

**In confidence**

Office of the Minister for Children

Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

**Report to Cabinet on the progress made against the recommendations of the Dame Karen Poutasi system review**

**Proposal**

- 1 This paper updates Cabinet on the action taken to address the recommendations of the Dame Karen Poutasi system review of the children’s system:  
*Ensuring Strong and effective safety nets to prevent abuse of children* (the Dame Karen system review).

**Relation to government priorities**

- 2 The recommendations of the Dame Karen system review and the cross-agency response are aligned with the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (CYWS) and Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (Action Plan) in ensuring the protection and wellbeing of children and young people is a core focus of children’s sector agencies.
- 3 Work progressed in response to the Dame Karen system review will contribute to successful outcomes under the CYWS including ensuring children and young people are loved, safe and nurtured. It will also support the actions under the Action Plan.

**Executive Summary**

- 4 On 12 November 2021, 5-year-old Malachi Subecz was murdered by his caregiver. In response to this tragedy, Dame Karen Poutasi was commissioned to conduct a review into how the children’s sector’s identification and response to child abuse could be improved. The Dame Karen system review included 14 recommendations, summarised below, all of which have a lead agency and supporting agency shown in **Appendix One**, and are being considered or progressed.

*Summary of recommendations*

Recommendation	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<b>Critical gap: In identifying needs of a dependent child when charging and prosecuting sole parents through the court system</b>		
1 Oranga Tamariki should be engaged in vetting a carer when a sole parent of a child is arrested and/or taken into custody. Police (or other prosecuting agency) in the first instance, and the Court in the second, will need to build into their processes time for this to occur.	Further advice to be provided.	Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group, considering feedback from targeted engagement. See paragraphs 22-27.

Recommendation	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<p>2 Oranga Tamariki should be engaged in regular follow-up checks and support for such an approved carer while the sole parent remains in custody. Resourcing must be addressed to enable this to occur.</p>	<p>Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group, considering feedback from targeted engagement. See paragraphs 22-27.</p>
<p><b>Critical gap: In the process for assessing risk of harm to a child, which is too narrow and one dimensional</b></p>		
<p>3 Multi-agency teams working in communities in partnership with iwi and NGOs, resourced and supported throughout the country to prevent and respond to harm. There are examples of this happening already across the country. Implementation in all localities must be a priority so that locally relevant teams can help assess, respond to the risk to a child and provide support.</p>	<p>Already being implemented.</p>	<p>Work is in progress. See <b>Appendix Two</b>.</p>
<p>4 Medical records held in different parts of the health sector should be linked to enable health professionals to view a complete picture of a child's medical history.</p>	<p>Already being implemented.</p>	<p>Work is in progress. See <b>Appendix Two</b>.</p>
<p>5 The health sector should be added as a partner to the Child Protection Protocol between Police and Oranga Tamariki to enable access to health professionals experienced in the identification of child abuse, and to facilitate regular joint training.</p>	<p>Support in-principle. Operational in nature or otherwise within the authority of Chief Executives to support and progress.</p>	<p>Work is in progress. See <b>Appendix Two</b>.</p>
<p><b>Critical gap: In agencies and their services not proactively sharing information, despite enabling provisions</b></p>		
<p>6 The Ministry of Social Development should notify Oranga Tamariki when a caregiver who is not a lawful guardian, and who has not been reviewed by Oranga Tamariki or authorised through the Family Court, requests a sole parent benefit or other assistance, including emergency housing support, from the agency for a child whose caregiver is in prison.</p>	<p>Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group. See paragraphs 28-30.</p>

Recommendation	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<p>7 The enhancement of understanding of the information sharing regime in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, to educate and encourage child welfare and protection agencies and individuals in the sector to share information with other child welfare and protection agencies on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Support in-principle. Operational in nature or otherwise within the authority of Chief Executives to support and progress.</p>	<p>Work is in progress. Work is being delivered by cross agency working group. See paragraphs 28-30.</p>
<p><b>Critical gap: In a lack of reporting of risk of abuse by some professionals and services</b></p>		
<p>8 Professionals and services who work with children should be mandated to report suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki. It was recommended this be legislated by defining the professionals and service providers who are to be classed as 'mandatory reporters', to remove any uncertainty around their obligations to report.</p>	<p>Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group, considering feedback from targeted engagement. See paragraphs 31-38.</p>

Recommendation	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<p>9 The introduction of mandatory reporting should be supported by a package approach that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mandatory reporting guide with a clear definition of the red flags that make up a high-risk Report of Concern, together with the creation of a ‘High Report of Concern’ category similar to the New South Wales ‘Risk of Significant Harm’ definition.</li> <li>• Defining mandatory reporters, all of whom should receive regular training.</li> <li>• In addition, for professionals deemed to be mandatory reporters, there should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ undergraduate courses teaching risks and signs of child abuse</li> <li>○ mandatory regular updated training regarding their responsibilities and the detection of child abuse, with practising certificates conditional on training and refreshers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group, considering feedback from targeted engagement. See paragraphs 31-38.</p>
<p>10 There should be active monitoring of the implementation by early childhood education services of their required child protection policies to ensure they are providing effective protection for children. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office should jointly design and administer a monitoring and review cycle for the implementation of Child Protection Policies in Early Learning Services.</p>	<p>Accepted in principle (subject to Cabinet decisions). Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress. See <b>Appendix Two</b>.</p>

Recommendation	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<b>Critical gap: In allowing a child to be invisible. The system's settings enabled Malachi to be unseen at key moments when he needed to be visible</b>		
11	The agencies that make up the formal Government's children's system should be specifically defined in legislation.	Accepted in principle (subject to Cabinet decisions). Further advice to be provided.
12	These agencies should have a specific responsibility included in their founding legislation to make clear that they share responsibility for checking the safety of children.	Accepted in principle (subject to Cabinet decisions). Further advice to be provided.
13	Regular public awareness campaigns should be undertaken so the public is attuned to the signs and red flags that can signal abuse and are confident in knowing how to report this so children can be helped. Aotearoa society needs to hear the message 'don't look away'.	Accepted
14	So change can be monitored, the recommendations made in this report should be reviewed in one year's time by the Independent Children's Monitor in its new system-wide role.	Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group. See paragraphs 39-40.

5 Oranga Tamariki has established four working groups which are preparing advice on the substantive recommendations that could lead to significant change in the children's system and involve a range of complexities. This includes the recommendations on:

- 5.1 vetting and supporting caregivers (recommendations one, two and six) which has identified there are points where agencies' practices could be improved, and greater support could be provided to children and their caregivers when a sole parent of a child is arrested and/or been taking into custody. A report back will be delivered to me by October 2023.
- 5.2 information sharing (recommendation seven) which is improving individual agency practice and exploring what wider strategies, resources and actions may be available in agencies, including sector supports (such as training organisations) that can be developed and drawn on to improve understanding, and use, of the information sharing provisions throughout all agencies.

- 5.3 mandatory reporting (recommendations eight and nine) 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The next step for this work is engagement with key stakeholders which will inform a discussion document for Cabinet approval following the election. This discussion document will support wider public consultation followed by policy decisions. Officials continue to approach this recommendation carefully, with ongoing work seeking to understand the extent to which a mandatory reporting regime in Aotearoa New Zealand would provide sufficient benefit to offset the potential unintended consequences associated with these regimes internationally.
- 5.4 the children’s system (recommendations eleven and twelve) which will result in an issues paper being delivered to me in August 2023. It will clarify the current system and enable me to give direction on the scope of what is formally reviewed, the additional agencies that should be involved and the engagement approach that underpins that work. My decision will determine whether this is a simple review or a more comprehensive process that includes legislative amendment.
- 6 The work includes consideration of alternative options which would address the issues identified, how any action taken for each recommendation fits within and interacts with the wider network of safety nets protecting children and will meet the government’s commitments under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It recognises that identifying and responding to the abuse and neglect of children requires adequate resources, active safeguards and appropriate responses to be in place.
- 7 The implications of the recommendations for tamariki, rangatahi, whānau, hapū and iwi Māori will be specifically addressed as those most impacted by the system. The response will need to ensure that Māori do not continue to be disproportionately impacted where we know that they are most likely to be subject to increased reports of concern that may arise from, for example, increased public awareness raising and mandatory reporting if it were to proceed.
- 8 Targeted engagement is currently underway for recommendations eight and nine, on mandatory reporting, and on recommendation ten which is about active monitoring of early childhood education services’ required child protection policies. Consultation will be necessary for recommendations one, two, five, six, and thirteen which are focussed on the vetting and supporting caregivers, the inclusion of the health section in the Child Protection Protocol and the public awareness campaign.
- 9 Oranga Tamariki is coordinating the government response across the lead and supporting agencies. It is reporting to me, the Ombudsman and the Independent Children’s Monitor every six months. I will report to Cabinet as decisions are needed on how to progress the recommendations, including where public consultation is recommended as part of the approach. **Appendix Two** updates Cabinet on the recommendations that are not being covered by the working groups.

**The children’s system was reviewed by Dame Karen Poutasi in response to the death of Malachi Subecz**

- 10 On 12 November 2021, 5-year-old Malachi Subecz was murdered by his caregiver. In response to his death, in May 2022, the Chief Executives of six public sector agencies commissioned Dame Karen Poutasi to conduct a review of the children’s

system and identify how to improve the sector’s identification and response to abuse of children and young people.

- 11 In December 2022, Dame Karen Poutasi submitted her final report *Ensuring Strong and effective safety nets to prevent abuse of children*. The Dame Karen system review identified five critical gaps in the system and made fourteen recommendations to ensure there are overlapping safety nets to prevent abuse of children and young people. The recommendations are summarised at **Appendix One**.
- 12 In the Cabinet Paper responding to the Dame Karen system review, *Final Report by Dame Karen Poutasi on the death of Malachi Subecz* [CAB-22-MIN-0540], it was noted that:
  - 12.1 five of the recommendations were operational or within the authority of the Chief Executives to support and progress and were agreed or supported in principle (recommendations three, four, five, seven and thirteen). It was also noted that some work was already underway (on recommendations three and four).
  - 12.2 three of the recommendations would require Ministerial and Cabinet approval and subsequent legislative amendments, and further advice would be provided on these (recommendations ten, eleven and twelve).
  - 12.3 five of the recommendations should be subject to further consideration because of the significant consequences that could arise from implementation and that they would require legislative change if introduced (recommendations one, two, six, eight and nine). Cabinet also noted further advice would be provided on these.

**A cross agency response is underway to ensure overlapping safety nets exist to protect children and respond to child abuse**

*Oranga Tamariki is coordinating the cross-agency response and is working with lead and supporting agencies to progress or consider all the recommendations*

- 13 Chief Executives agreed that Oranga Tamariki will coordinate the cross-agency response and lead the six-month report backs to me as the Children’s Minister. These report backs will support the Ombudsman and the Independent Children’s Monitor (ICM) to review the progress made against implementing the recommendations. Monitoring by the ICM is recommendation 14 from the Dame Karen system review. I received the first report back in April 2023, and Oranga Tamariki reported to the Ombudsman and ICM in May 2023.
- 14 Strategic oversight will ensure that as agencies work on individual recommendations, the collective impact of the recommendations is considered. This will enable us to be confident that we create what Dame Karen described as “a system of mutually reinforcing, purposefully structured safety nets” to offer protection to children and young people. Along with Oranga Tamariki oversight, each recommendation has a lead agency and supporting agencies have been identified. The lead agencies (identified in bold) and supporting agencies are found at **Appendix One**.

*Agencies are considering or progressing all the recommendations, with working groups progressing the substantive recommendations*

- 15 All fourteen recommendations are being considered or progressed by agencies. This work has drawn on existing work programmes that were already in place. This includes the Enabling Communities programme of work in Oranga Tamariki under the Oranga Tamariki Future Direction Plan. Four working groups led by Oranga Tamariki have been established and are working on the more substantive recommendations.

*The substantive recommendations could lead to significant change across the children's sector and therefore need careful consideration by agencies and Ministers*

- 16 Work to progress the substantive recommendations is focused on:
- 16.1 **advice around vetting and supporting caregivers (recommendations one, two and six)** which is focused on the steps which can be taken to improve the safety and wellbeing of children when a sole parent, guardian or normal caregiver is arrested and/or taken into custody and the child(ren) is placed in the care of another caregiver. This caregiver is often a family member such a grandparent, a friend or another person connected to the parent. This work will include consideration of the need for regular follow up check and support for approved carers.
  - 16.2 **information sharing (recommendation seven)** which has the purpose of improving the understanding and use of information sharing provisions in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 by frontline workers across the children's sector. Enhanced understanding and use of information sharing will help support children, young people, their families, whānau and carers to access, and access earlier, the services and entitlements that will enhance their wellbeing.
  - 16.3 **options for mandatory reporting (recommendations eight and nine)** which seeks to ensure children's workers are sufficiently capable, confident and willing to identify and report known or suspected abuse, so that children at risk of harm are visible and made safe at the earliest opportunity. This requires resources, active safeguards and system responses to be in place and needs to consider what works for Māori. The safeguards must be well understood by all Aotearoa New Zealanders, particularly those who work most closely with children.
  - 16.4 **the children's system (recommendations eleven and twelve)** which has the purpose of further defining the child protection roles and responsibilities of children's sector agencies to help ensure the rights and wellbeing of children is given appropriate priority across agencies and no child is left invisible. The current system settings meant that Malachi was unseen at key moments when he needed to be visible and protected from harm.
- 17 The work being undertaken could lead to significant change in the children's system and involve a range of complexities. The recommendations on mandatory reporting and vetting of caregivers may presuppose a significant increase in the role of the state in the lives of children, young people, the families, whānau and caregivers. In the case of mandatory reporting, this has led to wide debate in Aotearoa New Zealand since the 1980s.

- 18 Change in the way we report and respond to abuse, and vet and support caregivers could require substantial resources, for example, additional workforce capacity, information, guidance and training, and changes to systems, policies, and practices. For mandatory reporting, there are a range of potential unintended consequences that could see resources from family support and prevention services are unduly diverted into statutory investigative services.
- 19 There needs to be fulsome consideration of how the system could respond to the increased reporting that could be expected with a mandatory reporting regime. This must be fully understood and addressed before any approach is agreed to. Officials are working to provide me with advice on these matters, so I can bring them to Cabinet for discussion and decisions about the best way forward.
- 20 Given the complexities associated with the work, officials have also been exploring alternative options and how any action will meet our commitments under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This includes looking for opportunity to strengthen and streamline existing mechanisms and services, the potential for a greater focus on training for children's workers to identify and report abuse, and increased support services for parents, caregivers, and their children when a sole parent is arrested and/or taken into custody.
- 21 An update on the work towards the substantive recommendations is provided below. Each working group will report back to me. Where required I will seek a Cabinet decision to publicly consult on a matter and on any recommendations for change to the children's system. A summary of the progress on all other recommendations is found in **Appendix Two**.

**Vetting and supporting a caregiver - Implementing a process for when the sole parent of a child is arrested and/or taken into custody**

- 22 Through work undertaken to date, officials have identified that there are points where agencies' practices could be improved and greater support could be provided to children and their caregivers when the sole parent of a child is arrested and/or been taking into custody. This has been achieved through:
- 22.1 mapping out the legislative obligations placed on agencies to assess the suitability of caregiving arrangements, carry out follow up checks and support the caregiver and the child, as well as current practice across agencies and the system
- 22.2 undertaking a case study analysis of children who experienced harm during an unsupported child benefit placement to determine whether a full Oranga Tamariki assessment process and/or support for the caregiver, whānau or tamariki would have mitigated the event
- 22.3 undertaking a review of the practices and policies of overseas jurisdictions in relation to the care of a child when a sole parent is incarcerated.
- 23 The Dame Karen system review and work to date has focussed on Malachi's situation where his mother, a sole parent, was incarcerated. However, there may be other situations where a sole parent may quickly or unexpectedly be unable to care for their child. This work provides an opportunity to consider vetting and caregiver support across the range of circumstances. For example, there may be circumstances where a sole parent:

- 23.1 has a long-term stay in hospital due to a serious accident or the identification of a serious health issue
  - 23.2 is detained for an extended period under the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992, or
  - 23.3 is called away for an extended period due to unexpected personal circumstances in their family or whānau or expected work commitments.
- 24 The targeted stakeholder engagement underway may provide a clearer picture of these types of circumstances. Targeted engagement also provides an opportunity to gather stakeholders' views on who should input into the decision a sole parent makes about the care of their children, any vetting arrangements that may be in best interest of the child and what support the caregiver requires in a variety of circumstances.
- 25 Work is also now underway to analyse options for change, considering the feedback from targeted engagement. A report will be delivered to me early in the next parliamentary term. When officials report back with advice, they will identify where subsequent, more detailed, advice is required. After receiving the report back, I will give direction about whether a Cabinet report back on the proposed approach and whether public consultation is required.
- 26 The way in which any new interventions and improvements will impact the rights and duties of parents and guardians, the rights of the child as well as broader human rights, and deliver on the government's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is being considered. The Te Tiriti analysis will include consideration of the rights of Māori to care for and raise the next generation, the right tamariki Māori have to be embedded in their culture, and the Crown's partnership responsibility to support whānau, hapū and iwi.
- 27 The judiciary is also giving careful thought to how criminal court processes could be improved so that the court is aware of the existence of dependent children and this information can be considered in bail or sentencing decisions. This work is being led by His Honour Judge John Walker. His Honour's work has raised concerns that sole parents may not be comfortable disclosing the existence of dependent children if the outcome is that Oranga Tamariki will become involved.

**Information sharing - Enhance understanding and use of the information sharing regime on child welfare and protection matters**

- 28 To ensure information sharing provisions are well understood by frontline workers and to further embed them into practice, agencies participating in this working group have completed a stocktake of current policy, guidance and resources on information sharing within their agencies. Work includes identifying and are undertaking potential actions to enhance the understanding and confidence to use of the provisions within their agencies. For example:
- 28.1 Ara Poutama - Corrections is in the process of updating its practice centre, which is available to all staff and preparing to deliver a briefing to all front-line staff in July
  - 28.2 MSD is updating its processes, guidance and training for staff concerning information sharing provisions

- 28.3 Oranga Tamariki has developed and delivered a training module on information sharing and included information sharing in the induction package for new staff.
  - 28.4 Oranga Tamariki has also produced guidance for all agencies on the relevant information sharing provisions in its legislation, and how they can best be used
  - 28.5 Oranga Tamariki is reviewing its outward facing website content in relation to information sharing to assist other agencies to understand the provisions.
- 29 Potential opportunities and actions have also been identified across agencies, for example, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga - Ministry of Education (Education) and Oranga Tamariki are working together to identify opportunities for presentations on information sharing, with a particular emphasis on section 66C of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.
- 30 Next steps, will include exploring what wider strategies, resources and actions may be available in agencies, including sector supports (such as training organisations) that can be developed and drawn on to improve understanding, and use, of the information sharing provisions throughout all agencies. For example, Oranga Tamariki, is looking at whether information sharing can be included in social worker training and development programmes. It is also looking at establishing a Government Legal Network Practice Group on information sharing in the child welfare and protection sector. This would provide a regular forum for Crown lawyers in relevant agencies to work through information sharing challenges collaboratively.

**Mandatory reporting and training - 9(2)(f)(iv)**

31 9(2)(f)(iv)

32 9(2)(f)(iv)

33 9(2)(f)(iv)

9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

34 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

35 9(2)(f)(iv) [Redacted]

36 Targeted engagement on the options for change is underway, including with those professional groups who may be impacted by any changes, such as teachers, health practitioners and police. Work is being undertaken to ensure any future policy proposals are informed by mātauranga Māori and reflect the aspirations of those likely to be most impacted by the recommendations.

37 The targeted engagement will inform the development of a discussion document that I will seek your approval to release following the election. It will invite public feedback on how Aotearoa New Zealand can enable a system of supports for the identification and reporting of child abuse to ensure no child is invisible and that support is provided at the earliest opportunity to those who need it. Officials intend to undertake a survey of frontline professionals to support public consultation.

38 Because I am not seeking substantive policy decisions this parliamentary term, and initial engagement is focused on understanding the extent and nature of the problem rather than consulting on proposed government policy, I do not consider there are issues in carrying out this work in the pre-election period.

**The children’s system - Defining the children’s system, children’s agencies, and their roles and responsibilities in legislation**

39 To progress the children’s system recommendations, an issues paper is being produced to clarify the existing system and build a common picture of legislative responsibilities and approaches to child protection from the member agencies. The paper is being developed to ensure a shared understanding of:

- 39.1 what the children's system is and the organisations that comprise it
- 39.2 the part of the system specifically concerned with protecting and supporting children and young people with the greatest needs

---

<sup>1</sup> The mandatory reporting regimes in Queensland and Victoria, for example, apply to physical and sexual abuse, while the regimes in New South Wales and Tasmania also include emotional/psychological abuse, neglect and exposure to violence. Western Australia’s regime only applies to sexual abuse.

39.3 the existing formality around the system and agency responsibilities.

40 The issues paper will be delivered to me in August 2023. Following from this, officials will provide me with advice and seek my direction, in consultation with ministerial colleagues, on the scope of what is formally reviewed, the additional agencies that should be involved and the engagement approach that underpins that work. Decisions will determine whether this is a simple review able to be completed within the financial year or a more comprehensive process that includes legislative amendment.

**The next steps include targeted engagement with a range of key stakeholders**

41 Targeted engagement will be undertaken by agencies and working groups to support consideration or progress towards implementing the recommendations. Targeted engagement is necessary, for example:

41.1 to support the inclusion of the health sector in the Child Protection Protocol (recommendation five) to fully understand the implications for the sector and consider how their inclusion may be implemented

41.2 for the public awareness campaign (recommendation thirteen) to ensure that it is culturally appropriate and does not result in unintended consequences such as the over-reporting and over-surveillance of marginalised communities.

42 As noted earlier, it is also necessary to undertake engagement to support the working groups looking at the vetting and supporting of caregivers, mandatory reporting and the children’s system. The targeted engagement on these matters will include on:

42.1 the vetting and support for caregivers which is ongoing. This will be with sector experts and organisations, such as providers who deliver support to parent, caregivers, children and incarcerated parents as well as peak bodies. Engagement is also planned with Māori which will include Oranga Tamariki strategic partners and Māori providers, as well as with children and young people. This engagement will inform the advice provided to me prior to October 2023 and I expect to be given the option to carry out wider public engagement on any proposals for change before deciding the way forward.

42.2 mandatory reporting with front line professionals across the health, education, justice and social sectors to investigate the extent and nature of underreporting. Officials are also engaging with a range of relevant sector experts and organisations such as the Child Protection Network of the Paediatric Society of New Zealand, the Child Protection Clinical Network and the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, along with hosting Professor Ben Mathews for a visit to New Zealand, as the Lead Investigator on the Australian Child Maltreatment Study 2019–23 and an expert on the topic of mandatory reporting. There will be further engagement with the population groups who would be impacted by the introduction of mandatory reporting, including tamariki and rangatahi Māori, as well as with Māori, through strategic partners and Māori providers.

43 To give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the government response, agencies and working groups must engage with Māori. This is critical to ensuring the work is responsive to the needs of those most impacted by the care and protection system.

9(2)(f)(iv)

There are several past reviews which undertook extensive engagement with Māori that provide agencies with a starting point for this.<sup>2</sup>

- 44 The extent and nature of engagement will vary but may include seeking the voices of individuals, whānau, hapū, iwi, representative groups, subject matter experts, iwi-Māori partnership boards, tamariki and rangatahi, whaikaha Māori and those with lived experiences. Engagement with Māori and other stakeholders will influence the timeframes to deliver responses to the recommendations. Working group leads will advise me of their engagement approaches and seek necessary approvals if wider public consultation is required.

### Cost-of-living Implications

- 45 There are no cost-of-living implications arising from this paper. These implications will be considered when advice on the government response to the recommendations is prepared for Cabinet discussion and decisions.

### Financial Implications

- 46 The work to respond to the recommendations is being undertaken within baselines. If costs to implement a response are identified, the relevant agencies will brief their Minister on the next steps needed to identify and secure funding.

### Legislative Implications

- 47 There are no legislative implications arising from this paper. Agencies and working groups will report to their Minister and seek Cabinet decisions if the work being progressed requires legislative amendment.

### Impact Analysis

- 48 Impact analysis requirements do not apply to this paper.

### Population Implications

- 49 There are no direct population implications arising from this paper. However, the work to respond to the recommendations will have implications for:
- 49.1 children and young people, particularly those who indicate early risk factors or are in the care of Oranga Tamariki, as well as their families and whānau, and their carers. This includes Māori, Pacific people, disabled people, and the rainbow community

---

<sup>2</sup> *He Pāhararakeke, He Rito Whakakīkinga Whāruarua* - Oranga Tamariki Urgent Inquiry (Waitangi Tribunal Report WAI 2915), *Hipokingia ki te Kahu Aroha, Hipokingia ki te Katoa* (Ministerial Advisory Board Report), *Ko Te Wā Whakawhiti* - A Māori Inquiry into Oranga Tamariki (Whānau Ora Report), *He Take Kōhukihuki* - A Matter of Urgency (Chief Ombudsman Report) and *Te Kuku O Te Manawa* (Children's Commissioner Report)

- 49.2 professional groups and children's workers, such as teachers, health care practitioners, police and social workers who might engage with children and young people and be involved in their care or protection.
- 50 Each lead agency understands the significant implications on these population groups and is making this a focus in their work. This includes both the immediate and short-term impact the work to respond to the recommendations will have, and the long-term consequences. This includes the consequences that changed or enhanced State intervention may have for children, young people and their families. Detailed analysis of the population implications will be provided at the time any future policy, practice, regulation or legislation change is proposed.
- 51 The implications for tamariki, rangatahi, whānau, hapū and iwi will be specifically addressed by agencies. Tamariki and rangatahi Māori make up a disproportionate number of the children and young people in the care system and those who are at the greatest risk of entering the system. The response to the recommendations will therefore need to ensure that Māori do not continue to be disproportionately impacted. The implementation of any response to the recommendations must support work to address inequities for Māori, not exacerbate them.

### Human Rights

- 52 The government's obligations to children and young people are governed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the obligation to take all appropriate measures to protect the child from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19). Agencies' responses to the recommendations will affirm the rights provided for in this convention and other relevant international obligations.

### Use of External Resources

- 53 No contractors or consultants are currently providing a material contribution to the work to respond to the Dame Karen system review.

### Consultation

- 54 The following agencies have been consulted on this paper; Te Tai Ōhanga - the Treasury, Te Kawa Mataaho - the Public Service Commission, Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora - Ministry of Social Development, Ara Poutama - Department of Corrections, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga - Ministry of Education, Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand, Te Aka Whai Ora - Māori Health Authority, Manatū Hauora - Ministry of Health, Te Tāhū o te Ture - Ministry of Justice, Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa - New Zealand Police, Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga - Education Review Office, Te Puna Aonui, and Matatū Aotearoa - Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Tari o te Pirimia me te Komiti Matua - the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (Policy Advisory Group) has been informed.
- 55 Te Aka Whai Ora with Te Whatu Ora and the Ministry of Health provided detailed feedback on the recommendations and the importance of this work for Māori as the group most affected by the care and protection system. They recommended the work in response should take a holistic whole-of-system view, rather than to specifically focus on the Dame Karen recommendations and the protection of children.
- 56 The health agencies noted the findings of the previous reviews on the care and protection system, which highlighted the need to allow Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga over their tamariki, and for the Crown to partner with Māori to enable

the development and delivery of “by Māori, with Māori, for Māori” services and solutions. Agencies, in particular Oranga Tamariki, are currently engaged in work which responds to these previous reviews.

- 57 The focus of the government response to this review is directed toward ensuring that all children’s system participants understand their roles and responsibilities to prevent child abuse from occurring, and where it does occur, ensuring it can be readily identified and responded to prevent further harm. Previous reviews will help inform this work and engagement with Māori. However, I propose to retain the scope agreed by Cabinet in December 2022 which focused on addressing Dame Karen’s specific recommendations.

### Proactive Release

- 58 I propose to proactively release this Cabinet paper within three months of Cabinet’s consideration. I also intend to provide the information in this paper to the Independent Children’s Monitor and Ombudsman to update the information I provided on 18 May 2023.

### Recommendations

The Minister for Children recommends that Cabinet:

1. **Note** that a cross agency response is underway to respond to the Dame Karen system review including the substantive recommendations.
2. **Note** that I have considered initial advice from officials around how a mandatory reporting regime could be approached in New Zealand 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
3. **Note** that I have approved stakeholder engagement which considers mandatory reporting and other tools that could improve the system response to address child abuse.
4. **Note** I have also directed officials to ensure that work around the vetting and support for caregivers considers other situations where a solo parent cannot care for their child, to ensure that the range of instances where this occurs are taken into consideration.
5. **Agree** to direct agencies to continue to prioritise progressing each of the recommendations outlined in the Dame Karen review, to ensure that the children’s system responds to this review with the speed and urgency required.

Authorised for lodgement  
Hon Kelvin Davis  
Minister for Children

Appendix one: The Dame Karen system review recommendations and relevant agencies

Recommendation	Lead and supporting agencies	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<b><i>Critical gap: In identifying needs of a dependent child when charging and prosecuting sole parents through the court system</i></b>			
1	<i>Oranga Tamariki should be engaged in vetting a carer when a sole parent of a child is arrested and/or taken into custody. Police (or other prosecuting agency) in the first instance, and the Court in the second, will need to build into their processes time for this to occur.</i>	<b>Oranga Tamariki</b> Ara Poutama - Department of Corrections (Corrections) Te Tāhū o te Ture - Ministry of Justice (Justice) Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa - New Zealand Police (Police)	Further advice to be provided.
2	<i>Oranga Tamariki should be engaged in regular follow-up checks and support for such an approved carer while the sole parent remains in custody. Resourcing must be addressed to enable this to occur.</i>	<b>Oranga Tamariki</b> <b>Corrections</b> <b>Justice</b> <b>Police</b>	Further advice to be provided.
			Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group, considering feedback from targeted engagement. See paragraphs 22-27.

Recommendation	Lead and supporting agencies	Government Response in November 2022	Current status	
<b><i>Critical gap: In the process for assessing risk of harm to a child, which is too narrow and one dimensional</i></b>				
3	<i>Multi-agency teams working in communities in partnership with iwi and NGOs, resourced and supported throughout the country to prevent and respond to harm. There are examples of this happening already across the country. Implementation in all localities must be a priority so that locally relevant teams can help assess, respond to the risk to a child and provide support.</i>	<b>Oranga Tamariki</b> Police Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora - Ministry for Social Development (MSD) Manatū Hauora - Ministry of Health (Health) including: • Te Aka Whai Ora - Māori Health Authority (Te Aka Whai Ora) • Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand (Te Whatu Ora) Te Puna Aonui	Already being implemented.	Work is in progress.
4	<i>Medical records held in different parts of the health sector should be linked to enable health professionals to view a complete picture of a child's medical history.</i>	<b>Te Whatu Ora</b>	Already being implemented.	Work is in progress.
5	<i>The health sector should be added as a partner to the Child Protection Protocol between Police and Oranga Tamariki to enable access to health professionals experienced in the identification of child abuse, and to facilitate regular joint training.</i>	<b>Health</b> <b>Te Whatu Ora</b> <b>Te Aka Whai Ora</b> Oranga Tamariki Police	Support in-principle. Operational in nature or otherwise within the authority of Chief Executives to support and progress.	Work is in progress.

Recommendation	Lead and supporting agencies	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<b><i>Critical gap: In agencies and their services not proactively sharing information, despite enabling provisions</i></b>			
6	<i>The Ministry of Social Development should notify Oranga Tamariki when a caregiver who is not a lawful guardian, and who has not been reviewed by Oranga Tamariki or authorised through the Family Court, requests a sole parent benefit or other assistance, including emergency housing support, from the agency for a child whose caregiver is in prison.</i>	<b>Oranga Tamariki/MSD</b> Corrections Justice Police	Further advice to be provided.
7	<i>The enhancement of understanding of the information sharing regime in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, to educate and encourage child welfare and protection agencies and individuals in the sector to share information with other child welfare and protection agencies on an ongoing basis.</i>	<b>Oranga Tamariki</b> <b>Corrections</b> <b>Justice</b> <b>Police</b> <b>MSD</b> <b>Health</b> <b>Te Whatu Ora</b> <b>Te Aka Whai Ora</b> <b>Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga - Ministry of Education (Education)</b>	Support in-principle. Operational in nature or otherwise within the authority of Chief Executives to support and progress.
Work is in progress. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group. See paragraphs 28-30.	Work is in progress. Work is being delivered by cross agency working group. See paragraphs 28-30.		

Recommendation	Lead and supporting agencies	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<b>Critical gap: In a lack of reporting of risk of abuse by some professionals and services</b>			
<p>8 <i>Professionals and services who work with children should be mandated to report suspected abuse to Oranga Tamariki. I recommend this be legislated by defining the professionals and service providers who are to be classed as 'mandatory reporters', to remove any uncertainty around their obligations to report.</i></p>	<p><b>Oranga Tamariki</b>            Corrections            Justice            Police            MSD            Health            Te Aka Whai Ora            Te Whatu Ora            Education            Education Review Office (ERO)</p>	<p>Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group, considering feedback from targeted engagement. See paragraphs 31-38.</p>
<p>9 <i>The introduction of mandatory reporting should be supported by a package approach that includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A mandatory reporting guide with a clear definition of the red flags that make up a high-risk Report of Concern, together with the creation of a 'High Report of Concern' category similar to the New South Wales 'Risk of Significant Harm' definition.</i></li> <li>• <i>Defining mandatory reporters, all of whom should receive regular training.</i></li> <li>• <i>In addition, for professionals deemed to be mandatory reporters, there should be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>undergraduate courses teaching risks and signs of child abuse</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Oranga Tamariki</b>            Corrections            Justice            Police            MSD            Health            Te Aka Whai Ora            Te Whatu Ora            Education            ERO</p>	<p>Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group, considering feedback from targeted engagement. See paragraphs 31-38.</p>

Recommendation	Lead and supporting agencies	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>mandatory regular updated training regarding their responsibilities and the detection of child abuse, with practising certificates conditional on training and refreshers.</i></li> </ul>			
<p>10 <i>There should be active monitoring of the implementation by early childhood education services of their required child protection policies to ensure they are providing effective protection for children. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office should jointly design and administer a monitoring and review cycle for the implementation of Child Protection Policies in Early Learning Services.</i></p>	<p><b>Education</b> ERO</p>	<p>Accepted in principle (subject to Cabinet decisions). Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress.</p>
<p><b>Critical gap: In allowing a child to be invisible. The system's settings enabled Malachi to be unseen at key moments when he needed to be visible</b></p>			
<p>11 <i>The agencies that make up the formal Government's children's system should be specifically defined in legislation.</i></p>	<p><b>Oranga Tamariki</b> Corrections Justice Police MSD Education Health Te Aka Whai Ora Te Whatu Ora</p>	<p>Accepted in principle (subject to Cabinet decisions). Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group. See paragraphs 39-40.</p>

Recommendation	Lead and supporting agencies	Government Response in November 2022	Current status
<p>12 <i>These agencies should have a specific responsibility included in their founding legislation to make clear that they share responsibility for checking the safety of children.</i></p>	<p><b>Oranga Tamariki</b> MSD Corrections Justice Police Health Te Aka Whai Ora Te Whatu Ora Education</p>	<p>Accepted in principle (subject to Cabinet decisions). Further advice to be provided.</p>	<p>Work is in progress to determine the scope and parameters of the response. Advice is being developed by a cross agency working group. See paragraphs 39-40.</p>
<p>13 <i>Regular public awareness campaigns should be undertaken so the public is attuned to the signs and red flags that can signal abuse and are confident in knowing how to report this so children can be helped. Aotearoa society needs to hear the message 'don't look away'.</i></p>	<p><b>Oranga Tamariki / multi agency</b></p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Work is in progress.</p>
<p>14 <i>So change can be monitored, the recommendations made in this report should be reviewed in one year's time by the Independent Children's Monitor in its new system-wide role.</i></p>	<p>Ombudsman Independent Children's Monitor</p>		<p>This review has been initiated.</p>

Appendix Two: Summary of progress on additional recommendations not covered by working groups

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
<b><i>Critical gap: In the process for assessing risk of harm to a child, which is too narrow and one dimensional</i></b>	
<p>3</p> <p><i>Multi-agency teams working in communities in partnership with iwi and NGOs, resourced and supported throughout the country to prevent and respond to harm. There are examples of this happening already across the country. Implementation in all localities must be a priority so that locally relevant teams can help assess, respond to the risk to a child and provide support.</i></p>	<p><b>Enabling communities - Oranga Tamariki</b></p> <p><b><i>Positive change being sought for children and young people, and agency collaboration across the children’s system/addressal of recommendations</i></b></p> <p>The Enabling Communities programme being delivered under the Oranga Tamariki Future Direction Plan will restore and empower partners to lead the prevention of harm for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. It will enable Māori partners to lead a shift in the way that government supports tamariki, rangatahi and whānau, and ensure holistic, community-led, whānau-centred responses to child abuse and neglect. This work is about shifting decision making and resources to partners.</p> <p><b><i>Actions undertaken and achievements to-date</i></b></p> <p>Work is progressing with a particular focus on partner-led community prototypes. Nine prototypes are in progress across the regions, most in a discovery phase, with two moving toward operationalisation with Waikato-Tainui and Ngāi Tahu.</p> <p>There have been significant achievements across the various engagements with a focus on setting up governance, management and operational processes and resourcing. In others, there is work towards formally transferring Oranga Tamariki-led roles and activities to the community, for example, the Family Group Conference coordination role.</p> <p><b><i>The next steps, anticipated timeframe and decisions likely to be needed</i></b></p> <p>Each partner has its own plans and activities that are reported on a quarterly basis. Oranga Tamariki will continue to provide support and guidance to partners as they work through their prototypes, including providing detailed information on functions within our system that they could manage themselves for their region.</p> <p><b>Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke and Integrated Safety Responses – Police</b></p> <p><b><i>Positive change being sought for children and young people, and agency collaboration across the children’s system/addressal of recommendations</i></b></p>

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
	<p>Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke (WNPH) began as a partnership between Ngā Pirihiimana o Aotearoa - New Zealand Police (Police) and local iwi Māori to respond to and reduce family harm. WNPH has developed into an approach inclusive of Iwi government and non-government organisations supporting the wellbeing of whānau.</p> <p>Integrated Safety Responses (ISR) is hosted by Police on behalf of the Interdepartmental Board to Eliminate Family Violence Sexual Violence. It is funded to risk assess and triage episodes of family violence and ensure that appropriate supports and services are available to victims and perpetrators following family violence.</p> <p>Both WNPH and ISR are concepts of collaboration and collective responsibility, and although structured and funded differently, they focus on a shared purpose and values that support the holistic perspective of well-being of our communities. This way of working reinforces a whole-of-whānau approach.</p> <p><b>Actions undertaken and achievements to-date</b>  A case management system was prototyped within the ISR for managing family violence episodes and referrals. It is called the Family Safety System (FSS). FSS is now widely used across the country and is continuing to expand its coverage. The FSS has enabled easier pathways for information sharing between Police and partners.</p> <p>The integrated ways of working have evolved from the original pilots in Te Hiku, Counties Manakau and Tairāwhiti to extend in many forms to cover a several regions across New Zealand. Along with the Canterbury and Tainui-a-Rohe (Waikato) ISR, the WNPH has enabled communities to focus on more collective and coordinated responses across the spectrum of family harm; from prevention through to long term healing and recovery.</p> <p>There have been three sets of evaluations with WNPH and IRS, six WNPH sites have also been independently evaluated. The Productivity Commissioner commends the approach for its integration of its evidence base and continued development with the evaluations in mind.</p> <p><b>The next steps, anticipated timeframe and decisions likely to be needed</b>  Police are developing a case management system for family violence responders on behalf of all Te Puna Aonui agencies (Project Whetū). The case management system will replace the existing case management system, FSS, 9(2)(j) [REDACTED]. Project Whetū will deliver a national case management system that supports integrated case management for crisis responses as well as enhanced connections to support</p>

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
	<p>ongoing wellbeing that mitigate family violence risk. The system will comply with the Family Violence Act 2018 and Privacy Act 2020 and the Government's Data Protection and Use Policy.</p> <p>9(2)(j)  <span style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</span></p> <p>Both WNPH and ISR are examples of how integrated community led responses can work. At the foundation of every integrated community-led response, the relationship and partnership between iwi, government and non-government organisations is key. Every community across New Zealand is at a different stage of a relational journey. Timeframes are set at the pace of the wider community and vary across locations. It is also noted that every WNPH and ISR are individual and work according to the needs and ways of working in each location/community.</p> <p><b>Localities model – Health</b></p> <p><b><i>Positive change being sought for children and young people, and agency collaboration across the children's system/addressal of recommendations</i></b>                      The development of health locality models and iwi Māori Partnership Boards as part of the health reforms underway presents opportunities to strengthen local collaboration and trust among providers and facilitate local collaboration from across sectors.</p> <p><b><i>Actions undertaken and achievements to-date</i></b>                      Most of the twelve prototype localities have completed their initial community engagement and are formulating their locality hauora priorities based on what they heard from whānau Māori and their communities. Māmā and pēpē (first 1000 days of a child's life) as well as the mental health of rangitahi are emerging as community hauora priorities in many of the prototypes and will focus attention on tamariki and their whānau.</p> <p><b><i>The next steps, anticipated timeframe and decisions likely to be needed</i></b>                      The broader national roll out of localities is underway and Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora boards will be asked to endorse the proposed boundaries for the next localities in June/July 2023 – anticipated to cover an additional 43% of the population.</p>

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
<p>4 <i>Medical records held in different parts of the health sector should be linked to enable health professionals to view a complete picture of a child's medical history.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Positive change being sought for children and young people, and agency collaboration across the children's system/addressal of the recommendations</i></b>                      The personal health information system – Hira - will enable a comprehensive view of a child's previous medical history and health interactions by putting in place the foundational technology for their personal health record to be accessed by approved whānau and providers via an app or website.</p> <p>Changes to Hira will help health professionals to monitor wellbeing indicators over time and regardless of where health care is accessed. They will have secure, easy access to a child's 'real time' information when needed. They will also be able to access information in an emergency.</p> <p><b><i>Actions undertaken and achievements to date</i></b>                      Initial benefits from Hira will be realised faster due to the adoption of an existing regional system to provide a single, national system of sharing primary health information. Basic child primary care information such demographics, medications, immunisations and test results will be able to be accessed by providers and individuals and whānau independent of healthcare providers before the second half of 2023.</p> <p><b><i>The next steps, anticipated timeframe and decisions likely to be needed</i></b>                      A further initiative has been approved in principle by the Whanāu, Consumer and Clinical Digital Council and is awaiting authorisation from the Executive Leadership of Te Whatu Ora. This would provide a single national approach for the sharing of primary care summary information between authorised healthcare providers. This initiative would be rolled out progressively over a period of approximately 18 months and would enable consistent access nationwide to a child's primary medical records.</p> <p>Other information such as allergies, health conditions, appointments and procedures will be progressively rolled out in Hira up to June 2024. These will provide an important indicator of child wellbeing over time regardless of where care is accessed.</p> <p>It is also important that health professionals are supported to understand how the data infrastructure can be operationalised in line with information sharing expectations, and child protection policies and pathways. Police decisions about how and in what circumstances health records can be shared are in the early stages. How health professionals will be trained is yet to be decided.</p>

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
<p>5 <i>The health sector should be added as a partner to the Child Protection Protocol between Police and Oranga Tamariki to enable access to health professionals experienced in the identification of child abuse, and to facilitate regular joint training.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Positive change being sought for children and young people, and agency collaboration across the children’s system/addressal of recommendations</i></b>  The Child Protection Protocol (CPP) is currently a joint operational agreement between Oranga Tamariki and Police to ensure there is a timely, coordinated and effective response to complaints or reports of concern that allege actions or behaviours that constitute a criminal offence. The CPP includes ensuring the safety of children and young people, that supports are in place for them, their family and whānau and that there is a focus on oranga - wellbeing. Work is currently underway to explore Health joining the CPP, the mechanism through which it may participate and other ways to ensure Oranga Tamariki and Police can access support and expertise from health professionals when assessing potential indicators of abuse and neglect.</p> <p><b><i>Actions undertaken and achievements to-date</i></b>  Oranga Tamariki have engaged with officials from Police, Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora, to discuss the option of including the health sector in the CCP and have recently completed joint planning to refine the scope of this work.</p> <p>Child protection policies for Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora are also being renewed, with a unified policy that is more relevant to the reformed health system to be delivered by the end of 2023. This fulfils a legislative requirement to review child protection policies every three years and will allow it to better reflect the 2019 legislation amendments regarding information sharing practices and provisions for those working with children. This offers an opportunity to raise the awareness of, and provide additional training for, child protection information sharing practices and pathways.</p> <p>Consideration is also being given to the joint memorandum of understanding between Oranga Tamariki, Police and the former District Health Boards as this agreement applies to some of the areas highlighted in the Dame Karen system review.</p> <p><b><i>The next steps, anticipated timeframe and decisions likely to be needed</i></b>  The review of the CPP is being undertaken this calendar year, and next steps will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kaimahi from both Oranga Tamariki and Police being engaged to identify both strengths and opportunities to improve CCP</li> <li>• consultation with Paediatric Society, International Child Protection Team, legal teams, and the policy and practices teams and other relevant agencies and stakeholders.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
<p>10 <i>There should be active monitoring of the implementation by early childhood education services of their required child protection policies to ensure they are providing effective protection for children. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office should jointly design and administer a monitoring and review cycle for the implementation of Child Protection Policies in Early Learning Services.</i></p>	<p><b><i>Positive change being sought for children and young people, and agency collaboration across to children’s system/addressal of recommendations</i></b>            Young children, in particular non-verbal children, are especially vulnerable to child abuse. Early Childhood Education Centers’ (ECEs) need to be alert to this and have appropriate child protection policies. Without this, ECEs present a gap where a key opportunity to identify and respond to potential child abuse is missed. Active monitoring of ECEs management of potential child abuse and regular reviews of ECEs’ Child Protection Policies will ensure they are not only in place but are being implemented and offering protection to children.</p> <p><b><i>Actions undertaken and achievements to-date</i></b>            Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga - Ministry of Education (Education) and the Education Review Office (ERO) have agreed the overall approach to delivering against this recommendation and have been meeting regularly to continue scoping and plan the work in more detail.</p> <p>Education and ERO are also identifying other opportunities in the current system to strengthen implementation of Early Childhood Education services’ child protection policies. This includes gathering information from different groups to understand from their perspective what can and should be improved.</p> <p><b><i>The next steps, anticipated timeframe and decisions likely to be needed</i></b>            Targeted engagement is continuing with a range of stakeholders, including early learning services, kaiako (teachers) and Education and ERO staff, which will be used to inform the work. The key deliverables and associated milestones and timelines following on from this are still being finalised.</p>

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
<p><b><i>Critical gap: In allowing a child to be invisible. The system's settings enabled Malachi to be unseen at key moments when he needed to be visible</i></b></p>	
<p>13 <i>Regular public awareness campaigns should be undertaken so the public is attuned to the signs and red flags that can signal abuse and are confident in knowing how to report this so children can be helped. Aotearoa society needs to hear the message 'don't look away'</i></p>	<p><b><i>Positive change being sought for children and young people, and agency collaboration across to children's system/addressal of recommendations</i></b>  A public awareness campaign could help address the challenges and reinforce the idea that responding to child abuse is a collective responsibility. It may assist in abuse and neglect being identified, and identified earlier, so that appropriate support can be wrapped around a child or young person, and their family and whānau, or otherwise enable an effective intervention. However, work to date has identified that the unintended consequences from similar campaigns have included an increase in surveillance of indigenous and other marginalised communities. This work needs to carefully consider and respond to this.</p> <p><b><i>Actions undertaken and achievements to-date</i></b>  Oranga Tamariki has undertaken initial scoping and internal consultation on the approach to the campaign. This includes a literature review which highlighted that campaigns have the capacity to affect awareness, attitudes and behaviours, but there is little evidence of their efficacy in preventing or reducing maltreatment. This is because the problems that contribute to child abuse and neglect cannot be underestimated and are complex. Initial scoping also identified that campaigns can result in increases in calls and referrals to helplines. Some studies cite increases of around 40 percent.</p> <p><b><i>The next steps, anticipated timeframe and decisions likely to be needed</i></b>  The above research and discovery phase has helped define that the direction and strategy for the campaign should be awareness-building, community-oriented communications and engagement with partners to develop resources that raise awareness of child abuse. The next steps include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate a hui-ā-kaupapa to consider the who, why and how of this mahi to form an awareness-building strategy from a te ao Māori perspective. This hui will be made up of internal and external parties as well as different cultural cohorts</li> <li>• stand up a working group from hui participants, who can help steer the project and feedback to the original hui, leadership and partners</li> <li>• recommend the purpose of awareness-building initiatives based on research, define the objectives and outcomes, and audiences in advance of initiating any campaign.</li> </ul>

Recommendation	Progress towards implementation
	Any advertising initiatives that may arise from the hui-ā-kaupapa strategy will need to abide by Government Advertising Guidelines, which require Chief Executive sign off and for a period of restraint in the pre-election period.