



**Just Sayin' survey:
Understanding the transition
needs of rainbow young people**

November 2021



Table of contents

Executive summary	3
1. Background and the purpose of the study	4
2. An overview of rainbow young people in the Transition Support Service 6	6
2.1. There was a higher proportion of rainbow females than other genders	7
2.2. Ethnicity of rainbow young people closely resembles cis-heterosexual	7
2.3. A smaller proportion of rainbow young people were not in education, training or employment than cis-heterosexual young people	8
2.4. The poorer mental health of rainbow young people is a key finding of this report	8
2.5. Many but not all rainbow young people believed their health needs were being met	10
2.6. Rainbow young people were less positive about their wellbeing than cis-heterosexual young people.....	11
2.7. Many rainbow young people were proud of their identity	12
2.8. Rainbow young people had positive housing experiences.....	13
2.9. Most rainbow young people had support networks	15
3. Experiences of Oranga Tamariki care for rainbow young people	16
3.1. Rainbow young people entered care at a young age	16
3.2. Rainbow young people felt supported by their Oranga Tamariki social workers	16
4. Experiences with transition from care for rainbow young people	19
4.1. Rainbow young people had plans for when they transitioned out of care	19
4.2. Half of rainbow young people had a transition worker.....	19
4.3. Rainbow young people had positive relationships with their transition worker	20
4.4. Rainbow young people discussed their worries about leaving care with their transition worker.....	21
5. Overview and opportunities to strengthen the Transition Support Service for rainbow young people	23
Appendix A: Methods and information sources	24
Appendix B: Fact Sheet	25

Executive summary

This report is one of a series of thematic reports from the Just Sayin' 2021 survey of young people transitioning out of Oranga Tamariki care and eligible for transition worker support. In the survey, young people were asked whether they identify as part of LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities.

In line with other research, rainbow young people were over-represented in care and 63 (19%) of young people responding to the survey considered themselves part of rainbow communities.

Rainbow young people responding to the survey are similarly disadvantaged to cis-heterosexual young people in care when compared with young people in Aotearoa New Zealand without care experience. Rainbow young people also have needs which arise from experiences of discrimination and marginalisation due to their sexual orientation and gender identities and result in poor health and wellbeing outcomes. When compared with other young people in the survey, a higher proportion of rainbow young people were disabled¹ (73%) and self-assessed their taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing) as poor or fair (52%).

The Just Sayin' 2021 results found that between two-thirds and three-quarters of rainbow young people are doing well in many areas of their transition from Oranga Tamariki care. Those doing well feel safe and comfortable where they live. They have built successful relationships with their social worker and transition workers.

The survey findings emphasise the importance of understanding the support needs of rainbow young people while in care and transitioning from care. Asking young people if they are part of rainbow communities will allow Oranga Tamariki to respond to the specific needs of rainbow young people. Improving outcomes for rainbow young people includes ensuring they have access to support from social workers and transition workers who either are part of rainbow communities themselves or understand the needs of members of these communities.

¹ Criteria for disability was based of the Washington Group scale, where young people who indicated 'often' or 'always' on five facets were defined as disabled.

1. Background and the purpose of the study

1.1. Transition Support Service

The Transition Support Service (TS) was set up in July 2019 to ensure young people leaving care and youth justice were supported to become more independent and have opportunities to succeed. From the age of 15, in preparation for transition, young people who have been in care were provided new supports including:

- A statutory obligation for Oranga Tamariki to support and maintain contact with young people leaving care.
- A phone line dedicated to support young people with their transition needs up until the age of 25.
- A transition worker from an external provider organisation (A TS partner) to support young people through their transition journey up until the age of 21.
- Support to remain living with or return to live with a caregiver until they are 21.

1.2. The Transition Support Service evaluation

The evaluation of the TS is led by the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre with collaboration from the Transition Support team. Evaluation and monitoring activities are completed both internally and through a contract with Malatest International (an independent research and evaluation company).

The Just Sayin' surveys - annual surveys of young people who are eligible for support for transition workers – are one part of the TS evaluation (www.justsayin.nz). The surveys include young people aged 16 to 21 who were eligible for support from a transition worker.

This report is one of a series of reports focusing on Just Sayin' 2021 findings about the needs of different groups within the population of young people leaving care. Its focus is on the transition support needs of young people who identified as part of the LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities².

1.3. Information for this report is sourced from the 2021 Just Sayin' survey

The 2021 Just Sayin' survey was the first time young people participating in the survey were asked if they considered themselves part of LGBTQIA+/rainbow

² This term is discussed in more detail in Section 1.4. Language.

communities (here within described as rainbow communities). Asking this question allows us to explore the transition from care experiences and needs of young people in rainbow communities, to understand the needs of these communities and how to support them during transition.

Of the 331 young people transitioning out of care who participated in the survey:

- Sixty-three (19%) considered themselves part of the LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities.
- Forty (12%) were unsure whether they identified as part of the LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities.
- Six (2%) identified as gender-diverse (i.e., a gender other than man or woman).

This report focusses on the 63 young people who considered themselves part of the LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities³.

1.4. Language

Within this report, some of the language we use may be unfamiliar to people outside of the rainbow communities but is used to make the report as rainbow-inclusive as possible. For instance, 'rainbow' will be used as the main umbrella term for minority genders and sexual identities. This includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, queer, asexual, transgender, takatāpui, fa'afafine, non-binary, genderqueer, and other identities within rainbow communities.

Cis-heterosexual is the term used to denote people not within rainbow communities. This term refers to cisgender (people whose gender matches the one they were assigned at birth) and/or heterosexual people.

³ Best practice in research recommends including people who are unsure about whether they are part of rainbow communities in the rainbow community sample. During data collection, some young people did not understand the question. We cannot be certain whether young people who selected 'unsure' were unsure about what the question was asking, or unsure about their sexuality or gender identity. Therefore in this report we have not included the 'unsure' group in the rainbow sample.

2. An overview of rainbow young people in the Transition Support Service

Oranga Tamariki have not routinely collected data on whether young people in care are part of rainbow communities. Findings from overseas suggests rainbow people are over-represented in care⁴. For example, research from the USA suggests 4.1% of LGBT youth have been in foster care, compared to 2.6% of the general population⁵. Research from the USA also found that 30% of young people living in foster care identified with a rainbow identity, compared to 11% of the general population⁶. Transgender and gender-diverse young people were more likely to be in care (or have previously been in care) than cisgender rainbow young people⁷.

Around one-quarter of young people in care identify with rainbow communities⁸. However, rainbow young people in care have been called an “invisible population” due to a lack of awareness among staff of the ubiquity of this group in care and Youth Justice environments⁹. In the USA, rainbow young people transitioning out of care have unmet needs associated with their gender or sexuality¹⁰.

This report begins to build a picture of the experiences and support needs of rainbow young people in their transition out of Oranga Tamariki care.

The Just Sayin’ 2021 survey was completed by 331 young people and 63 (19%) identified as part of rainbow communities. As most questions were optional, n values may vary slightly, dependent on how many young people answered each question.

⁴ Baams, K., Wilson, B. D. M., & Russell, S. T. (2019). LGBTQ Youth in Unstable Housing and Foster Care. *Pediatrics*, 143 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4211>.

⁵ The Trevor Project (2021). Research Brief: LGBTQ Youth with a History of Foster Care. Retrieved from <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/2021/05/12/research-brief-lgbtq-youth-with-a-history-of-foster-care/>

⁶ Baams, K., Wilson, B. D. M., & Russell, S. T. (2019). LGBTQ Youth in Unstable Housing and Foster Care. *Pediatrics*, 143 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4211>.

⁷ The Trevor Project (2021). Research Brief: LGBTQ Youth with a History of Foster Care. Retrieved from <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/2021/05/12/research-brief-lgbtq-youth-with-a-history-of-foster-care/>

⁸ Baams, K., Wilson, B. D. M., & Russell, S. T. (2019). LGBTQ Youth in Unstable Housing and Foster Care. *Pediatrics*, 143 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4211>.

⁹ Gallegos, A. et al. (2011). Exploring the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Adolescents in Foster Care. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 14. DOI: 10.1080/10522158.2011.571547

¹⁰ Paul, J. C. (2020). Exploring support for LGBTQ youth transitioning from foster care to emerging adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105481>

2.1. There was a higher proportion of rainbow females than other genders

The highest proportion of rainbow young people who completed the Just Sayin’ 2021 survey were female (Figure 1). Few males in the sample identified as rainbow young people. All gender diverse people (people who are non-binary, agender, takatāpui, etc.) identified as part of rainbow communities. The larger proportion of females in rainbow communities is in line with previous research which found more rainbow people identified via surveys are women than men¹¹. The differences in gender in this sample are more marked.

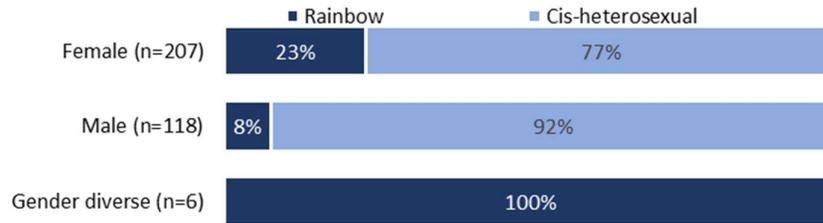


Figure 1. Gender of rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people

2.2. Ethnicity of rainbow young people closely resembles cis-heterosexual

The proportion of Māori rainbow young people was similar to the proportion in other ethnic groups. Pacific young people were somewhat over-represented in those who identified as rainbow young people (25%) (Figure 2), however the difference was not statistically significant. Rainbow communities have not often been studied in Aotearoa New Zealand, so it is not clear if this reflects an over-representation of rainbow young people who are Pacific in care or is consistent with community proportions.

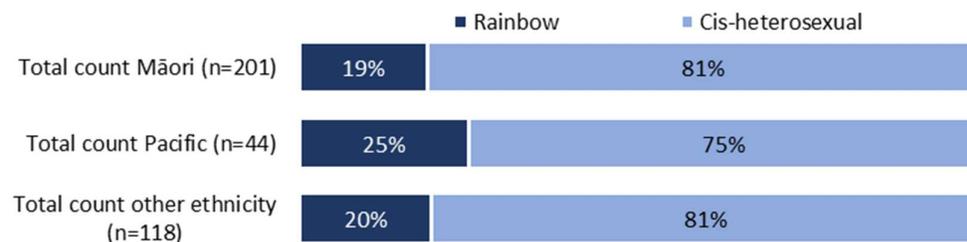


Figure 2. Ethnicity of rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people¹²

¹¹ Gates, G. J. (2011). How Many People are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender? *Williams Institute*. Retrieved from <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/how-many-people-lgbt/>

¹² A total count measure was used. Some young people identified as both Māori and Pacific and so were included in both Māori and Pacific count. Due to this, the total n is above the number of people who participated in the survey.

2.3. A smaller proportion of rainbow young people were not in education, training or employment than cis-heterosexual young people

Most rainbow young people were in some form of schooling or work, but 13% were not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 21% of cis-heterosexual young people responding to the survey (Figure 3). The proportion for rainbow young people is comparable to the national average for all 15–24-year-olds in Aotearoa New Zealand (12%)¹³. NEET status is associated with poorer long-term employability, leaving school with low qualifications and intergenerational benefit dependency¹⁴.

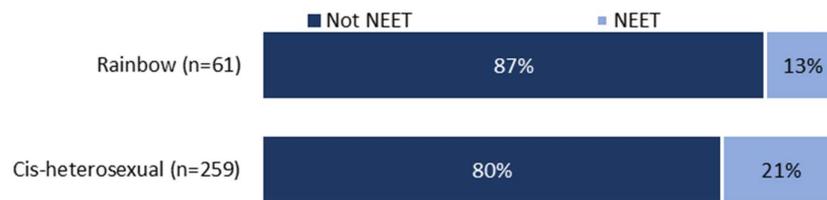


Figure 3. Comparison of rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people NEET status

2.4. The poorer mental health of rainbow young people is a key finding of this report

In this survey, almost three-quarters of rainbow young people (73%) indicated they had some form of disability on the Washington Group short scale¹⁵ (Figure 4). Disability was defined as people with level three or higher on the Washington Group scale – those who often or always having difficulty with one or more of the following in the last 12 months:

- Seeing (even when wearing glasses)
- Hearing (even when using a hearing aid)
- Physical movement (walking, using stairs, using their hands etc.)
- Difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating
- Emotional psychological or mental health condition.

¹³ National NEET rate is based on the Household Labour Force Survey which asks respondents about the week before the survey and if they did any paid work. This is much more specific compared to Just Sayin' which asks about the last 12 months.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education (2019). Not just about NEETs: A rapid review of evidence on what works for youth at risk of limited employment. Retrieved from https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/194513/Not-just-about-NEETs.pdf

¹⁵ Washington Group on Disability Statistics (2020). *WG Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/>

An independent samples t-test found this difference to be significant at the 0.05 level.

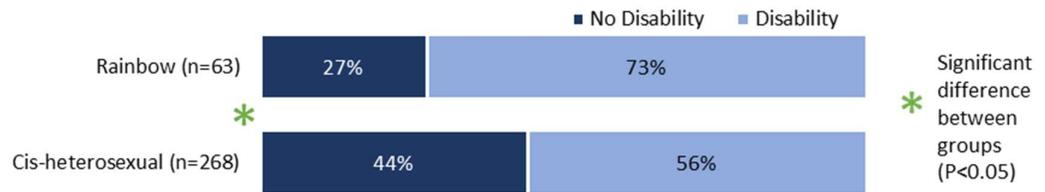


Figure 4. Level of disability for rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people based on the Washington Group short scale

The higher proportion of disability among rainbow young people is consistent with overseas research which indicated rainbow youth had higher rates of disability than the general population¹⁶.

In Just Sayin' 2021, the largest difference in disability between rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people was the level of emotional, psychological, or mental health issues (Figure 5). More than half of rainbow young people (57%) self-assessed as level three or higher in this domain. Overseas research has found rainbow youth in foster care had poorer mental health and were at greater risk of suicide than cis-heterosexual young people in foster care¹⁷. Mental health issues have also been linked in the literature with the stress of experiencing discrimination as a member of a marginalised gender and/or sexual identity¹⁸.

¹⁶ Fredrikson-Goldsen, K. I., Kim, H-J., & Barkan, S. E. (2012). Disability Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults: Disparities in Prevalence and Risk. *Am J Public Health, 102*(1). DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2011.300379

¹⁷ Baams, K., Wilson, B. D. M., & Russell, S. T. (2019). LGBTQ Youth in Unstable Housing and Foster Care. *Pediatrics, 143* (3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4211>.

¹⁸ Moagi, M. M., van Der Wath, A. E., Jiyane, P. M., Rikhotso, R. S. (2021). Mental health challenges of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people: An integrated literature review. *Health SA, 26*. DOI: 10.4102/hsag.v26i0.1487

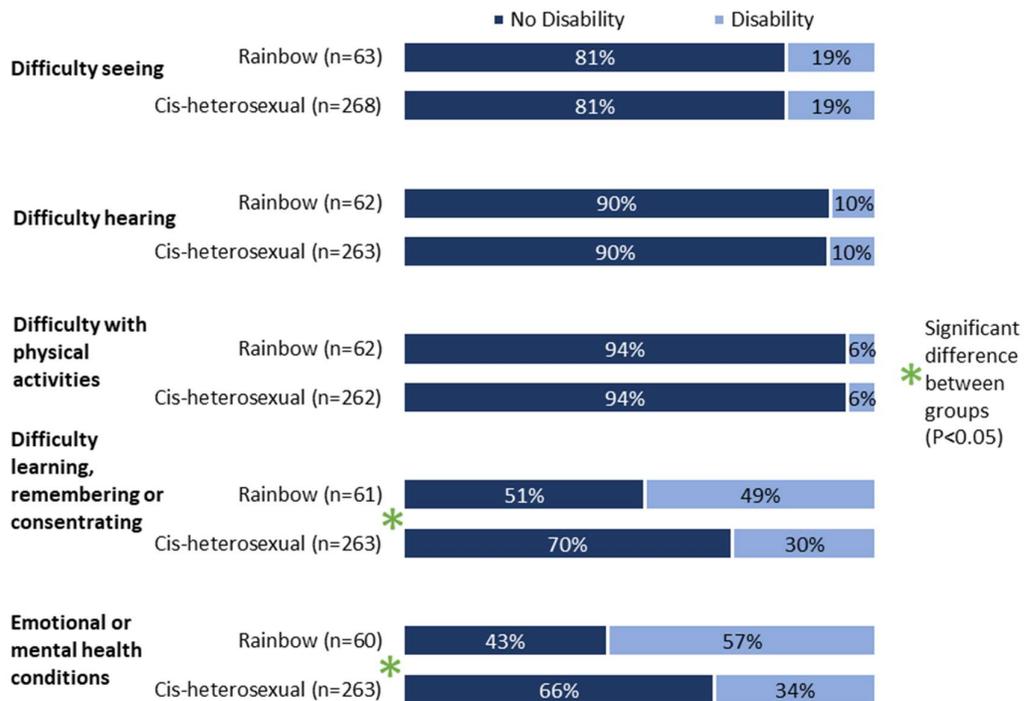


Figure 5. The proportions of rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people identifying disability based on the domains of the Washington Group short scale

2.5. Many but not all rainbow young people believed their health needs were being met

In response to Just Sayin’ 2021, two-thirds (67%) of rainbow young people said their health needs were met. Over one-third of rainbow young people (38%) said in the last 12 months, there was at least one occasion where they wanted to see a healthcare provider but were unable to. Most barriers to receiving health support were individual circumstances including transport and financial issues (Table 1). Understanding how to better help rainbow young people with their individual healthcare needs and barriers is important to improve their access to healthcare.

Table 1. Reasons rainbow young people gave for not visiting a healthcare professional (n=25)

“In the last 12 months, has there been any time when you wanted or needed to see a doctor or nurse about your health, but you weren’t able to?”	
Themes	Example quote
Transport issues	<i>Don't have a car to get into town and it's too far to walk.</i>
Finances	<i>Moving all the time, so have a joining fee. Don't have all the money for the doctor.</i>
Healthcare provider didn’t offer specific services	<i>[Town] don't care about trans healthcare.</i>
Anxiety or distrust of medical professionals	<i>I have a phobia of doctor. Need someone to go with me to be my soldier. If don't have support, then I won't go.</i>

2.6. Rainbow young people were less positive about their wellbeing than cis-heterosexual young people

Poor health and wellbeing outcomes in rainbow young people are related to experiences of identifying with a marginalised gender and/or sexual identity¹⁹. Overall, 67% of rainbow young people thought their life was excellent to good (Figure 6). More rainbow than cis-heterosexual young people selected good rather than very good or excellent when asked about how they felt about life in general.



Figure 6. Rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people assessments of how they felt about their life in general

Within the Just Sayin’ 2021 survey, hauora was assessed by asking how young people felt about their life using questions related to the four dimensions of Te Whare Tapa

¹⁹ The Trevor Project. (2019). National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health. Retrieved from <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/The-Trevor-Project-National-Survey-Results-2019.pdf>

Whā²⁰. Comparisons of rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people’s taha wairua (spiritual health), taha tinana (physical health), taha hinengaro (mental health) and taha whānau (family health) presents a picture of poorer hinengaro for rainbow people (Figure 7). Using an independent samples T-test, this difference was found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. It is worth noting the poor taha whānau rainbow people experienced, although it was not statistically significant. Helping rainbow young people rebuild their family relationships to increase their taha whānau may be important.

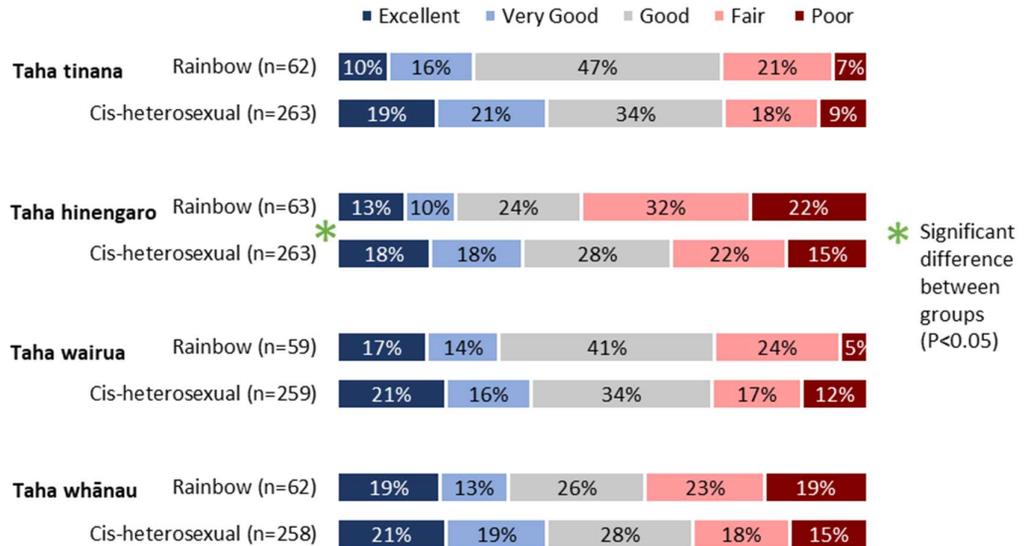


Figure 7. Four cornerstones of Te Whare Tapa Whā compared for rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people

2.7. Many rainbow young people were proud of their identity

Pride in their identity for rainbow people may indicate an acceptance and confidence in their sexuality and gender. Three-quarters (75%) of rainbow young people felt reasonably or very proud of who they are (Figure 8)²¹. Fewer, but still over 60% indicated a high degree of security in their identity²². International literature has

²⁰ Durie, M. (1994). Cited by Ministry of Health (2017). *Māori health models – Te Whare Tapa Whā*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/maori-health-models/maori-health-models-te-whare-tapa-wha>

²¹ High degree of pride includes young people who selected ‘very’ or ‘reasonably’ when asked to what extent they were proud of who they are.

²² High degree of security includes young people who selected ‘very’ or ‘reasonably’ when asked to what extent they were felt secure of who they are.

found a correlation between pride in identity and wellbeing for rainbow people^{23 24}. Within the Just Sayin’ 2021 survey, the sample size of rainbow young people is too small to provide robust statistical correlations.

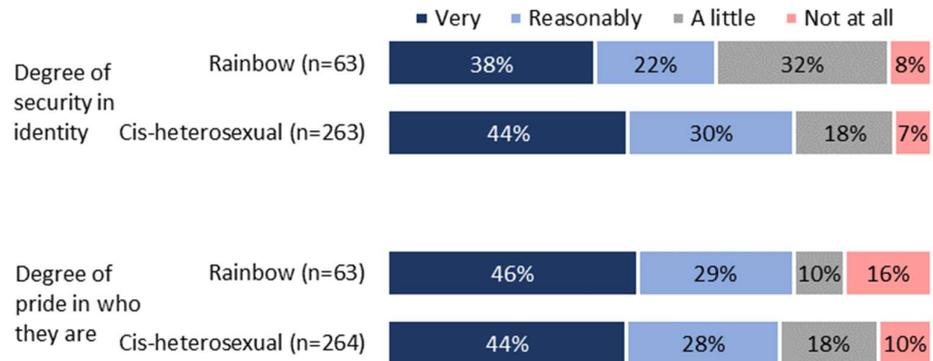


Figure 8. Self-reported pride and security in their identity for rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people

2.8. Rainbow young people had positive housing experiences

A key part of the TS is ensuring young people have stable and secure housing while transitioning out of care. Most rainbow young people felt the places they lived in were safe, warm, they felt settled, and accepted (Figure 9).

Their responses were equivalent, and higher in some instances, to cis-heterosexual young people. Three-quarters to four-fifths of rainbow young people felt their home was safe, warm, settled, and accepting, and one-third of rainbow rangatahi felt they didn’t belong in their home.

²³ Fredriksen-Goldsen, K.I., Bryan, A. E. B., Shiu, C., Emler, C. A. (2017). The Cascading Effects of Marginalization and Pathways of Resilience in Attaining Good Health Among LGBT Older Adults. *The Gerontologist*, 57. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnw170>

²⁴ Busby et al., (2020). Suicide risk among gender and sexual minority college students: The roles of victimization, discrimination, connectedness, and identity affirmation. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2019.11.013>

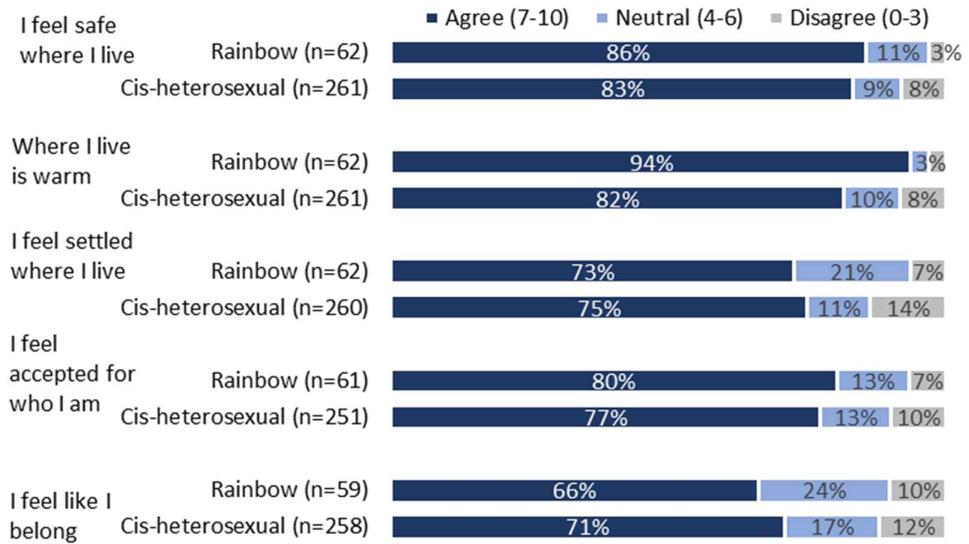


Figure 9. Rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people current housing experiences²⁵

Eight percent of the responding rainbow young people lived in unstable housing such as living rough, couch surfing, living in a car, van or garage. The rate of unstable housing for rainbow young people was similar to cis-heterosexual youth (Figure 10). However, it is likely that young people in unstable housing are under-represented in the survey. Other research has shown rainbow young people were at a greater risk of homelessness or housing instability than cis-heterosexual young people in Aotearoa New Zealand^{26 27}.



Figure 10. Unstable housing and other forms of housing for rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people

²⁵ Young people were asked to rate their housing experiences on a scale of 0 to 10 and these were grouped into Disagree (0 to 3), Neutral (4 to 6), and Agree (7 to 10).

²⁶ Greaves, L., Fleming, T., Roy, R., Fenaughty, J., Sutcliffe, K., & Clark, T. (2021). A Youth19 Brief: Rainbow Young people Māori. The Youth19 Research Group, Victoria University of Wellington and The University of Auckland, New Zealand.

²⁷ Te Ngākau Kahukura (n.d.). Housing and homeless. Retrieved from <https://www.tengakaukahukura.nz/housing-and-homelessness>

2.9. Most rainbow young people had support networks

Two-thirds (67%) of rainbow young people felt they had the support of an adult they could turn to if they needed help (Figure 11). Social support for rainbow young people is particularly important for reducing the consequences of marginalisation and discrimination for this group²⁸.

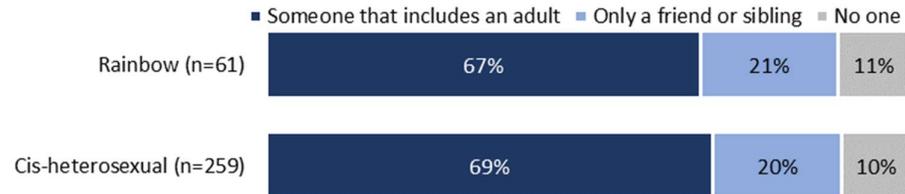


Figure 11. Who rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people feel they can reach out to for support

²⁸ McConnell, E. A., Birkett, M. A., Mustanski, B. (2015). Typologies of social Support and Associations with Mental Health Outcomes Among LGBT Youth, *LGBT Health*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2014.0051>

3. Experiences of Oranga Tamariki care for rainbow young people

Of the 63 rainbow participants, 40% were still in care when they responded to the Just Sayin' 2021 survey. Young people still in care responded to questions about their experiences with their social worker and their preparation for leaving care.

3.1. Rainbow young people entered care at a young age

Approximately half of both rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people entered care when they were younger than 11, with 33% of rainbow young people entered care aged 5 or younger (Figure 12). Reasons for entering care were not asked in this survey but research shows that between 11 and 15 is the age many young people begin identifying with and disclosing their sexual and gender identity²⁹.



Figure 12. Age entered care for rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people

3.2. Rainbow young people felt supported by their Oranga Tamariki social workers

The relationships between young people and their social workers were an important part of Oranga Tamariki care. Many rainbow young people (72%) knew how to get support from Oranga Tamariki when they needed it.

While 65% of rainbow young people still in care were positive about the support they received from their social worker 35% were not positive about some aspect of support (Figure 13).

Rainbow young people indicated their social worker:

- Understands what support they need when they leave care (70%)
- Is there for the young people when they needed them (88%)
- Does what they say they will do (84%).

²⁹ Dunlap, A. (2016). Changes in coming out milestones across five age cohorts. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 28 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2016.1124351>

The difference between the proportion of rainbow young people who were positive about their social worker was not statistically different to the proportion of cis-heterosexual young people.

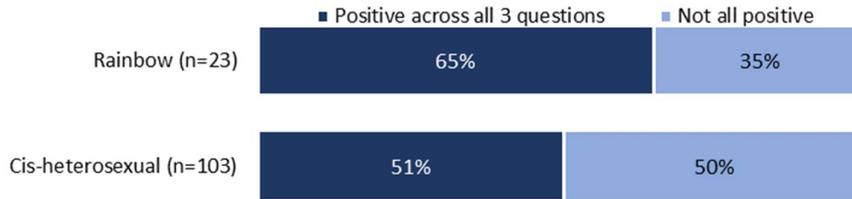


Figure 13. Rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people's positivity towards their social worker

However, a significantly higher proportion of rainbow young people (88%) than cis-heterosexual young people (61%) thought their social worker was there for them when they needed them³⁰.

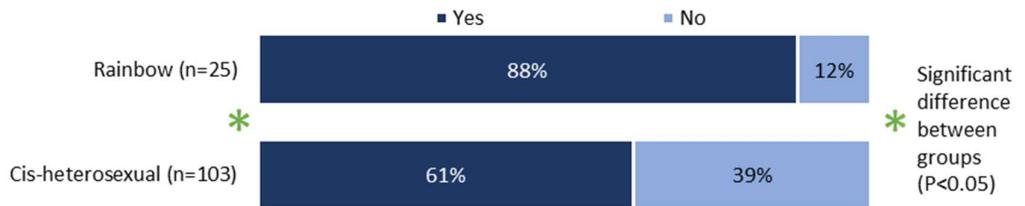


Figure 14. Rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people's views about whether their social worker was there when they need them

Sixty-five percent of rainbow young people felt they could talk to their social worker about their worries (Figure 15).

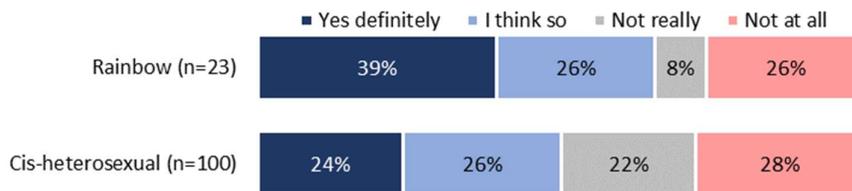


Figure 15. Rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people believe that they can talk to their social worker about their worries

³⁰ Independent Samples T-Test found a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level

Young people shared their thoughts about their social worker and why they felt they could or couldn't trust them (Table 2). Their comments highlighted the importance of building trust and positive experiences for them to feel able to share their worries with their social workers.

Table 2. Reasons rainbow young people had for trusting or distrusting their social worker with their worries (n=18)

"Do you feel you can talk to your social worker at Oranga Tamariki about your worries?"	
Themes	Illustrative Quote
I trust them because we have built up a good relationship	<i>She's a member of the LGBT community. We have a great relationship and she's amazing all around.</i>
I trust them because they treat me well	<i>Because she is hardworking, she treats me like a person not a job and she is just an awesome person and I feel happy around her.</i>
I don't trust them because they haven't demonstrated they were trustworthy	<i>Because the last time I spoke to her about my worries she made it ten times a lot worst [sic].</i>
I don't trust them because we haven't built up a relationship	<i>Because it's OT, I don't know her well enough to be able to trust her.</i>

4. Experiences with transition from care for rainbow young people

Core to the TS is the relationship between young people and their transition worker. Transition workers support young people transitioning out of care and into the community, helping them with future planning and their other transition needs.

4.1. Rainbow young people had plans for when they transitioned out of care

The planning and preparation aspects of service delivery were not consistent with the Oranga Tamariki national care standards for at least one-third of survey respondents (Figure 16). Three-quarters (74%) of rainbow young people who had left care had been a part of a family group conference leaving care and 76% had also worked out a plan with someone at Oranga Tamariki about transitioning out of care, but only 36% recalled receiving a copy of their plan. Smaller proportions of rainbow than cis-heterosexual young people who were currently in care had worked out a plan for leaving care with someone (44% and 76% respectively). Three-quarters of young people currently in care had already had a family group conference about leaving care.

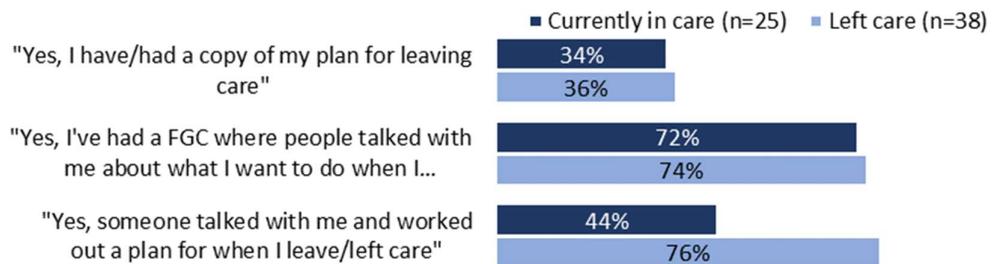


Figure 16. Rainbow young people's plans for leaving care

4.2. Half of rainbow young people had a transition worker

Most rainbow young people (81%) said they had been asked about a transition worker, and 76% had met with a transition worker. At the time of the survey, 56% of rainbow young people said they had a transition worker (Figure 17). An additional 19% of rainbow young people were unsure whether they had a transition worker.

The remaining percentage may have either declined a transition worker or had not yet met with a transition worker.



Figure 17. Whether rainbow young people had a transition worker (TW) self-reported

4.3. Rainbow young people had positive relationships with their transition worker

Four out of five rainbow young people who had a transition worker (either currently or in the past) were positive about at least some of the support they received and 75% gave positive responses to all three questions. Their transition worker:

- Was there when they needed them (83%)
- Made things better for them (85%)
- Understood what kinds of support they needed (91%).

Additionally, 85% of rainbow young people believed their transition worker did what they said they would do ‘most’ or ‘all of the time’.

Young people were asked to share their thoughts about why they did or did not feel their transition worker made things better for them (Table 3).

Table 3. Rainbow young people’s descriptions of why they think their transition worker makes things better for them (n=38)

“Does your transition worker help make things better for you? Why do you say this?”	
Themes	Illustrative Quotes
They helped me with my transition needs	<i>Because she did helped (sic) a lot through my financial need.</i> <i>They have helped me to move out of a toxic home space and made the transition fast and easy.</i>
They have built up a relationship with me	<i>Before I got a transition worker, I spent so long having to hide myself from the world, because I was told people didn’t want people like me around. My transition worker helped me feel more confident in myself, they made me feel supported and accepted, when my caregiver didn’t.</i>
They were not useful	<i>Wasn’t useful because the social worker was doing most of the stuff, they were in background.</i>

Rainbow young people described the ways their transition worker helping them with things they found difficult such as future plans, housing, food grants, and transport was valuable (Table 4). Their responses were similar to those of all young people who responded to the Just Sayin’ 2021 survey.

Table 4. Rainbow young people’s descriptions of the help their transition worker provided (n=43)

“How has your transition worker helped you?”	
Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Life skills	<i>My transition worker has set me up with life skills that I will be able to use once I leave care (e.g., how to budget, learning how to drive etc).</i>
Transport and drivers’ licences	<i>She was very supportive and helped me get my learner’s [driver] licence.</i>
Helped with buying items	<i>They helped me get furniture for my where.</i>
Emotional and social support	<i>She has been there with open ears and arms about what I want in life and has always been there to support me.</i>
Accommodation	<i>Helped get accommodation so I didn’t have to sleep in a car.</i>

4.4. Rainbow young people discussed their worries about leaving care with their transition worker

Some rainbow young people (54%) had ‘some’ or ‘a lot of worry’ about leaving care (Figure 18).

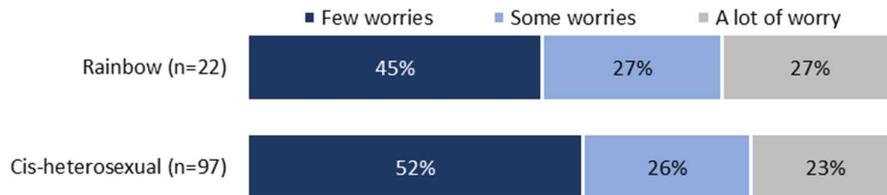


Figure 18. Rainbow and cis-heterosexual young people’s self-reported level of worry about leaving care

Many of the things rainbow young people worried about were generalised and unspecific about being in the world as an adult. Some worries were about things such as needing accommodation where their transition worker could help.

Table 5. Rainbow young people describe their worries about leaving care (n=46)

"Are you worried about anything that will happen after you leave care? Would you like to share any of the things you are worried about?"	
Themes	Illustrative Quotes
Financial worries	<i>Struggling with finding jobs to support me financially.</i>
Lack of support people	<i>Sometimes I worry that it will be a lot harder without the support of my transition and social worker. I've grown up a lot of the time OT have been shit to me but I do know they have my back. I just want to be prepared when I transition into 18.</i>
Worrying about future plans	<i>The usual things, overthinking about the future, work, and study, where I want to live and of course family.</i>
Worrying about lack of life skills	<i>I am worried I will not have the necessary knowledge to care for myself as I am already struggling while in care.</i>

Three-quarters of rainbow young people with a transition worker (76%) said they felt they could talk to someone at the TS, such as their transition worker, about their worries. Broadly, young people saw their transition worker as trustworthy, supportive, and compassionate which made them want to share their worries with their transition worker (Table 6). Some young people did not want to open up to their transition worker because they did not trust others easily, or because a trusting relationship had not yet been built between them and their transition worker.

Table 6. Descriptions of why rainbow young people could or could not open up about their worries with their transition worker (n=31)

"Do you feel you can talk to someone at the Transition Support Service about your worries? Why do you say this?"	
Themes	Illustrative Quotes
TW had been helpful with supporting them with their worries	<i>I already have [opened up to them], and they've been helpful and tried to help me manage them. I know she gets sh*t done.</i>
TW were trustworthy	<i>I trust them and I can talk to them about anything. She's very open and genuine, making it a safe place to open up to and talk to.</i>
Young people had difficulty opening up to others	<i>I get shy and feel like I can be a burden at times. I'm a person that's hard to open up.</i>

5. Overview and opportunities to strengthen the Transition Support Service for rainbow young people

Rainbow young people were similar in some aspects to cis-heterosexual respondents, and in some areas had more positive findings. For example, a higher proportion of rainbow young people than cis-heterosexual had close relationships and trusted their social workers and transition workers. Previous research found that rainbow young people leaving care often considered child welfare service providers (i.e., social workers, transition workers) as part of their support system³¹.

Many rainbow young people felt secure and proud in their identities. While many rainbow young people felt safe and secure where they lived and accepted by the people with whom they lived, one-third felt they did not belong.

Rainbow young people transitioning out of care have been found to have poor economic and educational wellbeing³². In this group, rainbow young people's engagement in employment, education or training was similar to the average in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In line with research about rainbow people's health and wellbeing, rainbow young people in the survey had high rates of disability and mental health concerns. Focusing on the health and wellbeing of rainbow young people is an important area of attention for this population to improve their outcomes.

Consideration and catering to the specific needs of rainbow young people in care and transitioning out of care may improve their outcomes³³.

Just Sayin' survey findings provide some exploratory information about rainbow young people transitioning out of care. Further research into the experiences of rainbow young people in care will allow more knowledge to be gained about the transition support needs of this population.

³¹ Paul, J. C. (2020). Exploring support for LGBTQ youth transitioning from foster care to emerging adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 119.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105481>

³² Dworsky, A. & Hall, C (2013). The Economic Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care. *Mathematica Policy Research*.

³³ Paul, J. C. (2020). Exploring support for LGBTQ youth transitioning from foster care to emerging adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 119.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105481>

Appendix A: Methods and information sources

5.1. Information sources

Information was sourced from Just Sayin' 2021 survey data. Just Sayin' is an anonymous survey of young people eligible for the TS, aged between 16 and 21. The survey is repeated annually with the first survey run in 2020. This report draws on the 2021 data where young people were asked about whether they were part of LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities.

The Just Sayin' 2021 survey was completed by 331 young people not in a youth justice at the time of the survey and 63 (19%) of these respondents identified as part of LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities. Respondents who indicated they were 'unsure' whether they were part of the LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities (12%) were not included in this analysis because some young people, when doing the survey face-to-face or over the phone did not know what LGBTQIA+ stood for. Therefore, we cannot assume survey respondents who had put 'unsure' were currently questioning whether they identified as a member of rainbow communities or were unsure what the question was asking

5.2. Analysis and ethical approval

Just Sayin' 2021 data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research team adhered to established ethical principles underpinning research and evaluation (including policies specific to informed consent, participant safety, privacy and data security). Ethics review was provided by experts at the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre.

Appendix B: Fact Sheet

This fact sheet presents the data for 331 rainbow and cis-heterosexual³⁴ young people who completed the Just Sayin' 2021 survey, excluding young people currently in youth justice (of which there was just one rainbow person surveyed). The data indicated that in the total sample, 19% of young people considered themselves part of the LGBTQIA+/rainbow communities. In the tables below, Rn and Cn refer to the count for the rainbow and cis-heterosexual sample respectively.

Overview of rainbow and cis-heterosexual survey respondents	Rainbow	Cis-heterosexual
Part of the LGBTQIA+/rainbow community? (Rn=63, Cn=268)		
Yes	100%	0%
No	0%	85%
Not sure	0%	15%
Currently has a transition worker (% yes) (Rn=63, Cn=268)	56%	61%
Currently in care (% yes) (Rn=63, Cn=268)	40%	39%
Gender diverse/still deciding (Rn=63, Cn=268)		
Male	14%	41%
Female	76%	59%
10%	10%	0%
Total count Māori	60%	61%
Total count Pacific	17%	12%
Total count Non-Māori/Non-Pacific (Rn=63, Cn=268)	37%	35%
Current age: (Rn=63, Cn=268)		
16	16%	18%
17	27%	24%
18	30%	28%
19	19%	19%
20+	8%	12%
Age entered care: (Rn=63, Cn=268)		
Younger than 5	33%	26%
6 to 10	17%	26%
11 to 15	41%	37%
16 or older	5%	4%
Not sure	3%	6%

³⁴ Cis-heterosexual is the term used to describe non-rainbow people. That is, people who are cisgender (their gender identity matches their gender assigned at birth) and heterosexual (attracted only to people of a different gender than themselves).

Holistic needs assessment (for young people still in care)	Rainbow	Cis-heterosexual
Does Oranga Tamariki help make things better for you? (3-yes, I think so, to 4-yes, definitely on 4-point scale) (Rn=24, Cn=102)	58%	62%
Does your Oranga Tamariki social worker do what they said they would do? (3-most of the time to 4-all of the time on 4-point scale) (Rn=25, Cn=103)	84%	60%
Is your Oranga Tamariki social worker there when you need them? (% yes) (Rn=25, Cn=103)	88%	61%
I think my Oranga Tamariki social worker understands what kinds of support I need after I leave care (% yes) (Rn=24, Cn=103)	70%	64%
Are you worried about anything that will happen after you leave care? (7-10 out of a 10-point worry scale – serious worries) (Rn=22, Cn=97)	27%	23%
Do you feel you can talk to your social worker at Oranga Tamariki about your worries? (3-yes, I think so to 4-yes, definitely on 4-point scale) (Rn=23, Cn=100)	65%	50%
Transition planning		
Have you had a conversation with anyone at Oranga Tamariki about what you need when you leave care? (% yes) (Rn=25, Cn=104)	44%	50%
Have you been at a family group conference where people talked with you about what you wanted to do when you leave care? (% yes) (Rn=25, Cn=104)	72%	67%
When you left care had you been part of a family group conference to discuss your future? (% yes, for those who had left care) (Rn=38, Cn=164)	74%	67%
Have you been asked about whether you want to see a TW? (% yes) (Rn=63, Cn=268)	81%	86%
Have you talked with a transition worker? (% yes) (Rn=63, Cn=268)	76%	81%
Transition Support Services (for young people with a transition worker)		
Do you think your transition worker understands what kinds of support you need? (% yes) (Rn=46, Cn=209)	91%	79%
Does your transition worker do what they say they would do? (3-most of the time to 4-all of the time on 4-point scale) (Rn=46, Cn=208)	85%	80%
Is your transition worker there when you need them? (% yes) (Rn=46, Cn=208)	83%	80%
Does your transition worker help make things better for you? (3-yes, I think so to 4-yes, definitely on 4-point scale) (Rn=46, Cn=207)	85%	81%
Maintaining contact with young people		
Do you know how to get support from Oranga Tamariki if you needed help? (% yes) (Rn=61, Cn=260)	72%	68%

Where young people live	Rainbow	Cis-heterosexual
Living in one place (<i>Rn=63, Cn=268</i>)	86%	88%
Where they are living: (<i>Rn=63, Cn=268</i>)		
A family home or homes	40%	44%
A group residence (or lock up residence)	2%	4%
A foster home	16%	13%
A partner or friends' home	19%	19%
A flat you pay rent for	21%	15%
Somewhere else	14%	9%
Unstable accommodation (garage, couch surfing, living in a motel, car or van, sleeping rough)	8%	9%
Young people in education, employment or training (in the past 12-months)		
In education or training (<i>Rn=61, Cn=259</i>)	61%	47%
Has full-time job (<i>Rn=61, Cn=259</i>)	18%	22%
Has part-time job (<i>Rn=61, Cn=259</i>)	31%	24%
NEET (<i>Rn=61, Cn=259</i>)	13%	20%
Young people wellbeing and support systems		
How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements about where you usually live? (<i>7-10 agreement out of 10-point scale</i>)		
I have somewhere warm to live (<i>Rn=62, Cn=261</i>)	94%	82%
I feel like I belong (<i>Rn=59, Cn=258</i>)	66%	71%
I feel safe where I live (<i>Rn=62, Cn=261</i>)	85%	83%
I feel settled where I live (<i>Rn=62, Cn=260</i>)	73%	75%
I feel accepted for who I am by the people I live with (<i>Rn=61, Cn=251</i>)	80%	77%
If you were going through a difficult time and needed help, do you have someone you could turn to? (% yes) (<i>Rn=61, Cn=259</i>)	77%	75%
Rangatahi who could turn to...? (<i>Rn=61, Cn=259</i>)		
An adult	67%	
Only a friend or sibling	21%	68%
No one	11%	21%
		10%
Young people sense of identity and belonging		
To what extent do you feel secure in your identity? (<i>3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale</i>) (<i>Rn=63, Cn=263</i>)	60%	75%
To what extent do you feel proud of who you are? (<i>3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale</i>) (<i>Rn=63, Cn=264</i>)	75%	72%
To what extent do you feel hopeful about your future? (<i>3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale</i>) (<i>Rn=63, Cn=262</i>)	75%	71%

Health and hauora	Rainbow	Cis-heterosexual
How do you feel about your life in general? (4-very good, to 5-excellent on 5-point scale) (Rn=63, Cn=263)	30%	43%
Self-reported holistic wellbeing (based on Te Whare Tapa Whā)		
In general, would you say your taha tinana - physical health is? (4-very good to 5-excellent on 5-point scale) (Rn=62, Cn=263)	26%	40%
In general, would you say your taha hinengaro - mental health is? (4-very good to 5-excellent on 5-point scale) (Rn=63, Cn=263)	22%	35%
In general, would you say your taha wairua - spiritual health is? (4-very good to 5-excellent on 5-point scale) (Rn=59, Cn=259)	31%	37%
In general, would you say your taha whānau or family health is? (4-very good to 5-excellent on 5-point scale) (Rn=62, Cn=258)	32%	40%
Self-reported difficulties (3-often, to 4-always on 4-point scale)		
Do you have any difficulty seeing? (Rn=63, Cn=262)	19%	19%
Do you have difficulty hearing? (Rn=62, Cn=263)	10%	10%
Do you have any difficulty doing physical activities? (Rn=62, Cn=262)	6%	6%
Do you have difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating? (Rn=61, Cn=263)	49%	30%
Do you have any emotional, psychological or mental health conditions? (Rn=60, Cn=263)	57%	34%
The Washington Group disability scale (has at least one response of 3-often or 4-always to above difficulties) (Rn=63, Cn=268)	73%	56%
Are you receiving the health support you need? (% yes of those who indicated poor or fair for any of the Te Whare Tapa Whā questions) (Rn=46, Cn=146)	67%	52%
In the last 12 months, has there been any time when you wanted or needed to see a doctor or nurse (or other health care worker) about your health, but you weren't able to? (% yes) (Rn=63, Cn=263)	38%	33%