- Assisting young people to transition out of care to independence.

The duties and responsibilities of the Oranga Tamariki Chief Executive are described in terms of service response (including service volumes where applicable) in Figure 1.

We also administer Part 1 of the Children's Act 2014. This requires children's agencies to work together through the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan<sup>2</sup> to achieve the outcomes of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy<sup>3</sup> for the core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki. More information on the Action Plan can be found on page 32.

In addition to our primary legislative functions, we have additional statutory functions that direct us to work with other agencies to expand our role in protecting and caring for children who come to our attention. Legislation that expands our responsibilities include:

- Family Violence Act 2018
- Care of Children Act 2004
- Adoption Act 1955
- Adult Adoption Information Act 1985
- Adoption (Inter-country) Act 1997
- Children and Young People's Commission Act 2022
- Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022

Oranga Tamariki has international obligation that require us to uphold the rights of children we support and care for. We are signatories to the following:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture
- Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction

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**"It's like when you know someone who cares about you and wants the complete best for you, everything about yourself changes. You now see yourself from the way that person sees you. All it takes is one person to help you make that step forward."**

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2024 Synthesis (page 20 Original source: VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai. (2022). Whakamānawatia tōku taiao! He hononga rangatira! Honour my world – my noble connections: Rangatira experiences of leaving care in Aotearoa New Zealand.

2 The Oranga Tamariki Action Plan can be found at [www.orangatamarikiactionplan.govt.nz/](http://www.orangatamarikiactionplan.govt.nz/)

3 The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy can be found at [www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/child-youth-wellbeing/index.html](http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/child-youth-wellbeing/index.html)

Figure 1 – our roles and responsibilities

**Role:** We deliver a high performing, highly trusted statutory care and protection and youth justice agency

**Role:** We lead and drive the wider children’s system

**SITUATION FOR TAMARIKI AND WHĀNAU**

**Not our role**  
Tamariki with no known risks

Tamariki are at risk of coming into contact to the attention of Oranga Tamariki

Someone has a concern about the safety and oranga of a tamaiti, and shares this concern with Oranga Tamariki

An initial assessment of the concerns identifies that further understanding of needs, safety and oranga is required

A decision is made at the end of a core assessment that a tamaiti is ‘in need of care or protection’

**BROAD SERVICE CATEGORIES**

Prevention\* & early support

Intake and Assessment

Intervention

\* Preventing tamariki from coming to the attention of Oranga Tamariki. Other services prevent escalating needs (and cost) including through early support

**SERVICE RESPONSES**

Influence and monitor outcomes for cohort through the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan; amplify voices and advocate for needs

Enabling Communities prototypes & Strategic Iwi Partnerships (span the continuum)

Social workers in school; Family Start; Gateway

Reports of concern

Initial assessment of safety and oranga

Multi-agency family harm processes

Further Action Required

Core assessment of needs, safety and oranga

Joint Child Protection Protocol investigation with Police

Full assessment of safety and wellbeing (as part of Family Group Conference referral)

Abuse findings

Care & Protection Family Group Conference (preparation, facilitation, planning, implementation, review)

**TAMARIKI OR RANGATAHI\***

**237,000\*\***

Oranga Tamariki Action Plan cohort

**71,616**

Reports of Concern for 52,788 tamariki

**38,727**

Core assessments for 32,000 tamariki

**6,591**

Care & Protection Family Group Conference for 4,750 tamariki

**Role:** An enabler and coordinator for Māori and communities

\* The data used for ‘Tamariki or rangatahi’ are figures from 2022/23.  
\*\* Figures based on the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan cohort data from Stats NZ’s Integrated Data Infrastructure and represent a within the year figure in the 12 months to 30 June 2022.



Concerns for a tamaiti and their whānau mean that an application is made to bring a tamaiti into care

Tamariki are supported in the care or custody of Oranga Tamariki (excluding Youth Justice)

People need support from our adoptions and international care work team

Tamariki and rangatahi require support from the Youth Justice system due to their offending behaviours

Tamariki and rangatahi require planning and support to successfully leave Oranga Tamariki care

**Not our role**  
Rangatahi older than 25 who were in care or a youth justice placement

Care

Youth Justice

Transition support

Entry to care practice and decision-making  
Court processes

Care planning, implementation and review  
Caregiver recruitment, assessment, and support  
Residences, community and family homes

Adoption practice  
International case work practice

Youth Justice Family Group Conference (Intention to Charge and Court Directed)  
Youth Justice Supervision Orders  
Youth Justice Custodial Placements

Discharging orders  
Exits from care arrangements  
Exits from youth justice custody  
Permanent care practice  
Transition Services

**1,092**

New care entries for 1,031 tamariki

**4,317**

Tamariki in care as at 30 Jun 2023

Support for more than 4000 requests and enquiries

**4,450**

Youth Justice Family Group Conferences for 2,050 rangatahi

**1,650**

Rangatahi receiving transition support\*\*\*

\*\*\* The number of rangatahi include those actively working with a Transition Worker, young people without a transition worker or between the ages of 21-25 years may be receiving transition support through the Transition Assistance Helpline.

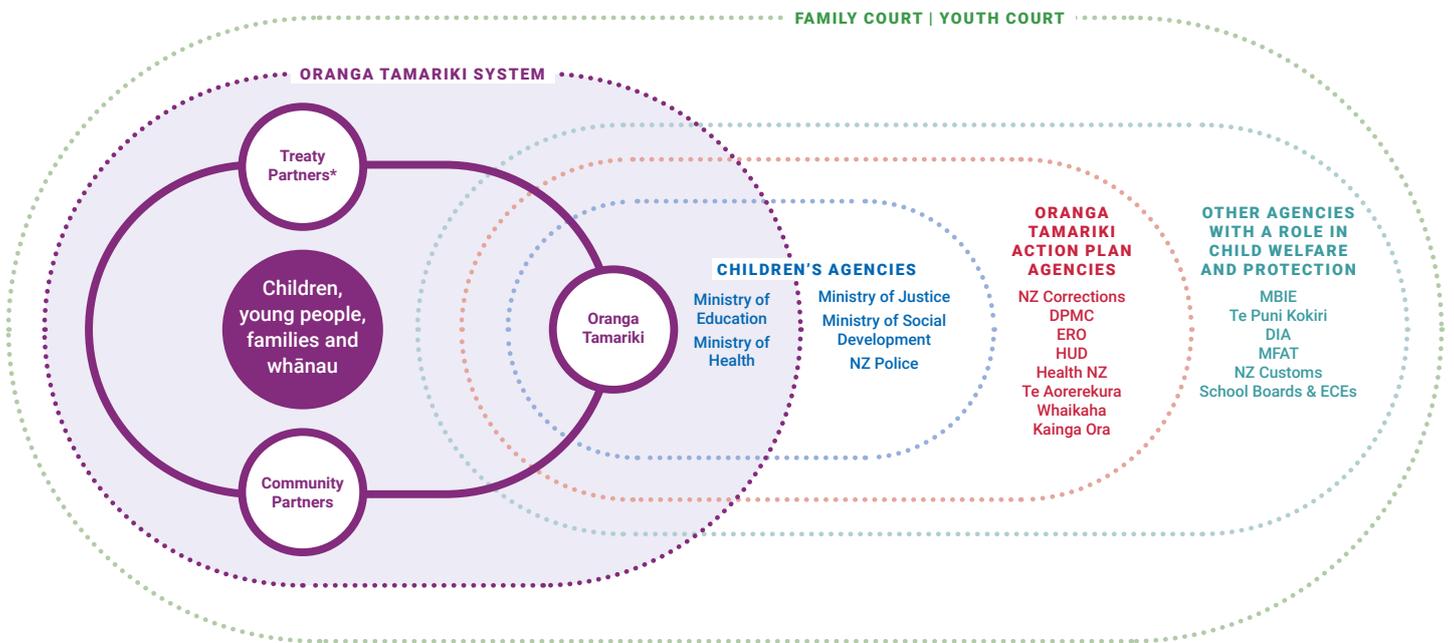
### Building a coordinated, cross-agency children’s system

Oranga Tamariki is the government’s lead advisor on the broader children’s system (shown in Figure 2) including children’s agencies: the New Zealand Police, and the Ministries of Education, Social Development, Health, and Justice, and other agencies that work

with children including the Department of Corrections, Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, Kainga Ora – Homes and Communities, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. This complements our role as an enabler and coordinator for Māori and communities. Our role leading the children’s system is discussed more in the Rato Pūnaha section of this document from page 31.

**Figure 2: How the children’s system is organised**

This diagram provides a simplified view of the complex interrelationships and connections across the children’s system



\* We define our Treaty Partners as Māori whānau, marae, hapū, Iwi and Kaupapa Māori groups and organisations.

**Other organisations we work with**

Commissioners and advocates	Independent Police Conduct Authority	Central agencies	Education Review Office	Courts and Tribunals	Oversight of the Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Rights Commissioners</li> <li>Health and Disability Commissioner</li> <li>Privacy Commissioner</li> <li>VOYCE Whakarongo Mai</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Service Commission</li> <li>The Treasury</li> <li>Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet</li> <li>Social Investment Agency</li> <li>Ministry for Regulation</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Children’s Monitor</li> <li>Children and Young People’s Commission</li> <li>Chief Ombudsman</li> </ul>





# HINE WAWATA

## OUR PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

### Honouring the voices of tamariki

In conjunction with the Youth Advisory Group, we are proud to present Hine Wawata – an interconnected performance system centred on the aspirations of tamariki and rangatahi.

In an enduring recognition to Pūao-te-Atatū, Hine Wawata comprises of two major components:

- Her prized core: **Ngā Wawata** – the Outcomes of tamariki and rangatahi

An Outcomes Framework that acknowledges the limitless potential every child is inherently born with, and what we must deliver to enable them to lead their best lives. First-hand testimony is prioritized in Ngā Wawata.

- Her cradle of service: **He Ringaringa Mōu** – the performance of Oranga Tamariki and the Children's System

A Performance Framework that consolidates our strategic direction into the three interwoven functions we must uphold in service to Tamariki and rangatahi. He Ringaringa Mōu draws heavily on our Practice Approach enablers and focuses on our operational purpose and delivery, for the generational benefit of tamariki and rangatahi.

Containing one of the first Outcomes Frameworks to be designed by care experienced youth, we acknowledge the passion, bravery and generosity of the Youth Advisory Group. We also acknowledge Dr Sasha McMeeking who consistently challenged and grounded us in customizing He Ara Waiora<sup>4</sup> for a uniquely Oranga Tamariki context.

Our hope is that you feel the energies of our youth advisors in Hine Wawata - strong yet subtle, wise yet hopeful, clear yet spirited, pragmatic yet unrelenting.

Through Hine Wawata, we honour their many voices.

<sup>4</sup> Read more about He Ara Waiora | The Treasury New Zealand at: [www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nzeconomy/higher-living-standards/he-ara-waiora](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nzeconomy/higher-living-standards/he-ara-waiora)

# Foreword from the Youth Advisory Group

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The journey to design and develop this Outcomes Framework has been an emotional and transformative experience, and an undertaking we did not take lightly. As we embarked on this project, it quickly became clear that this was not just another Oranga Tamariki project – it was about reassuring each of us that our voices, our stories, and our struggles have not been in vain.

Working on this project was the first time many of us felt that Oranga Tamariki has genuinely acknowledged our voices. Every single word has been scrutinised, born out of deeply personal experiences in care. The framework that emerged is not just a tool—it is a visual representation of our voices, our hopes, and our collective care experience. It is straightforward, reflecting the common themes that unite us, yet it is deeply personal, allowing each of us to see our efforts and feel the hope that we have poured into this mahi. We believe this framework has the potential to guide Oranga Tamariki in supporting tamariki and rangatahi through some of the most challenging times in their lives, ensuring that whānau are equipped for generations to come.

Reflecting on the hard work and dedication that went into this project, we cannot overlook the challenges we faced. Revisiting trauma, confronting conflict, and ensuring that all voices were acknowledged and incorporated were not easy tasks. However, these challenges only reinforced our belief that this framework is essential. It made us hopeful that Oranga Tamariki will meet their obligations in the best possible way, and that future generations of tamariki and rangatahi in care will truly know what it means to feel safe and loved.

We would like to acknowledge the other Youth Advisory Group members, and the voices they represent, whose insights also informed the creation and development of Hine Wawata.

Looking ahead, it is clear that Oranga Tamariki must continue to work closely with communities, caregivers, and rangatahi to ensure that this framework is implemented in a way that reflects the rights and voices of those it is designed to support. This is not just about meeting legal obligations; it is about transforming Oranga Tamariki from a responsive service into a preventative one. It is about healing the fractures between Oranga Tamariki and rangatahi, whānau, and the providers who support us. It is about ensuring that future generations do not have to endure the same pain and trauma that we have. We expect Oranga Tamariki to take this framework seriously, to implement it with the same care and dedication with which it was created, and to use it as a tool to create a future where all tamariki and rangatahi are safe, loved, and supported. We know that change is not just possible, but within reach.

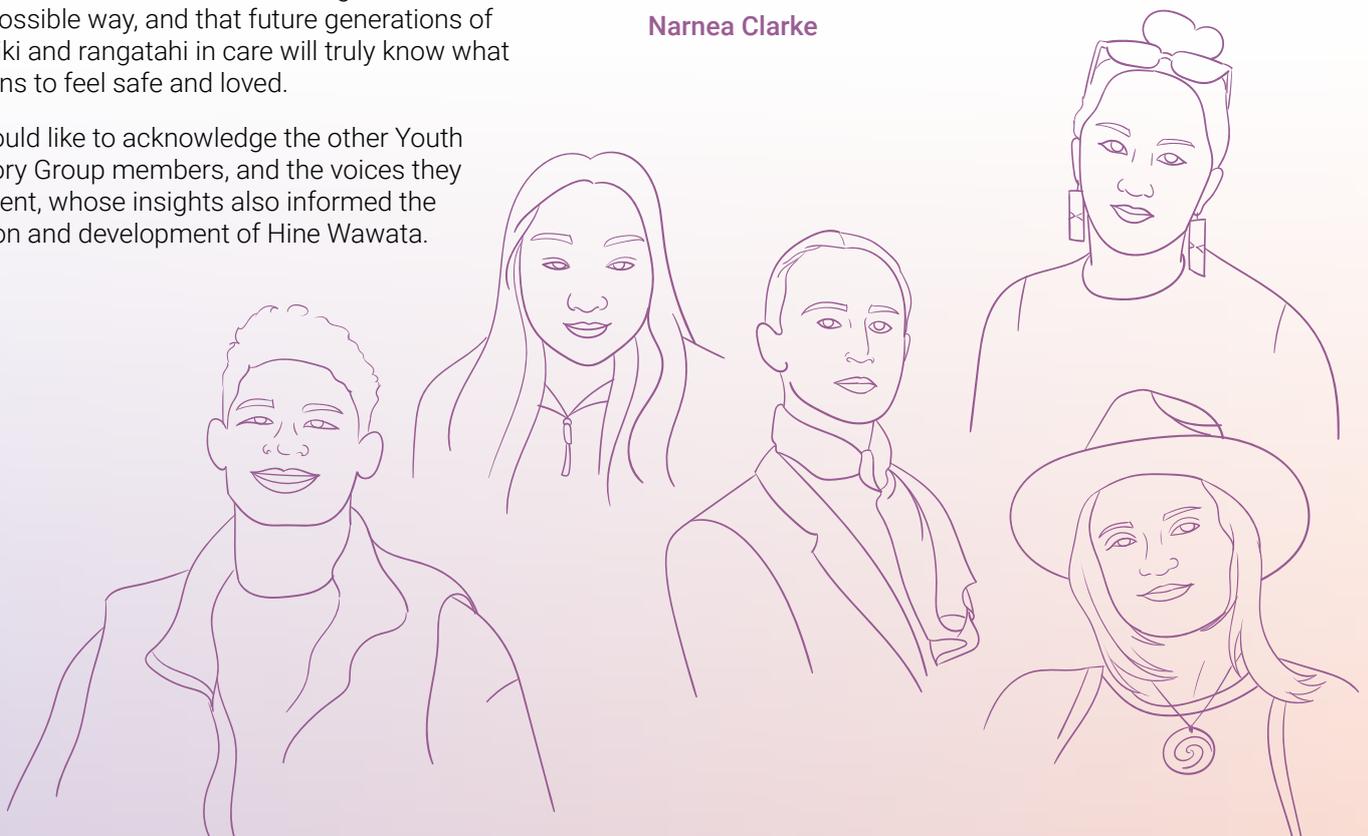
Mafiress McGregor-Tau'i

Jennifer Thonrithi

Dimitri (Dima) Gibbs

Meno Kapa-Clarke

Narnea Clarke



# HINE WAWATA

OUR PERFORMANCE SYSTEM



# Ngā Wawata

## OUTCOMES FOR TAMARIKI



### MANA WHĀNAU EMPOWERED WHĀNAU

#### Generations of whānau

Whānau are supported and connected on their journey, developing the tools they need for whānau to be whānau for generations.

#### Tamariki can be tamariki

Tamariki are provided safe environments where they are comfortable to be themselves and tamariki can be tamariki.



### MANA TAMARIKI CONFIDENT CHILDREN

#### Better life outcomes

Tamariki experience personalised support that prepares them for their life journey and sets them up to experience better life outcomes.

#### Tamariki chart their own futures

Tamariki influence the decisions made about them and grow into empowered young adults who chart their own futures.



### MANA HĀPORI THRIVING COMMUNITIES

#### Communities look after their own

Tamariki can find the communities where they feel they belong, and communities look after their own.

#### Safeguarding tomorrow

Partners' experience genuine partnership, so they can deliver the services tamariki & whānau need, to safeguard their tomorrow.

## About Ngā Wawata

At the heart of Ngā Wawata, the Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi, is the realisation of Mana Whānau (Empowered Whānau), Mana Tamariki (Confident Children), and Mana Hāpori (Thriving Communities); where all children are safe, loved and nurtured by whānau, hapū, and iwi, supported by thriving communities.

Ngā Wawata are expressed through six outcomes. Whilst these outcomes are not centred on Oranga Tamariki, we have clear duties. Each outcome statement is progressive, formed of three parts each building on the prior:

- *'Must Deliver'*. Where we must meet the basic needs of tamariki and whānau. The short-term outcome.
- *'Greatest Contribution'*. Enabling and equipping them through how we respond and engage. The medium-term outcome.
- *'Limitless Future'*. Where they go on to thrive independently without the need for Oranga Tamariki involvement. The long-term outcome.

What we do and how we do it may change, but the outcomes we aspire to for our tamariki, rangatahi and whānau will endure.



Suggested by the Youth Advisory Group, the takarangi symbolises past knowledge and experiences informing and linking with the present, as well as the cycles of growth and decay. It is a symbol of ever-evolving change, and in Ngā Wawata, it shows tamariki in the centre, supported by whānau and hāpori.

# He Ringaringa Mōu

## OUR PERFORMANCE



### PRACTICE PROTECTS

#### Safety is paramount

We work relationally, inclusively and restoratively with tamariki, rangatahi and whānau taking action together to protect the child every time we are concerned about safety and wellbeing

#### Oranga is a journey

Tamariki-whānau oranga and its potential is protected



### PARTNERSHIPS DELIVER

#### Partnership led

We build strong locally-led partnerships with iwi Māori, community groups and service providers enabled by a nationally-coordinated Children's System.

#### Generationally focused

Tamariki, rangatahi and whānau can access the right supports and services they need, when they need them, for as long as they need them



### THE SYSTEM PREVENTS

#### Prevention every time

We prevent the escalation of involvement for all tamariki and rangatahi that come to our notice, including those in care, custody, or offending

#### Prevention everywhere

Every opportunity is used by us to prevent and address harm, alongside every other New Zealander

## About He Ringaringa Mōu

Orbiting Ngā Wawata – the Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi, are three whetū (stars) that symbolise the cradle of service we're responsible for, He Ringaringa Mōu – our performance.

The three whetū of He Ringaringa Mōu represent our three interwoven statutory functions.

- 'Protection' through the delivery of quality social work practice for tamariki, rangatahi, their whānau and their victims.

- 'Partnership' with Māori, community groups and service providers enabling local support for tamariki and whānau in need
- 'Prevention' by leading and guiding the wider children's system to provide integrated services to tamariki, rangatahi and whānau, preventing the need for statutory intervention

Upholding these responsibilities is a challenge we accept. We acknowledge ko Oranga Tamariki tenei.



The inner brightness of the whetū acknowledges the divine spark that every child is inherently born with. The overlapping and interweaving star trails are symbolic of the interconnectedness of our functions, and our enduring journey of improvement.

# Hine Wawata – the frameworks of our performance system

## Ngā Wawata – outcomes for tamariki & whānau

MANA WHĀNAU (EMPOWERED WHĀNAU)				
What we want to achieve	Tamariki are provided safe environments	Tamariki are comfortable to be themselves	Whānau are supported and connected in their journey	Whānau develop the tools they need
How we will know	Tamariki feel safe	Tamariki feel they can be themselves	Whānau feel supported	Whānau feel they're developing useful skills
MANA TAMARIKI (CONFIDENT CHILDREN)				
What we want to achieve	Tamariki influence the decisions made about them	Tamariki grow into empowered young adults	Tamariki experience personalised support	Tamariki are prepared for their life journey
How we will know	Tamariki feel they have a say in their life	Tamariki feel capable	Tamariki feel supported	Tamariki feel prepared for life
MANA HĀPORI (THRIVING COMMUNITIES)				
What we want to achieve	Tamariki find their communities	Tamariki feel they belong in their communities	Partners experience genuine partnership	Partner's deliver the services tamariki and whānau need
How we will know	Tamariki feel they have supportive relationships outside of home	Tamariki feel they have somewhere they belong	Partners feel respected	Partners feel capable/equipped to deliver services to tamariki and whānau

## He Ringaringa Mōu – Our performance

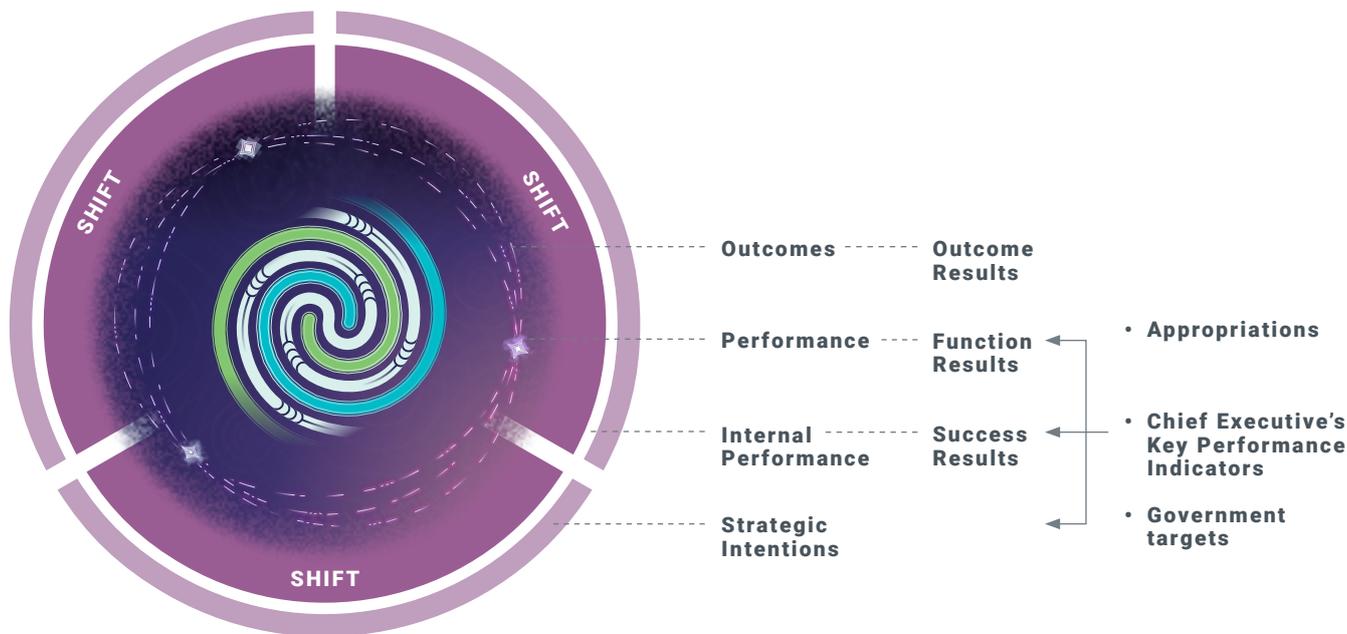
PRACTICE PROTECTS		
What we want to achieve	We work relationally, inclusively & restoratively with tamariki & whānau taking action together to protect the child every time we are concerned about their safety or wellbeing	So tamariki-whānau oranga and its potential is protected
How we will know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to Tamariki safety is timely</li> <li>Tamariki and whānau are supported to actively participate in the practice process</li> <li>Tamariki needs are understood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tamariki have strong relationships with those that matter to them</li> <li>Tamariki and Whānau perspective is central in all decisions and changes</li> </ul>
PARTNERSHIPS DELIVER		
What we want to achieve	We build strong locally-led partnerships with iwi Māori, community groups and service providers enabled by a nationally-coordinated Children's System.	So tamariki & whānau can access the right supports and services they need, when they need it, for long as they need it
How we will know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oranga Tamariki works in partnership</li> <li>National agencies cooperate and coordinate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The services available reflect the needs of tamariki &amp; whānau</li> <li>Tamariki and whānau find services accessible</li> </ul>
SYSTEM PREVENTS		
What we want to achieve	We prevent the escalation of involvement for all tamariki and rangatahi that come to our notice, including those in care, custody, or offending	So that every opportunity is used to prevent and address harm
How we will know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Escalation to statutory response is reduced</li> <li>Less young people reoffend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oranga Tamariki does no further harm to Tamariki &amp; Whānau</li> <li>Oranga Tamariki has the right response the first time</li> </ul>

## Hine Wawata realises our strategic aspirations

The takarangi design of Hine Wawata gives life to the Oranga Tamariki vision through the realisation of Ngā Wawata – the Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi. By upholding Mana Tamariki, Mana Whānau and Mana Hāpori, we want tamariki and rangatahi to thrive independently amongst their whānau and hāpori, forever more.

The orbiting whetū of He Ringaringa Mōu – Our performance, details the interwoven functions we're accountable for, and to whom we serve. These whetū align directly with our transformative Strategic Shifts and they benefit from the execution of Our Strategic Intentions. Informing all of Hine Wawata's elements is our internal performance reporting, which includes our other public commitments such as our appropriations, the Chief Executives Key Performance Indicators and government targets.

When Hine Wawata thrives, everything thrives.



## Reporting

Hine Wawata has many layers, and those layers will have a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures. Ngā Wawata and He Ringaringa Moū will be externally reported in our Annual Reports and Quarterly Reports, alongside our government commitments.

Other layers and supporting indicators of Hine Wawata will be reported internally for business improvement purposes.

## Ongoing development

Hine Wawata is underpinned by a robust measuring and monitoring approach that enables us to understand, interrogate, target and improve our performance for tamariki and rangatahi. We have defined, rationalized and prioritised what we will monitor and how we will measure our progress.

To ensure we understand our performance now, we have identified suitable measures available in the short-term. Weaker measures will be iteratively phased out as more meaningful information develops.

Hine Wawata is a living performance system that will provide the transparency, reflection and accountability to help us move ever closer to Ngā Wawata – the Outcomes of tamariki and rangatahi.

Disclaimer: Oranga Tamariki claims no ownership of any te ao Māori concepts, methodologies, or approaches that have contributed to the design of Hine Wawata. We have incorporated He Ara Waiora with the support of Dr Sasha McMeeking, as well as te ao Māori concepts (including Puaoteata-tu) as experienced by the diverse membership of the Youth Advisory Group. Hine Wawata reflects their realities and their aspirations. We have also drawn heavily from the Oranga Tamariki Practice Approach. To date, no iwi Māori organisations, including Strategic Partners, have been involved in the development of Hine Wawata. Grounded by a Māori-led project team, we respectfully hope that Hine Wawata sets out our commitment to a future where all tamariki, supported by their whānau and Hāpori (communities), are flourishing in their own self-led futures.



# Our delivery priorities

## Strategic shift 1: Whakapakari Kaimahi – Enable our people

We deliver a high-performing, highly trusted statutory care and protection and youth justice agency



### Taumata 1:

We will focus our social workers on the most challenging mahi and statutory responses, collaborating with other kaimahi offering wider support to children and whānau.

### Taumata 2:

We will strengthen our backbone support for frontline staff by optimising our structure, ensuring we have the right capability at the right time.



**This contributes to our performance outcome of 'Practice protects'**

This shift focuses on ensuring we have highly trusted, competent and confident professionals operating in a statutory environment. This recognises there are services that Oranga Tamariki kaimahi will continue to provide, and this is where our workforce, systems and processes must be the best they can be to serve Aotearoa with world-leading social work practice.

As the role of our partners and other agencies increases, Oranga Tamariki needs to be appropriately sized to support partners and coordinate and lead across the system. With a systematic focus on earlier intervention, we expect the need for child protection and youth offending services to reduce over time.

### Shorter term

2024/25-2026/27

### Delivery priority 1

#### Embed improved Practice Approach

We will complete the implementation of our Practice Approach, and then embed the approach as our new way of working, including monitoring our progress through our practice quality assurance systems. We have made good progress in implementing the approach to date, through the development of tools, resources, and training. These support our kaimahi to work in rights-based, relational, inclusive, and restorative ways, grounded in Te Ao Māori.

Embedding our improved Practice Approach is important so that our kaimahi can:

- better meet the needs of children and young people including whaikaha (disabilities) and takatāpui (rainbow).
- work in rights-based, relational, inclusive, and restorative ways, grounded in Te Ao Māori.
- work in new complementary ways with iwi, Māori, and community-led approaches.
- collaborate across the broader children's system to ensure the best care and support is provided to children.



**“What you do makes a difference. A lot of the workers don't know that, as they think they're just doing their job, but in reality they're helping so many people”**



2024 Synthesis (page 24 Original source: Malatest International. (2023). Hearing from young people - Just Sayin' 2023. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki–Ministry for Children.)

To deliver this priority we will also:

- respond to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care including to better prevent, monitor, identify and respond to harm.
- improve capability and safety of kaimahi in youth justice residences and community homes, as part of our response to the rapid review focused on secure residences and a sample of community homes led by former Police Commissioner Mike Bush.
- improve monitoring against the National Care Standards to inform practice improvements.
- embed the new ways of working by implementing practice improvement tools, resources, training, monitoring and quality assurance.



**“If the social worker had time to build a relationship, I would have had the safety to tell her about the experiences I was going through at the time which would have helped me to leave...instead of admitting to the foster family that I didn’t want to live with them.”**



2024 Synthesis (page 27 Original source: Clunie, M., Fenaughty, J., Haunui, K., Hamilton, T., Lockie, A., Mackie, K., Metzger N. Radford-Poupard, J., Sade-Inia, J., Shippam, M., Wi-Hongi, A., (2023) Making Ourselves Visible: The Experiences of Takatāpui and Rainbow Rangatahi in Care. Point and Associates and the Community Design Team.)

## Delivery priority 2 Implement our focused structure and operating model

Implementing our focused structure and operating model is important to:

- have clear lines of accountability and faster decision making that empowers frontline staff.
- clarify how our organisation gets things done, works together, with our partners and the wider children's system, and how resources are used.
- deliver or fiscal sustainability target set by the Government.

To deliver this priority we will:

- drive a high-performance culture with a leadership focus on performance, risk and financial management, diversity and inclusion, health, safety and wellbeing.
- improve governance and external advisory group support, including our Risk and Assurance Committee, Ministerial Advisory Board, Youth Advisory Group, Disability Advisory Group, the Pacific Panel and the Rainbow Advisory Group
- implement other priorities to deliver our new operating model, including through benefits and enterprise change management for our portfolio of key projects.

## Medium term 2027/28-2029/30

### Delivery Priority 3: Invest in modern tools and systems

Investing in modern tools and systems is important so that:

- kaimahi can have more time to better support children and young people.
- children and their family can engage with us through digital channels.
- systems can enable more mobile and responsive ways of working for both internal and partnered kaimahi, as we shift service delivery responsibility to partners.

To deliver this priority we will develop new frontline case and care management technology systems. This will:

- provide efficient, accessible and secure systems for existing kaimahi and emergent partner-enabling service delivery models.
- ensure that adapting and updating these tools is manageable and affordable.
- support quality practice including a case-complexity approach, demand-based deployment, and monitoring.

#### **Delivery priority 4** **Grow and develop the right workforce**

Growing and developing the right workforce is important so that our workforce:

- has the capabilities, diversity, and capacity required to be aligned, collaborative and responsive to the needs of children and young people.
- can scale and adapt as our partners progressively take the lead in providing care and support.

To deliver this priority we will work with partners including the Social Workers Registration Board to:

- understand current and future challenges, including an aging population, low volume of graduating social workers, and the diversity complexity of children's need by taking an intersectional approach.
- progress a strategic sector-wide workforce development approach that supports the pipeline of social workers and allied practitioners including youth workers for Oranga Tamariki and across the sector.
- promote the professional standing and identity of care and protection and youth justice practitioners in New Zealand including through attraction, recruitment and retention activities.

# Strategic Shift 2: Mana Ōrite – Enable our partners

An enabler and coordinator for Māori and communities



## Taumata 3:

**We will support partners and resource them to deliver care responses for children that need it.**

## Taumata 4:

**We will continue to reprioritise resources to enable partner-led preventative approaches, working towards at least 50 percent of funding being managed by partners.**



**This contributes to our performance outcome of 'Partnerships deliver'**

This shift is informed by many reviews from:

- Pūao te āta tū (daybreak): The Report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Māori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare (1986)
- 'WAI 2915' – He Pāharakeke, he Rito Whakakīkinga Whāruarua: Waitangi Tribunal Inquiry (2021)<sup>5</sup>
- 'Te Kahu Aroha' – Hipokingia ki te Kahu Aroha Hipokingia ki te Katoa: Ministerial Advisory Board Report (2021).<sup>6</sup>

### Shorter term

**2024/25-2026/27**

### Delivery priority 5

### Enhanced commissioning and contracting of partnered services

Enhancing our commissioning and contracting of partnered services is important to:

- centrally enable more effective locally-led services, as articulated by children and young people and their family or whānau.
- progress towards 50 percent of funding being managed by partners.

- improve the consistency and fairness of approaches to both direct and partnered spend on care arrangements and supports (whether caregiving or funded placements).
- improve contract efficiency by better aligning funding with actual delivery.
- better understand cumulative impacts from broader children's agency contracting directions and decisions in communities.

To deliver this priority we will improve our commissioning, procurement and contracting processes and practices. Specifically, we will:

- align national and regional investment priorities.
- implement more outcome-based contracting and mutually beneficial (and less burdensome) reporting.
- ensure procurement is fit-for-purpose, with more consistent and equitable pricing and costing.
- take more opportunities to better join-up supports for children 'in place' including:
  - by pooling funding through cross-government 'backbones' to reduce unnecessary procurement, contract management and reporting costs<sup>7</sup>.
  - by commissioning networks of diverse partners and providers with share accountabilities (formal and informal) within and to their communities.

5 Read the WAI 2915 report at: [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/performance-and-monitoring/reviews-and-inquiries/he-paharakeke-he-ritowhakakikinga-wharuarua-waitangi-tribunal-inquiry-wai-2915/](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/performance-and-monitoring/reviews-and-inquiries/he-paharakeke-he-ritowhakakikinga-wharuarua-waitangi-tribunal-inquiry-wai-2915/)

6 Read the Te Kahu Aroha report at: [www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-09/SWRB082-OT-Report-FA-ENG-WEB.PDF](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2021-09/SWRB082-OT-Report-FA-ENG-WEB.PDF)

7 For example, based on administrative data gathered by the Ministry of Social Development from social sector agencies, in 2021/22 10 percent of NGOs had five or more different contracts including with the same funding agency (4 percent had ten or more). Place-based 'backbones' include the Manaaki Tairāwhiti Iwi-led partnership, South Auckland Social Wellbeing Board and health sector Iwi-Māori Partnership Boards.

### Delivery Priority 6: Support locally led innovation by enabling communities

Supporting locally led innovation by enabling communities is important to:

- recognise that iwi-Māori, community groups and service providers are best placed to ensure the needs of each child are met, including by building protective community networks and repairing and sustaining whakapapa connections.
- change the way we work with and shift decision making and resources to Māori and communities, to mobilise supports in a timely way and reduce risk of children coming to our attention or needing a statutory response, and to improve care responses.

To deliver this priority we will advance implementation, and then evaluate our Enabling Communities prototypes so learnings can inform future enhancements to our operating model. This includes:

- supporting willing iwi and Māori partners to redesign and reimagine what care looks like for their children, young people and families.
- building on our commitments and engagements with Pacific communities with an Enabling Communities Pacific prototype.
- enabling collective learning around how we safely decentralise and delegate parts of our care and protection system, which we intend to build into our 'business as usual' through further operating model refinements.

Some of our Enabling Communities prototypes are also supported by Strategic Partnerships which are discussed further on page 28.

### Medium term 2027/28-2029/30

### Delivery priority 7 Support caregivers and partner-led care responses

Supporting caregivers and partner-led care responses is important for:

- caregivers (both family and non-family) to provide safe and loving homes for children where they can heal, belong, and be themselves.

- children to have consistent, appropriate, and quality care options that best respond to their level and complexity of needs.

To deliver this priority we will:

- focus on keeping children with their family, where support is provided by people they can trust, in places where they feel safe.
- build collaborative approaches so care can be planned and delivered in partnership with hapū, iwi, Māori, and communities.
- ensure we have the right types of care provision and support in the right places, including a range of suitable community-based care arrangements and less use of interim and less stable placement options.
- make caregiving more attractive, and improve caregivers' rights and responsibilities to make decisions regarding children they care for.
- support children into more supportive and sustainable care arrangements, with a focus on getting them safely home where possible.



**“There were more processes and procedures to make sure I was comfortable in the home I was living which definitely helped and made me feel safer than I have felt in OT’s homes [with care provider.]”**



(Making Ourselves Visible, page 40)

## Delivery priority 8 Target support to our priority populations

Targeting support to our priority populations is important to:

- ensure the children’s care and protection and youth justice systems better serve the unique needs of diverse Māori, Pacific, whaikaha (disabilities) and takatāpui (rainbow) populations, who tend to be the most vulnerable (see below).
- give effect to the rights of the child or young person is being respected and upheld and ensuring their well-being is protected by recognising their whakapapa and whanaungatanga responsibilities of their family, whānau, hapū, iwi, and family group (see section 5(1)(b)(i) and (iv) of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989)

Māori are over representation of in both the care and protection and youth justice systems (see figures on pages 36-42). Oranga Tamariki is committed to:

- partnering with Māori, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities.
- supporting Māori to achieve rangatiratanga over their kāinga.
- aiming to keep tamariki and rangatahi Māori from harm.
- reporting on the disparities between Māori and non-Māori.
- maintaining Strategic partnerships with iwi and Māori organisations.

Of the 5,476 children in care as at 30 June 2021, 56 percent (3,227) had at least one indication of an impairment through either the Gateway Assessment or Critical Risk Alerts<sup>8</sup>. In care and protection and youth justice residences, the prevalence rises to 70-80 percent.

Pacific children are also over-represented in the care and protection system (17 percent, while only 14 percent of all 0–17-year-olds in New Zealand are Pacific). An estimated 15 percent of school-aged young people involved with Oranga Tamariki are takatāpui/rainbow, with takatāpui Māori approximately twice as likely to be involved with Oranga Tamariki as rainbow young people from other ethnicities.

To deliver this priority we will:

- deepen and build our relationships with iwi, as Treaty partners, including our 10 current strategic partnerships who help tamariki and rangatahi Māori to thrive in the care and protection of their whānau, hapū and iwi.
- lift our capability as an organisation and as kaimahi across Māori and Pacific cultural capabilities.
- clarify expectations to improve the experiences of those who identify with takatāpui and rainbow.
- implement strategies we have for Pacific and whaikaha populations<sup>9</sup>.

This is supported by work to amplify, listen and respond to the voices of children and young people, with support from our Youth Advisory Group, the Pacific Panel and the Rainbow Advisory Group.

8 These are not official published statistics from Oranga Tamariki. Approximately 80 percent of children and young people in care have a completed a Gateway Assessment and so this prevalence is likely an underestimation.

9 This includes a refresh of the Pacific Strategy 2021-2014.

# Strategic Shift 3: Rato Pūnaha - Lead the system

We lead and drive the wider children's system



## Taumata 5:

**We will set expectations and drive accountability across the children's system for the children that we serve, working alongside our partners to do this at a local and regional level.**

## Taumata 6:

**We will use evidence, particularly data, analytics, and children and whānau insights, to drive system improvement and investment allocation.**



**This contributes to our performance outcome of 'The system prevents'**

Oranga Tamariki has a unique role as the lead advisor across government to advocate for the wellbeing of children, young people and their families. This means coordinating agencies, organisations, communities, and individuals to collectively improve outcomes. At a local and regional level, this means we will work alongside our iwi-Māori, community groups and service providers to drive coordinated responses across the social services that work for children, young people and families.

### Shorter-medium term 2024/25-2029/30

#### Delivery priority 9 Reduce serious and persistent youth offending

Oranga Tamariki is the lead agency for the Government's target to reduce the total number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour by 15 percent by December 2029<sup>10</sup>. We will lead the implementation of a cross-agency delivery plan to balance early response and preventative interventions with more intensive wrap around responses, noting over three-quarters of youth crime is committed by the 10 percent of young people who have greatest exposure to experiences of hardship and disadvantage.<sup>11</sup> This includes:

- extending Fast Track, an intervention across government, iwi, and community organisations to provide early and intensive wraparound support for children, young people and their families, with referrals to community organisations when they offend.
- establishing effective intensive responses to serious youth offending, building off the military style academy pilot that provides a rehabilitative, trauma-informed, and intensive case-management approach, helping rangatahi transition back to communities.
- improving the operations and safety of youth justice residences and community homes, which includes adequately maintaining aging residential facilities that have had limited capital investment in recent years, and progressing work towards increasing capacity through smaller, modern, fit-for-purpose builds within communities.

<sup>10</sup> Read about the Government targets at: [www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-04/factsheet-target-3-reduced-child-youth-offending-8april24.pdf](http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-04/factsheet-target-3-reduced-child-youth-offending-8april24.pdf)

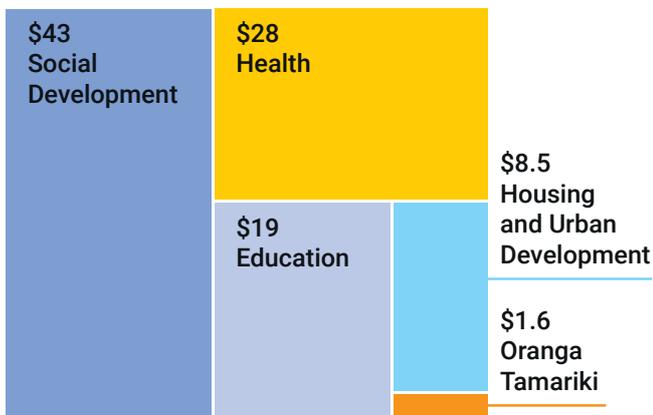
<sup>11</sup> Read more information about the Wellbeing of children and young people who offend at: [sia.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/Wellbeing-of-children-and-young-people-who-offend.pdf](http://sia.govt.nz/assets/Document-Library/Wellbeing-of-children-and-young-people-who-offend.pdf)

**Delivery priority 10**  
**Activate the new Oranga Tamariki Action Plan at local and national levels**

The Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (the Action Plan) is the Government’s commitment to ensure that the children and young people with the greatest needs receive the right support and services. This is important for improving support provided to many Māori, Pacific, whaikaha children and young people who experience less positive opportunities and outcomes compared with the wider childrens population.

As Figure 3 shows, Oranga Tamariki has a small proportion of overall social sector funding (as at 1 July 2024) that it must invest across a broad range of obligations and services.

**Figure 3: Overall social sector funding**



While universal services are an essential component of government intervention, there are opportunities for other agencies to better target support to our most vulnerable children at the earliest opportunity, noting most of the levers to prevent Oranga Tamariki intervention are held by other children’s agencies. For example, the Ministry of Education has identified a long-standing challenge to deliver education success for Māori, Pacific peoples, deaf people, and those with disabilities, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. There is a cohort of children in care with disability and/or high mental health and addiction needs who have not received timely and appropriate supports for continued engagement in school. Disengagement from school often leads to

other challenges (e.g. poor mental health and violent and offending behaviours), which can result in more intensive care arrangements, which require specialist services at higher cost to Oranga Tamariki than more typical caregiving arrangements.

We will drive delivery of priorities under the Action Plan that build on foundational work, by narrowing focus onto improving key health, education and housing outcomes for children and young people in care and improving data and information sharing across these areas. Delivery of seven in-depth needs assessments in 2022/23 gave us a much stronger evidence base of health, education and housing experiences of children, young people and whānau. This gives us a solid foundation to work with partner agencies to plan longer term change across the Children’s system.

**Delivery priority 11**  
**Respond to child abuse and harm, the first 2,000 days, family violence and sexual violence**

Responding to child abuse and harm, the first 2,000 days, family violence and sexual violence needs a collective and sustained effort across the whole children’s system. We can deliver better outcomes when we partner with others, lead, contribute to and influence system wide initiatives including at regional and local levels.

Evidence is clear that:

- New Zealand has one of the worst rates of child wellbeing in the developed world
- what happens early in a child’s life has a significant impact on their lifelong outcomes, including as young adults
- government needs to join-up better at local levels to support the needs of children and families, especially when these are more complex, dynamic and require holistic (not ‘one-size-fits-all’) responses.
- preventing children from coming to the attention of Oranga Tamariki, and providing early support once they do, can deliver value for money through improved outcomes for children, less risk of harm, and reduced lifetime fiscal costs to government associated with benefit dependency, health issues, involvement in crime and less income tax contributions.

As the government's lead for the children's system, we will:

- respond to the Dame Karen Poutasi review of the Children's System to improve how it prevents, recognises, reports, responds to and reviews child abuse
- contribute to the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy by focusing on supporting children's first 2000 days and reducing child harm and material hardship
- support Te Puna Aonui to development and implement Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Five-Year Action Plan
- work with the Social Investment Agency and other children's agencies to ensure investment decisions take a social return on investment approach, within the children's system and 'at the edge' of the care and protection system.

This, and work to activate the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, is supported by work to amplify, listen and respond to the voices of children and young people, and develop data and insights for a learning system (see below).

## Medium term 2027/28-2029/30

### Delivery priority 12 Amplify, listen and respond to the voices of children and young people

Amplifying, listening and responding to the voices of children and young people is important for Oranga Tamariki and the wider children's system to better understand the lived experience and meet the needs of diverse Māori, Pacific, whaikaha (disabilities) and takatāpui (rainbow) children and young people and their families and whānau.

To deliver this priority we will:

- embed voices into operational practice and decision-making processes so that children, young people, and their families and whānau get the services and supports they need, including by strengthening our complaint management and responsiveness
- deliver Te Tohu o te Ora, a recurring survey of children and young peoples' experiences, improving our practice based on the findings, and reporting publicly on these findings through our Te Mātātaki report
- deliver a whānau voice survey to help us monitor our Practice Approach, support our quality assurance efforts, including compliance with the National Care Standards, and measure our performance against our new outcomes (see page 25)
- learn from and improve our practices through the participation of care experienced children and young people, Māori, Pacific, whaikaha and rainbow communities in our advisory groups
- continue working with VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai (an NGO providing independent connection and advocacy services) to ensure the voices and insights of children and young people from the wider care community are included in system advice.

### Delivery priority 13 Develop and mature data and insights to enable continuous improvement learning systems

Developing our data and insights system and capability is important for:

- improving accountability and uplifting organisational performance
- enabling the implementation of a Social Investment Approach
- connecting together data and data-driven continuous improvement at national and regional levels, as well as with other children's agencies and community partners.

## OUR DELIVERY PRIORITIES

To deliver on this priority we will:

- implement and embed our Data and Insight Strategy, setting a clear direction, prioritisation, and resource allocation
- design, build, and deliver new modern data systems, including our Enterprise Data and Analytics platform and our new case management system, that will:
  - safely store client and case management information, ending our reliance on Ministry of Social Development data warehousing and legacy data systems
  - integrate datasets from across different sources, allowing for the generation of more meaningful and useful insights
  - enable better access to and analysis of complex information, including the voices of children, improving operational performance and decision-making
  - support safe and appropriate sharing of data and insights, including with other agencies and partners.
- build our data and insight capability and data literacy to make the most of modern data technology, support efficient and effective frontline practice, and generate performance insights for continuous improvement while managing risks and making the most of emerging opportunities,
- design and implement improvements to our data governance practice and procedures that sit alongside the new data systems, enabling us to build trust and accountability, maintain high quality data, and improve our evidence base and its use,
- focus on data and insights that improve practice and outcomes for those children and young people most impacted by our service delivery.



# The children and young people we serve

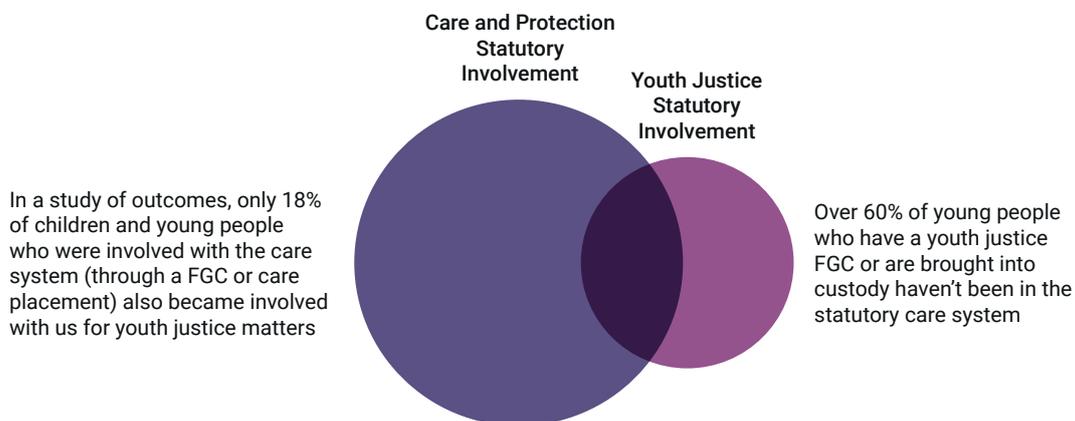
Oranga Tamariki serves a significant number of children and young people in New Zealand. Most of the 1.14 million children (under 18 years-old) living in New Zealand do not require additional support or involvement from Oranga Tamariki, but approximately<sup>12</sup>:

- Over a quarter of all children will come to our notice at some point in their life
- 161,000 children and young people who identify as demonstrating early risk factors of needing Oranga Tamariki support and are highly likely to be in contact with other agencies which make up the children's system.
- Over 60,000 children are receiving support or services from Oranga Tamariki and its partners (not including care or custody)
- Nearly 6,400 children and young people are in the care or custody of Oranga Tamariki (for care or youth justice matters) or have had a youth justice family group conference<sup>13</sup>

There is some overlap of populations involved in the care system and those involved in the youth justice system, as shown in Figure 4. The underlying needs that lead to children coming to the notice of the care system (e.g. our involvement in family violence situations to ensure safety for children) tend to be the same needs that give rise to youth offending behaviours. It is estimated:

- less than one in five children involved in the care system (where assessment indicates they need care and protection) become involved in the youth justice system
- about two in five young people involved in the youth justice system were previously involved in the care system (even though a majority will have come to our attention for less serious care and protection, or youth justice matters in the past).

**Figure 4: Overlap between care and youth justice populations**



<sup>12</sup> Figures based on the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (Action Plan) cohort data from Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure and represent a within the year figure in the 12 months to 30 June 2022.

<sup>13</sup> This number represents the "Currently in Care" and "Youth Justice Contact" sub-cohorts of the Action Plan. For details on the make-up of these groups, please see the Action Plan Evidence and Indicators Dashboard <https://www.orangatamarikiactionplan.govt.nz/mahi/implementation/>

### The children’s care and protection system

If children do come to our notice, it’s most likely the first time they do is when they are young (half will first come to attention in their first 1,000 days). Many of the older children whom a report of concern (RoC) was made about will have has multiple RoCs made about them in their earlier years.

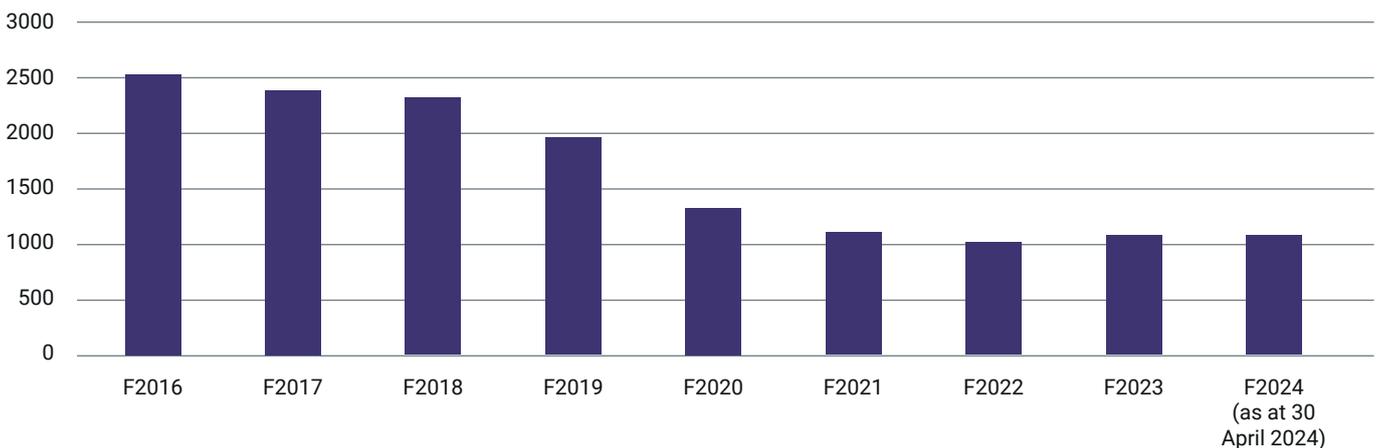
There has been an overall reduction in RoCs made to Oranga Tamariki about abuse and neglect of children over the past 10 years, with the lowest number (66,364) recorded in the 2021/22 financial year, which is in part attributable to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns. However, in the last two years the number of RoCs increased and stabilised with 74,941 RoCs in the 2023/24 financial year, with 10,958 of these children experiencing at least one substantiated finding of harm. Read more about the Safety of Children in Care findings in our 2023/24 Annual Report<sup>14</sup>.

In the 2023/24 financial year:

- About five percent of all children and young people came to our attention through either a report of concern or youth justice referral
- About 75,000 (54,000 distinct) children and young people were reported with a RoC about abuse and neglect.
- About 30,000 (59 percent) of the distinct children who had a RoC also had a social worker undertake an assessment or investigation.
- About 4,600 distinct children had at least one FGC over the year.
- A statutory care order was made for two percent of the 54,000 distinct children who had a report of concern in the year<sup>15</sup>

The total number of children entering care each year has reduced significantly since 2017, from 2,321 individual tamariki entering care in 2016/17 to a low of 943 tamariki in the 2021/22 financial year. Since 2020/21 we have seen small fluctuations, with a small increase in 2023/24 as shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Number of children entering care over financial years**



14 Read about the Oranga Tamariki Annual Report at: [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-reports/annual-report/](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-reports/annual-report/)

15 Statutory Care refers to a child or young person who is in the custody of the Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki



Most children in care are older as shown in Figure 6, with 60 percent over 10 years-old and fewer than four percent one year-old or younger.

**Figure 6: Number of children Oranga Tamariki has received Reports of Concern about and in care**



Figure 7 below shows the cohort of children with a birthdate in the 2005 calendar year, who would turn 18-years-old in the 2023 calendar year. This diagram tracks their greatest level of engagement in the care system for these children, and their manner of exit from the care system (noting this does not include children with youth justice involvement).

**Figure 7: Care involvement for children and young people born in 2005**

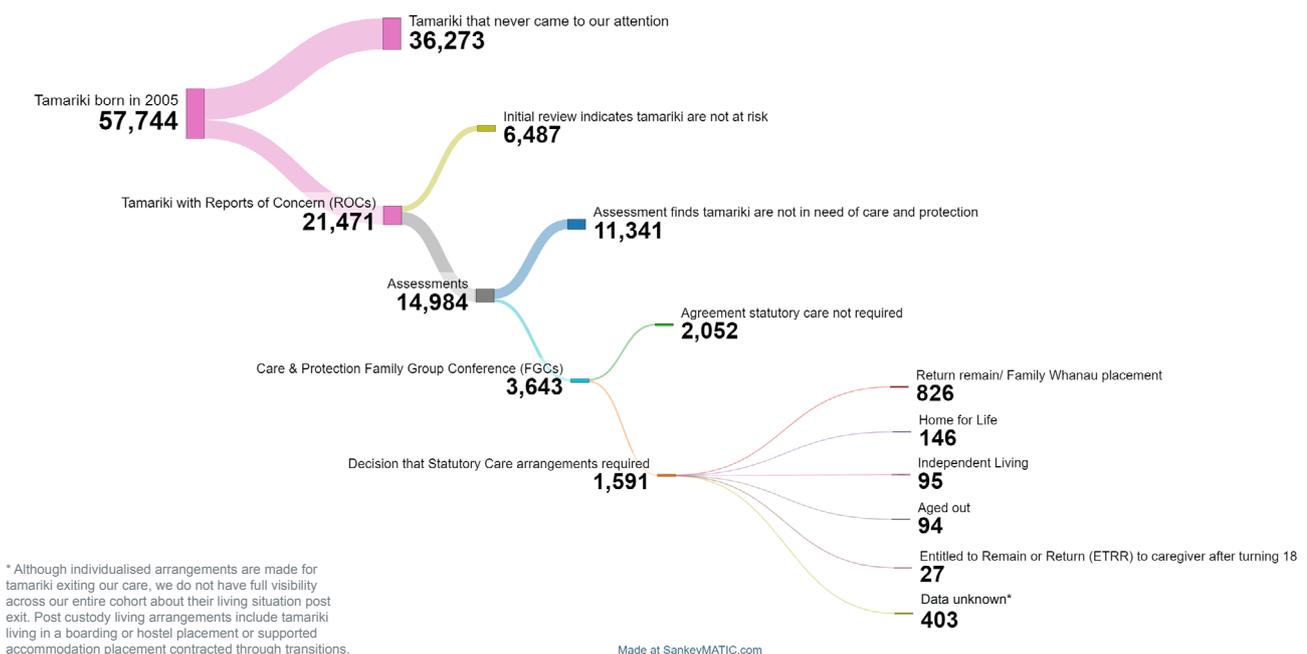


Figure 8 below shows the profile of those we work with in care and protection, as at 30 June 2023/24. There has been no significant change in figures from the previous financial year.

**Figure 8: Profile of children in care and protection**

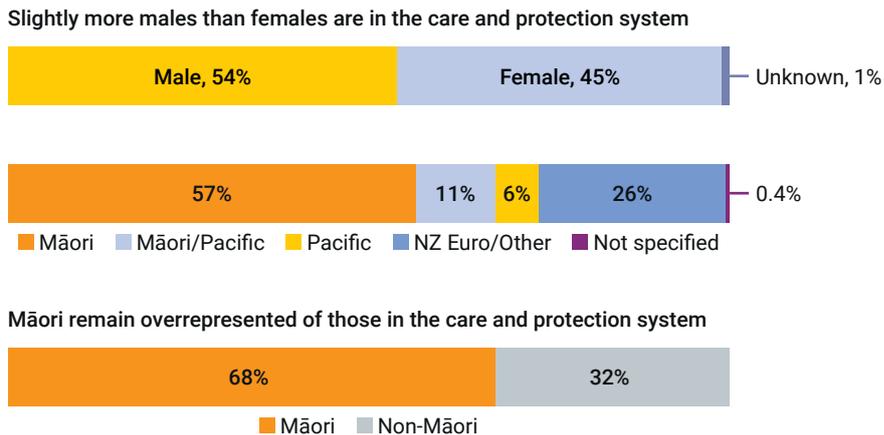
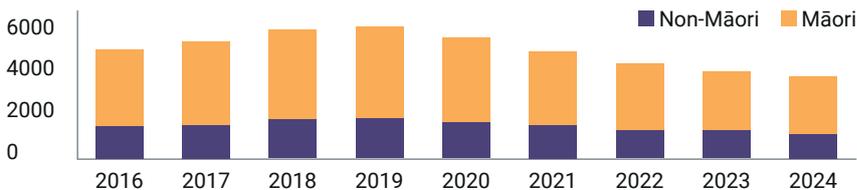


Figure 9 below shows there has been an overall reduction in the number of children in care since 2019. These numbers are at 30 June for each year. For 2024, there were about 4,110 children, 68 percent of whom had whakapapa Māori. Most children in custody (59 percent) are 10 or older.

**Figure 9: Number of children and young people in the care or custody of the Chief Executive (2016-2024) (care only, not Youth Justice custody)**

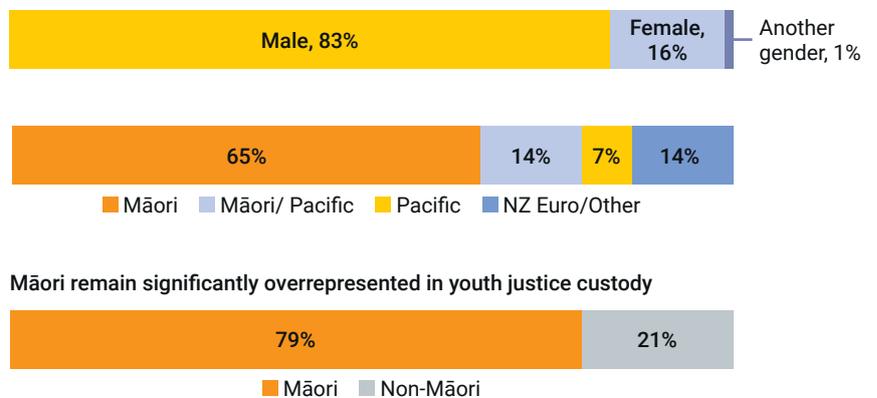


### Youth justice system

In New Zealand, 83 percent of young people don't offend in their teenage years. For the 17 percent that do, intensive justice processes aren't usually needed to get them back on track – in fact about 70 percent are dealt with through Police diversionary responses. As at 1 June 2024, only around 2,000 were escalated to Oranga Tamariki or Youth Court processes. The most intensive responses they received were intention to charge FGC<sup>16</sup> (34 percent) and court directed FGC<sup>17</sup> (62 percent).

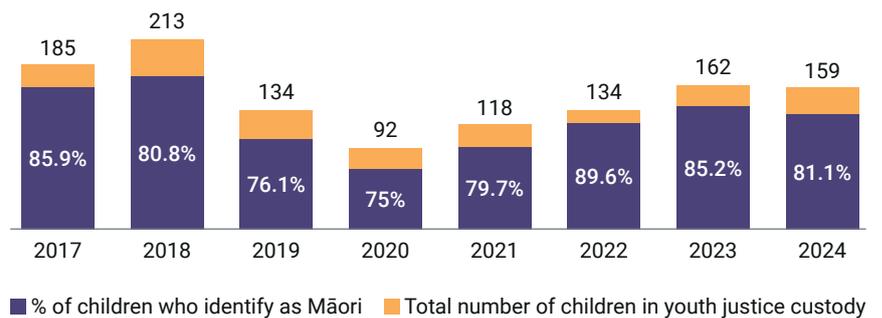
**Figure 11: Profile of young people we work with in youth justice.**

Figure 11 shows there has been no significant change in the profile of young people we work with in youth justice from the previous financial year.



**Figure 12: Number of children in youth justice custody, as at 30 June, 2017 to 2024 and percentage of those who identify as Māori**

Figure 12 shows that numbers of children in youth justice custody decreased in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, following a legislative change in 2019 where 17-year-olds were included in the youth justice system. Since 2020, there had been a steady annual increase but last two years have seen number of children in youth justice custody been stabilised.



16 Involves completing a plan to make amends and repair the harm they caused, agreed at an FGC

17 Involves completing a court approved plan to repair the harm they caused, developed at an FGC

Despite an overall reducing trend in youth crime, serious and repeat youth offending has increased by 20 percent between June 2022 and June 2024 (although increases have slowed since June 2023).<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 13: Profile of young people involved in serious and repeat offending.**

Figure 13 shows most youth offenders are male, and about two thirds are Māori.

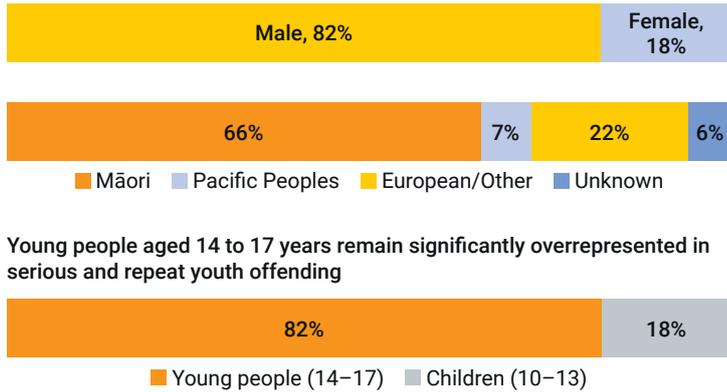
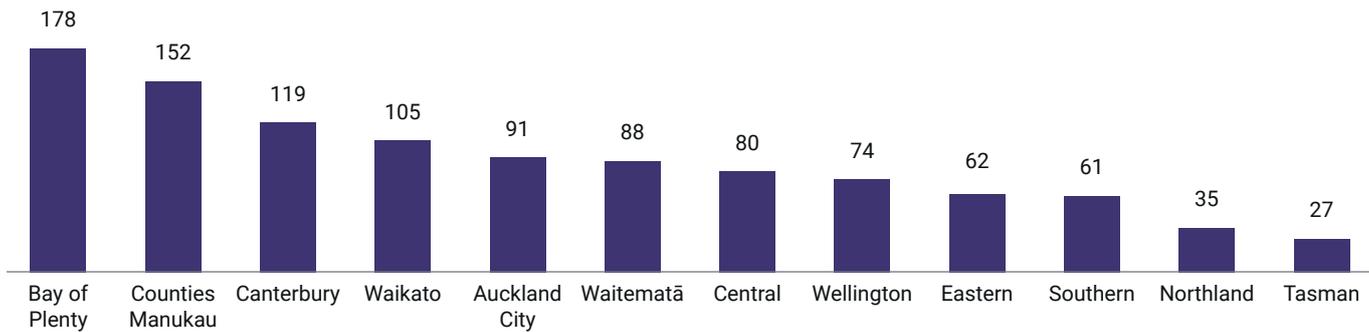


Figure 14 shows Auckland (including Auckland City, Counties Manukau, and Waitemata), Bay of Plenty, Canterbury and Waikato are the areas experiencing the largest volumes of this cohort.

**Figure 14: Number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending by Police district as at 30 June 2024.**



<sup>18</sup> Serious and persistent offending behaviour is when three or more distinct offending events have occurred within 12 months for an individual, where at least one of the offences committed has a maximum penalty greater than or equal to 7 years imprisonment.

### Factors influencing future service demand

It is hard to predict and quantify, but we forecast an increase in numbers of children coming to our attention over the medium term. This is due to the following factors.

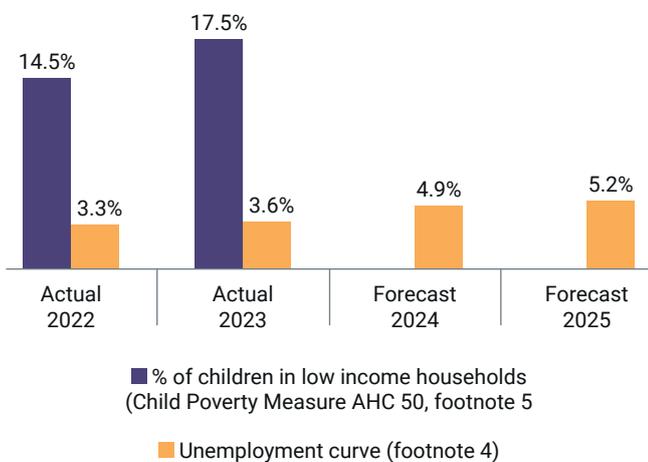
- New Zealand’s rates of child poverty have worsened recently; after improving since 2017/18<sup>19</sup>. Child poverty is correlated with unemployment, which is forecast to peak at 5.2 percent at the end of 2025/26 before gradually reducing to 4.4 percent at the end of 2028/29<sup>20</sup>.

- New Zealand’s social demographics are changing – Māori and Pacific are our fastest growing populations (along with Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African)<sup>21</sup> and tend to have more material hardships than other populations such as living in households that lack basics e.g. food insecurity<sup>22</sup>.
- A feature of the post-Covid-19 environment, here and overseas, is high levels of disassociation from school and early learning, challenging behaviour, and a marked increase in anxiety as well as more severe mental health trauma for young people.<sup>23</sup>
- New Zealand is experiencing more frequent and severe weather events and a survey published in 2021 involving 10,000 young people from 10 countries found that almost 60 percent were either very or extremely worried about climate change.<sup>24</sup>
- The 2022/23 New Zealand Health Survey found that one in five young people experienced high levels of psychological distress, with 15.5 percent of 15–24-year-olds reporting unmet need for professional mental health support.

**Figure 15: Rates of unemployment and child poverty**

Figure 15 shows that between 2022 and 2023 a 0.3% increase in unemployment correlated with a 3.1% increase in child poverty measure (AHC50)

Source: Stats NZ, the Treasury, The Child Poverty Report



Our future demographic changes and the challenges we face present opportunities for innovation and creativity, cultural enrichment, and social cohesion. To capitalise on these opportunities, we must listen to the unique perspectives and experiences of our diverse children and young people. This will help ensure we create inclusive policies that enable them to have an equitable and sustainable future.

Children and young people rely on all of us for survival, protection, and development. Whilst most will have their needs met, there are still some that are significantly disadvantaged by factors outside of their control. We must create an environment that cares for and upholds the mana of all children so that their future and the future of our country is thriving.

19 Child Poverty Report 2024, Hon Nicola Willis Minister of Finance, 30 May 2024

20 Budget Economic and Fiscal Update 2024, The Treasury, 30 May 2024

21 Statistics New Zealand, Initial results from the 2023 Census

22 The 2022/23 New Zealand Health Survey key findings show more than one in three Māori and Pacific children live in households where food runs out.

23 Ministry of Education, 2023, Briefing to the Incoming Minister of Education

24 Hickman, C., Marks, E., Pihkala, P., Clayton, S., Lewandowski, R. E., Mayall, E. E., ... & Van Susteren, L. (2021). Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5 (12), e863-e873.





**ORANGA TAMARIKI**  
Ministry for Children

**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government