



**Malatest**  
International

**First Synthesis Evaluation Report:**

# **Oranga Tamariki Transition Support**

**June 2021**



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## Key messages

Transition support became a core component of the new operating model for Oranga Tamariki from 1 July 2019.

Oranga Tamariki has established a new relationship-based Transition Service (TS) for eligible young people leaving care or custody up to age 21, with access to advice and assistance available up to age 25. Roll-out of the TS is phased over three years to 30 June 2022.

Oranga Tamariki has a statutory obligation to prepare young people for transition from care by assessing their transition needs and developing a transition plan with the young person. The 2020 Just Sayin'<sup>1</sup> survey of young people and the Quality Practice Tool (QPT) findings identified inconsistent pre-transition planning.

At 30 June 2021, 1,251 young people had been referred to a TS partner (53% of the eligible cohort).

TS support is voluntary. A few young people (7%<sup>2</sup> of those eligible) have declined transition worker support. The main reasons they gave were that they didn't need support or they wanted to end any involvement with Oranga Tamariki.

After referral, contracted external providers (TS partners) help rangatahi to maintain and build relationships, networks and knowledge to support their decision making, plan for their future and achieve their goals.

At 30 June 2021, there were 63 TS partners and 121.25 transition workers. The TS partners are a range of NGO and iwi organisations located throughout the country. In response to the 2021 Just Sayin' survey, 40% of rangatahi Māori said they were supported by a Māori TS partner and a further 23% would like to be.

Young people described their transition worker as a trusted person in their lives. In the 2021 Just Sayin' survey, more young people (81%) said their transition worker understood their needs than their Oranga Tamariki social worker (65%).

Support young people described receiving from their transition workers included help with life skills and becoming independent, getting an ID, passport and birth certificate, planning for their future and setting goals, with financial skills, with accommodation, getting into work, education and training, and by providing moral support.

Information to date confirms the benefits of transition support and the need for this separate young person-centred role to continue as a foundational element of the transition process.

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<sup>1</sup> Annual surveys of young people eligible for a transition worker (Appendix 3)

<sup>2</sup> CYRAS data

## Executive summary

**This report synthesises evaluation and monitoring information to 30 June 2021 to inform Oranga Tamariki reporting back to Cabinet against the Transition Service objectives.**

The report draws on data to 30 June 2021, from the Transition Service (TS), the Oranga Tamariki administrative database CYRAS, internal Oranga Tamariki reviews, interviews with young people preparing for and who have left care, interviews with Oranga Tamariki staff and external providers contracted to support young people (TS partners), and the annual Just Sayin' surveys of young people eligible for transition worker support<sup>3</sup>.

The report has been reviewed by the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, the Transition Support team and the evaluation advisory group.

**Transition support became a core component of the new operating model for Oranga Tamariki from 1 July 2019.**

The TS is a new relationship-based service for eligible young people leaving care or custody up to age 21, with access to advice and assistance available up to age 25. The focus of transition support is to help young people move successfully into adulthood and independent living by supporting them to maintain and build relationships, networks and knowledge to support their decision making, plan for their future and achieve their goals.

Transition support is voluntary. Once a young person leaves care they can:

- Receive transition support from a TS partner
- Receive transition support from a Transition Helpline through the National Contact Centre (NCC)
- Have the right to remain or return to living with a caregiver after they turn 18 and until they turn 21
- Become independent from Oranga Tamariki but with the right to reconnect.

**Oranga Tamariki has successfully put in place a new service to support young people transitioning from care.**

Advice and assistance were proactively offered to those leaving care or custody, or otherwise eligible, after 1 July 2019. The TS is being progressively rolled out over three years, ending 30 June 2022.

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<sup>3</sup> Annual surveys of young people eligible for a transition worker. Detailed in Appendix 3.

The TS partners are the foundation for TS support. At 30 June 2021, there were 63 TS partners employing 121.25 transition workers. The TS partners are a range of NGO and iwi organisations located throughout the country.

The TS was set up as a flexible contract model to enable TS partners to meet the needs of specific groups of young people they support and to enable innovation. The flexible model enables kaupapa Māori and Pacific TS partners to develop ethnic specific ways of support.

An estimated 600 rangatahi become eligible for transition support each year. At 30 June 2021, 53% of eligible young people (1,251) had been referred to a TS partner and 7% had declined referral. The main reasons they gave for declining were that they didn't need support or they wanted to end any involvement with Oranga Tamariki.

The National Contact Centre is providing support for young people and 2,016 calls were received in the April-June 2021 quarter. In the 2021 Just Sayin' survey, 21% of young people said they had called the Contact Centre (up from 17% in the 2020 survey). Of those who had called, 53% said the Contact Centre response 'helped a lot' and a further 27% said they had been helped 'a little'.

Improving contact information for young people held in the national database will enable contact to be maintained with more young people.

### **Responsibility for pre-transition planning sits with Oranga Tamariki and is not happening consistently.**

Oranga Tamariki has a statutory obligation to prepare young people for transition from care by assessing their transition needs and developing a transition plan with the young person. Although the requirements for transition planning are set out in the National Care Standards, there is variation in practice. The 2020 Quality Practice Tool (QPT) found 43% of young people had a transition plan and 35% a skills assessment. In response to the Just Sayin' surveys, 46% of young people in care in 2020 and 49% in 2021 recalled pre-transition planning conversations, 30% of young people in care said they had a copy of their transition plan in 2021 (not asked in 2020).

Transition planning processes were described by Oranga Tamariki stakeholders as working best in regions with a dedicated Oranga Tamariki transition resource or a transition champion. These differences as well as differences in regional leadership may explain the regional variation in referral rates to TS partners.

Opportunities to improve pre-transition planning include:

- Improving and clarifying preparation and planning processes.
- Understanding more about the barriers and facilitators for Oranga Tamariki sites to improve planning and preparation. Responses to learnings may include the establishment of dedicated transition roles.
- Increasing Oranga Tamariki social worker awareness of the TS by communicating the benefits of transition support, where processes could be strengthened and to improve the clarity of information to social workers.

**Young people receive a breadth of support from their transition worker that is linked to their needs.**

Young people are linked to a TS partner as part of pre-transition planning led by their Oranga Tamariki social worker, or by referral from the Transition Helpline.

Support young people described receiving from their transition workers included help with life skills and becoming independent, getting an ID, passport and birth certificate, planning for their future and setting goals, with financial skills, with accommodation, getting into work, education and training, and by providing moral support.

Connection and reconnection with whānau were strong drivers for many young people. Reconnection with siblings was important for those who been separated because not all siblings went into care or custody or if they did, they may have been placed in different foster settings.

How much support young people receive varies as it is linked to a young person's needs. Young people's contact with their transition worker varied from never/once or twice<sup>4</sup> a year (17%) to fortnightly or more (41%), monthly to every few months (24%) and 19% who said they only saw them when they requested it<sup>5</sup>. Many young people (63%) considered the frequency of contact from their transition worker was about right; 25% would like to see their transition worker more and 12% less.

Responses to the Just Sayin' surveys confirmed young people's positive attitudes to their transition worker. Responses from Just Sayin' 2 indicated many (81%) felt their transition worker understood what support they needed when leaving care compared to 65% who said they felt their Oranga Tamariki social worker understood their needs for leaving care. More considered their transition worker helped to make things better for them (81%) than their Oranga Tamariki social worker (61%).

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<sup>4</sup> Some young people who had been referred to a transition worker had not yet met with them or met them only once or twice.

<sup>5</sup> In response to Just Sayin'2.

The proportion of young people with positive attitudes towards their transition worker had decreased slightly from 2020. Comments from young people suggest that social worker and transition worker staff turnover undermines young people's confidence and trust.

Overall, information from the evaluation confirms the need for separate young person-centred services as a foundational element of the transition process.

Improving access to data from TS partners will inform service development and continuous improvement by providing information about the way young people are supported, the assessment and intervention models used, and what aspects work and for whom.

TS partners are competing with each other, with Oranga Tamariki and other agencies for workforce. It is important that TS partners have adequate funding to pay competitive salaries and provide professional development opportunities to staff to enable the workforce stability required by a relationship-based service.

### **Māori and Pacific identities were a pillar of strength for many young people.**

Their identities provided Māori and Pacific young people with a sense-of-belonging and stability although their historical and current living situations may have been transient.

Effective transition support is an important mechanism to reduce disparities between Māori and non-Māori because of the potential for support from Māori TS partners to improve outcomes for rangatahi Māori. In response to Just Sayin'2, 52% of rangatahi Māori were supported by a Māori TS partner or a Māori transition worker. Of those not supported by a Māori TS partner, 23% would like to be. Tikanga, wellbeing and a whānau first approach was a key driver for many kaupapa Māori providers. Although each provider had their own way of engaging and creating plans they emphasised working with the rangatahi and their wider whānau structure.

Oranga Tamariki stakeholders recognised the opportunities for doing things differently and learning from kaupapa Māori TS partners about how to support rangatahi Māori in the context of whānau, hapū and iwi.

Changes to procurement processes, strategic approaches to procurement and capability building opportunities aim to increase the number of kaupapa Māori and Pacific TS partners which would increase access to them for young people.

### **Roll-out of the TS was facilitated by new approaches to leadership and systems, although some challenges remain.**

A Transition Support team was established as a central function that specifies the service, commissions the operations arms of Oranga Tamariki to deliver them, and ensures the funding for the service together with providing the guidance material

and reporting functions. The delivery of the programme is then managed through normal commissioning channels. The team sits under a Deputy Chief Executive with input from a Transitions Operating Group.

Most but not all interviewed stakeholders supported the need for a separate Transition Support team to ensure a specific focus on the breadth of different tasks required to set the service up by 1 July 2019. Balancing the advantages of a separate team has been the challenge of having the ability to advocate for change but not the authority to make it happen.

Most interviewed stakeholders considered there was a major risk of loss of focus on the continued development of transition support without a team specifically focused on transitions.

**Although it is too early to provide quantitative evidence of the extent transition support has improved outcomes for young people leaving care, information to date strongly supports the continued development of the Transition Service.**

There are substantial potential benefits in strengthened transition from care. Establishing a pathway to independence and providing young people with the support they need as they leave care will improve outcomes for young people that benefit the New Zealand economy, communities and future generations and help break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage.

Year three of implementation sees further expansion of the eligible cohort. Future iterations of the Just Sayin' surveys and comparison of outcomes for young people leaving care with other cohorts of young people will inform progress towards outcomes. Comparisons will be available from the National Youth Health and Wellbeing survey – What About Me?

As the TS moves into year three there is opportunity to respond to the identified challenges and gaps in the service model.

Strategies to support mobile young people. An accessible database of TS partners would enable social workers to communicate and connect with TS partners out of their region to support young people who planned to move after leaving care.

Housing shortages for young people are major barriers for transition. The main housing option, Entitlement to Remain or Return (ETRR), has had low take-up. There is a need to refocus ETRR and/or consider a wider range of housing options.

Extending support to siblings and whānau. A focus on rebuilding whānau relationships because of the importance of whānau and siblings and the drive for some young people to return to whānau.

Considering what transition support is required for young people with high and complex needs who will still need some support after they turn 21 but will not reach the current thresholds for adult services.

Streamlining the interfaces with other government agencies to improve young people's access to transition needs such as health support, education and housing. Further work is required to ensure young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care are not disadvantaged in accessing these services.

Organised advocacy to better hear the voices of young people with care experience will inform further service development.

## 1. The purpose of this report

This report is the first annual synthesis report about the Oranga Tamariki Transition Service (TS). It summarises evaluation and monitoring information to 30 June 2021. The purpose of the report is to inform Oranga Tamariki reporting back to Cabinet against the TS objectives.

### 1.1. Information or the report comes from a range of sources

The report draws on data to 30 June 2021, from the transition support team, the Oranga Tamariki administrative database CYRAS, internal Oranga Tamariki reviews, interviews with young people preparing for and who have left care, interviews with Oranga Tamariki staff and contracted external providers (TS partners), and the 2020 and 2021 annual Just Sayin' surveys of young people eligible for transition worker support<sup>6</sup>. The TS evaluation and information sources for this report are detailed in Appendix 1.

The report has been reviewed by the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, the Transition Support team and the evaluation advisory group.

## 2. A new Transition Service has been established

### Key points:

Transition support became a core component of the new operating model for Oranga Tamariki from 1 July 2019. Transition support is delivered across three stages:

- Pre-transition to prepare young people for their transition
- During transition to respond to a young person's needs.
- Post-transition to help a young person become and remain independent.

Roll-out of the TS was phased over three years. An estimated 600 rangatahi become eligible for transition support each year from 1 July 2019. Full roll-out will be completed 30 June 2022.

To the end of June 2021, a total of 1,251 young people had been referred to one of 63 external providers (TS partners).

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<sup>6</sup> Annual surveys of young people eligible for a transition worker. Detailed in Appendix 3.

## 2.1. Rationale for setting up the Transition Service

Young people who have been in statutory care or a youth justice residence are among those who have the highest needs and require the most support as they move towards adulthood. The TS is a new relationship-based service for eligible young people leaving care or custody up to age 21, with access to advice and assistance available up to age 25.

The intention of the TS is outlined in section 386AAB of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 and in Oranga Tamariki's Transition to Adulthood Service Specifications.

Section 386AAB of the Act states the intention is:

- To prepare young persons to be ready to thrive as independent young adults and for the preparation for moving to independence to begin early adulthood.
- To ensure that young persons have opportunities to have relationships with caregivers and other trusted adults that endure into adulthood.
- To enable young persons to access the government and community support that they need to manage challenges and to grow and develop as adults.

### The principles that specifically relate to the Transition to Adulthood

- (a) the young person is to increasingly lead decisions about matters affecting them and is to be supported by adults to do this.
- (b) a holistic approach is to be taken and the young person's strengths and identity are to be built on and nurtured.
- (c) the relationships between the young person and their family, whānau, hapū, iwi, and family group are, if appropriate, to be maintained and strengthened.
- (d) family, whānau, hapū, iwi, family groups, and communities are to be supported to help the young person move to independence.
- (e) the relationships between the young person and a caregiver, other trusted adults, and the wider community are to be established, built on, and maintained.
- (f) the young person is to be supported, to the extent that is reasonable and practicable, to address the impact of harm and to achieve and meet their aspirations and needs, with priority to be given to supporting the stability of their education.
- (g) assistance to the young person is to be provided proactively, promptly, and to be sustained regardless of the decision that the young person makes.

## 2.2. Oranga Tamariki responsibilities

The National Care Standards<sup>7</sup> and the Oranga Tamariki Act<sup>8</sup> set out the statutory minimum requirements of Oranga Tamariki social workers in the transition process (Part Five of the regulation). The Care Standards require an assessment of life skills and the provision of advice and assistance. The life skills assessment needs to be attached to a young person's transition plan and official documentation and information about access to services is required.

Oranga Tamariki responsibilities are summarised below and detailed in Practice Centre Guidance<sup>9</sup>.

### Summary of expectations of assessment and support for children and young persons moving to independence

#### Assessment of life skills

There is an expectation that the life skills of each young person under 18 years to whom section 386A of the Act applies will be assessed and that the assessment will inform the advice that the young person needs to become and remain independent. The assessment should consider the young person's development and any disabilities they may have. The assessment will be broad and include personal and health care, managing money, shopping, cooking, driving and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health care, sexual and gender identity, safe and positive relationships and culture and identity.

#### Developing a transition plan

Oranga Tamariki social workers will work in partnership with rangatahi, their family/whānau, aiga, caregivers (where relevant), practitioners and other people who are important to them in transition planning processes.

The plan for transition must be developed once rangatahi turn 15 years old or as soon as possible afterwards. If rangatahi are living in a youth justice residential placement, the plan must be developed as soon as practicable, once it's known that they will be eligible to enter the Transition to Adulthood Service.

The plan must be developed at a family group conference. The plan must also be formally reviewed and updated at a family group conference:

- at least once a year.
- at least six months prior to rangatahi turning 18.

In the special circumstance where a family group conference isn't appropriate, a hui ā-whānau process will replace it.

<sup>7</sup> [National-Care-Standards-regulation-booklet.pdf \(orangatamariki.govt.nz\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 No 24 \(as at 01 April 2021\), Public Act – New Zealand Legislation](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Transition to adulthood — Preparation, assessment and planning | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)

The plan for transition that is developed six months before rangatahi turn 18 is a document the rangatahi will take with them when they leave care or custody. A copy will be retained on their record.

#### **Transition planning activities**

Before rangatahi leave care or custody Oranga Tamariki must assist them to obtain any official documentation they need. This includes:

- a verified online identity
- an IRD number
- photo identification
- an original copy of their birth certificate
- a bank account
- ensuring they understand their legal obligation to enrol on the General or Māori electoral roll.

#### **Referral to a Transition to Adulthood Service**

Eligible rangatahi must be referred to a Transition to Adulthood Service after they turn 16 years of age, or at least 6 months before they will leave care; whichever comes first.

When referring, we must consider:

- their wishes
- whether the service is a good fit for them and in line with their preferences
- the capacity of the service to match:
- rangatahi Māori with a transition worker who is culturally responsive to their needs, language and identity, and ideally Māori
- rangatahi with a transition worker that will work with them to support their identity, including cultural and spiritual identity, heritage and languages.

#### **Maintaining contact**

Oranga Tamariki has a duty to maintain contact with a young person up to the age of 21 years.

- If a referral has been made to a TS Partner, they will be maintaining contact.
- If a referral is not made then the NCC will maintain contact
- If a case is closed, then the NCC is informed and will maintain contact from that point.

### **2.3. The new Transition Service has been established and is still growing**

An estimated 600 rangatahi become eligible for the TS each year. Advice and assistance were only proactively offered to those leaving care or custody after 1 July 2019. The intention was that the TS would be scaled up each year as more young people aged into eligibility with full roll-out completed by 30 June 2022.

**Table 1. Cohort of young people and numbers eligible and referred to transition workers**  
(Source: Oranga Tamariki)

	July 2019	June 2020	June 2021
Total cohort	5,736	5,531	5,324
Eligible for a transition worker	1,673	2,066	2,372
Referred to a transition worker	112	654	1,251
Percentage of eligible young people referred	7%	32%	53%

The phased approach was planned to allow service strength to be built over time – A learn and grow approach. The phasing also allowed new parts of the service to be established including increased proactive contact with young people as the numbers grew over time. The Transition Support team provide monitoring dashboards and collate and synthesise information to inform best practice. Similarly, the main accommodation option for the TS, Entitlement to Remain or Return to living with a caregiver (ETRR) was expected to grow over time as only young people turning 18 on or after 1 July 2019 are eligible to take up ETRR.

*And I remain of that view that this [TS] is one of the single biggest achievements since Oranga Tamariki was set up ... I just think it's absolutely fantastic. It was a critical need. ... The service is great. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*I think it's gone well, in terms of having a service up and running, having clients enrolled. The contact centre has gone really well, in terms of them being able to provide limited case management and some financial assistance. I think we were able to respond to some young people during COVID. That was really encouraging. (Oranga Tamariki)*

#### 2.4. A new Transition Support team was established to implement the Transition Service

At a senior level, the Transition Support team comprises: a general manager, service managers, a senior advisor youth, a systems activation manager and a data and insights manager. More broadly it interfaces with the Transition Support Service at the National Contact Centre (NCC), the Rangatahi Commissioning Manager, PFO Regional Senior Transitions Advisors, regional disability advisors, senior managers responsible for change, communications, policy and practice advice. The team has a project manager.

A key point of this model is that the Transition Support team does not deliver services directly but instead commissions services and provides supports internally and externally. Externally the Transition Support team engages regional resources to deliver localised and community-driven approaches<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Oranga Tamariki (May 2021) Information for the Ministerial Advisory Board.

The operational services lines (Youth Justice, Services for Children and Families, Care Services, PfO) hold responsibility for:

- Developing operational capability and maintaining operational excellence.
- Delivering the services as agreed, ensuring sufficient resource and capability is in place to do so.
- Providing operational support for the delivery of those services.
- Ensuring referrals and access points to the service allow for service provision.
- Ensuring the service is integrated with the broader suite of Oranga Tamariki services.

Interviewed stakeholders supported the need for a separate team to ensure a specific focus on the breadth of different tasks required to set the service up by 1 July 2019. However, some considered the team could have been set up as part of an existing Oranga Tamariki operational arm which would have increased their ability to implement changes.

*Setting up a new service does carry some momentum. And I think we've used that momentum well. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*We've got no control over practice ... we have no weight behind anything that we might complain about. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Most interviewed stakeholders considered there would be a major risk of loss of focus on the continued development of transition support without continuing to have a team specifically focused on transitions.

*I think if it went to BAU now, we wouldn't get the full innovation or the full potential. Because that would just sort of flat line. Whereas now, there's I think there's still opportunity, particularly with the Māori organisations to do some things that are really different. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*... we've got to keep working with the providers to evolve, innovate ... It's not just set a contract and then leave it ... So I think it does need to keep going as a change project. Or a transformation project. (Oranga Tamariki)*

### 3. The Transition Service partners

#### Key points:

A network of external providers (TS partners) is the foundation of transition support.

At 30 June 2021, there were 63 TS partners who employed 121.25 transition workers. The TS partners represent a range of NGO and iwi organisations located throughout the country.

The TS was set up as a flexible contract model to enable service partners to meet the needs of specific groups of young people they support and to enable innovation. The flexible model enables kaupapa Māori and Pacific TS partners to develop ethnic specific ways of support.

#### 3.1. A network of transition partners has been established

The TS partners vary in their size, geographical location and type of organisation. Some partners had extensive experience in supporting rangatahi and others were new to providing services for youth but brought a wealth of cultural knowledge and other expertise.

At 30 June 2021, there were 63 TS partners across Aotearoa/New Zealand including kaupapa Māori, Pacific and other health and social service providers who employed 121.25 transition workers<sup>11</sup>.

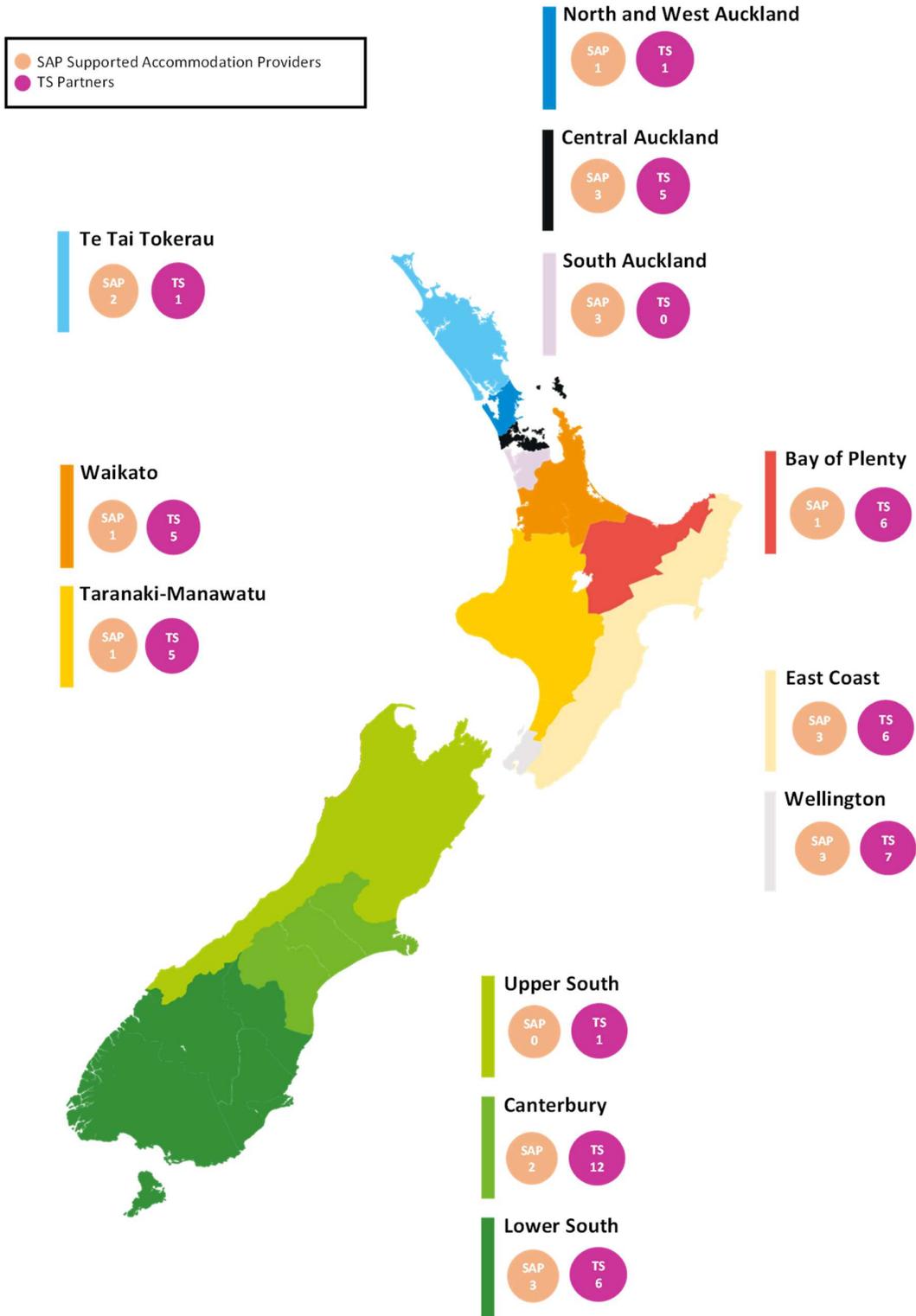
In some regions there was only one TS partner. In regions with more than one TS partner, rangatahi had some choice of transition support. Larger partners with more than one transition worker had the potential to offer rangatahi a choice of transition worker.

The locations of TS partners are summarised below based on the location of the 'head office' for partners in multiple sites and on the SCF regions. For example, there are TS providers in Papatoetoe and Otahuhu but their 'head office' is in the Central Auckland region.

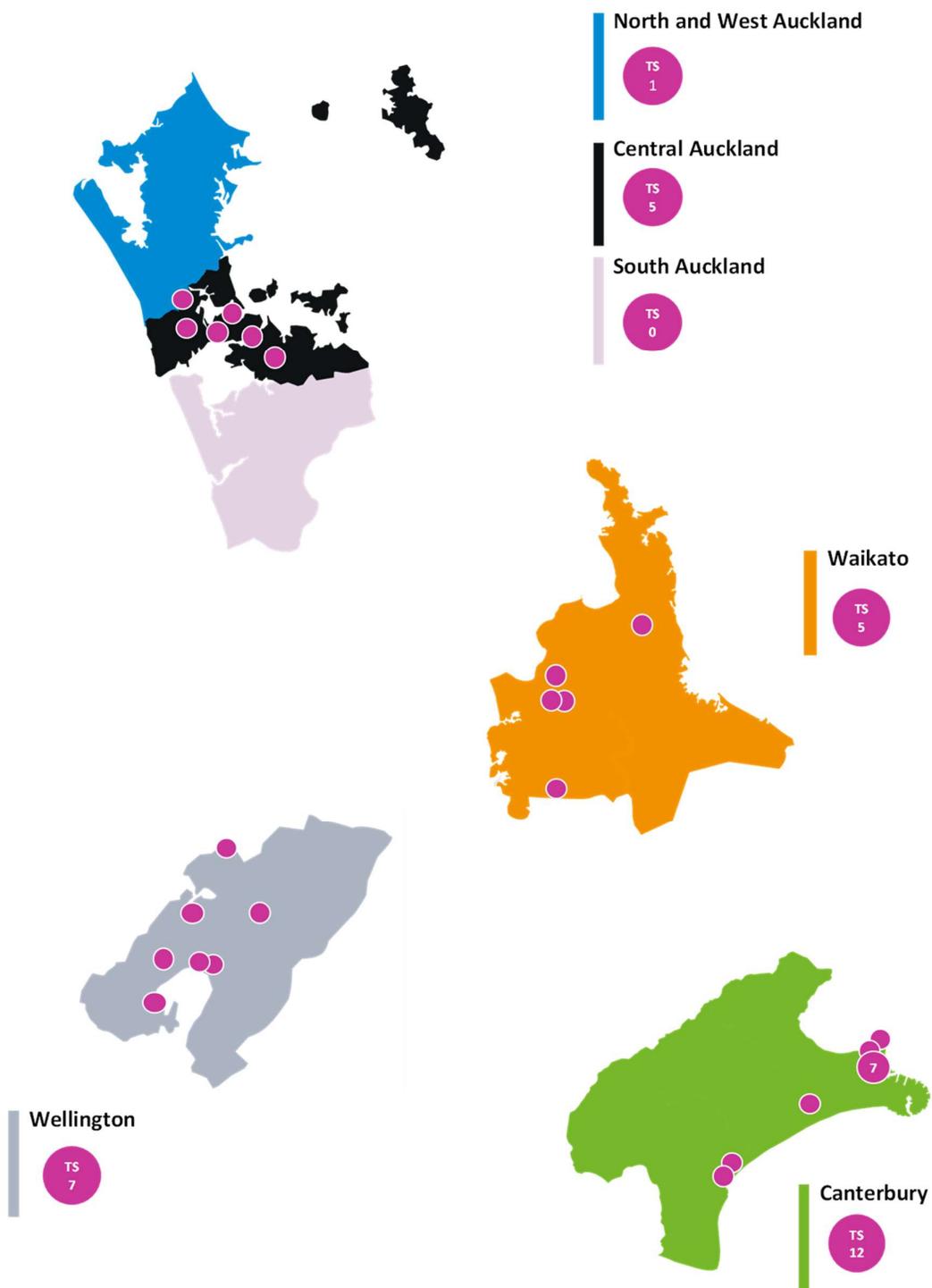
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<sup>11</sup> The forecast number of workers in the Transition Support Cabinet paper was 183.

# Transition Service Partners and Supported Accommodation Providers



# Transition Service Partners



### 3.2. Interfaces between Oranga Tamariki and the Transition Service partners

In interviews<sup>12</sup>, TS partners discussed their interface with Oranga Tamariki. Some partners were developing new relationships and for others, past tensions and perceptions of organisations influenced attitudes. Oranga Tamariki has worked on these relationships to improve interfaces.

Communication and working together was a key theme throughout the evaluation. TS partners wanted a strong partnership with Oranga Tamariki social workers, and further opportunities to meet other transition workers and share stories and ideas. Regional hui and communities of practice are providing these opportunities.

### 3.3. Flexibility and changed approaches to procurement and contracting

Contracts with the TS partners allow flexibility and enable Oranga Tamariki to implement the 'learn and grow' approach and to respond to the differing needs of young people.

How much support young people need ranges from keeping in touch through to intensive support. In the early stages of setting up a new service most referrals will be in the more intensive end of the spectrum requiring assessment and planning. As a service develops, the entry and exit points spread out and transition workers can support a larger number of young people because some will have likely moved into a less intensive phase of support.

*What we're interested in is the responsiveness and the intensity of work that young people require... A 1 to 15 ratio would be for a really low level of support for young people further along ... When we're setting up a service, not many young people would fit into that category ... (Oranga Tamariki)*

The TS recognises that caseloads vary between TS partners and between transition workers within a TS partner.

*We absolutely don't want to see [a strict FTE to young person ratio] happening. Because what we know is there's such a variety of needs. And it comes back to that stuff that's the heart of the service, that actually this is about rebuilding that trust, this is about being able to do the things that you say you will, and a key to that is being responsive in being able to get back to young people because that's what they say they haven't had from their care experience. (Oranga Tamariki)*

TS partners are encouraged by the Oranga Tamariki team to discuss any challenges they may have with caseloads.

*... if you have to travel further distances because you cover a more rural area, if you've got a few really, sort of, high and complex needs young people at the*

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<sup>12</sup> Provider profiles report

*moment, it's about having those conversations with the PFO advisor so that we're aware of that. (Oranga Tamariki)*

TS partners were generally positive about the TS contracts, funding and caseloads. However, interviews with TS partners<sup>13</sup> highlighted some of the challenges for small providers where there may only be one transition worker employed. Challenges included ensuring availability and providing cover.

### 3.4. Māori TS partners

Rangatahi Māori are substantially over-represented in the cohort of young people transitioning from care. Partnering with Māori includes developing iwi partnerships, understanding the different ways Māori TS partners can support young people and increasing the number of Māori TS partners. Changes to procurement approaches have helped to include a wider range of organisations as provider partners. Community investment has also been a priority.

*One of our successes this year is we've changed our procurement model. ... It's a much more direct approach to mana whenua ... (Oranga Tamariki)*

Provision of transition support by Māori providers represents an opportunity for communities to address centuries of systemic racism and government failure to support rangatahi within whānau, hapū and iwi on their own terms.

Reconnection with whānau was very important for many. Interviewed rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people shared that their whānau (partners, parents, siblings, grandmothers and other extended whānau) were the most important people in their lives. Some needed support to be able to reconnect and reintegrate with them. Many young people shared the responsibility they had as young children to care for their siblings. Those sibling ties severed through forced separation when going into care have been an ongoing source of trauma.

There was recognition amongst Oranga Tamariki stakeholders of the opportunities for doing things differently and learning from kaupapa Māori providers about how to support rangatahi Māori in the context of whānau, hapū and iwi. Kaupapa Māori and Pacific providers have been challenging some of the processes in place and building the strength of the TS for all partners.

*So if Māori and iwi organisations are involved in developing their own approach, they're probably going to look at things more holistically. They'll have a very long-term focus, obviously be good at connecting children with whakapapa, and looking at whanaungatanga and some of those other cultural concepts. So that's a great opportunity. (Oranga Tamariki)*

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<sup>13</sup> The provider profiles report – see Appendix 2 for details.

The number and localities with Māori TS partners has been increasing since the start of the TS. In regions where there are no Māori TS partners, partnerships between tauwi TS partners, Māori TS partners and iwi are helping support rangatahi Māori until the capacity of Māori TS partners can be increased.

*I think, end of year one, it was around 30% investment in kaupapa Māori. We're just coming to the end of year two and it will be close to 50%. So, we would hope that into next year, we'll get that up to 70% including Pasifika providers as well. And that will look different region to region. ... it's quite a shift if you look at Oranga Tamariki's traditional investment profile. (Oranga Tamariki)*

**Many of the opportunities to strengthen kaupapa Māori transition support for rangatahi<sup>14</sup> identified in the Provider Profiles report are now in place**

- Providing opportunities and resourcing for kaupapa Māori and other TS partners to share expertise and experiences.
- Responding to 7AA requirements by:
  - Prioritising kaupapa Māori partners for rangatahi Māori
  - Recognising mātauranga Māori as a vital knowledge system for working with rangatahi Māori
  - Ensuring rangatahi Māori (and all rangatahi) are referred to TS in a timely manner

Strengthening provider knowledge about how to access flexible financial assistance funding from Oranga Tamariki to facilitate whakapapa connections, i.e. travel for rangatahi to connect with whakapapa whānau, hapū, and iwi.

### 3.5. Growing TS partner capacity and capability

The TS partners bring different capabilities. The transition support team at Oranga Tamariki have recognised the need to facilitate opportunities for TS partners to share capability and experiences through building communities of practice and providing other opportunities for partners to share knowledge. Opportunities have included national and regional hui and an online community of practice. The Transition Helpline also helps TS partners. Newer TS partners have had the opportunity for capability-build funding.

Combined attendance at training sessions has helped build connections between Oranga Tamariki and the TS partners.

*What the PFO and Transition Service team have tried to do is if we're going out to a region to do a training, we really want PFO, site and the partner all to be there together. And then it works really well. (Oranga Tamariki)*

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<sup>14</sup> Identified in the Provider Profiles Report

Support and professional development are ongoing. One interviewed stakeholder noted the importance of maintaining TS partner-led capability building rather than having an Oranga Tamariki agenda for professional development.

Examples of professional development topics requested by TS partners include:

- Growing capability in supporting young people with trauma and young people with high and complex needs.
- Capability building to support young people from rainbow communities.

### 3.6. Supported Accommodation partners

Supported Accommodation is intended for young people who have the potential to move into independent living. Supported Accommodation is not an entitlement for young people transitioning from care but provides an option for a small number who need additional support.

Oranga Tamariki contracts organisations to provide supported living options that aim to give rangatahi a stable and supportive environment where they can develop life skills and gradually transition from fully-supported care to independent living.

Supported Accommodation places may be provided through congregate-site housing, foyer housing, scattered site housing or host homes depending on the accommodation providers model and the needs of young people. Supported Accommodation capacity has increased from 47 at the end of June 2020 to 107 at the end of June 2021<sup>15</sup>, however, demand exceeds the places available.

*It was never sized to meet the demand for housing. If we are working with a young person and they don't have stable accommodation, we'll then go to public housing. And if we can't get them into public housing, then we have a small allocation of housing. (Oranga Tamariki)*

There was discussion by Oranga Tamariki stakeholders about the benefits of a separate transition worker as well as a Supported Accommodation social worker. The advantage of continued support from a transition worker was that they would be there after the young person left Supported Accommodation. However, young people with high and complex needs would benefit from intensive support from the Supported Accommodation partner.

*But we've got to be careful, as well, that we don't be duplicating the roles, not from a funding issue, but from a, 'how many people are going to be fiddling with these young people's lives?' (Oranga Tamariki)*

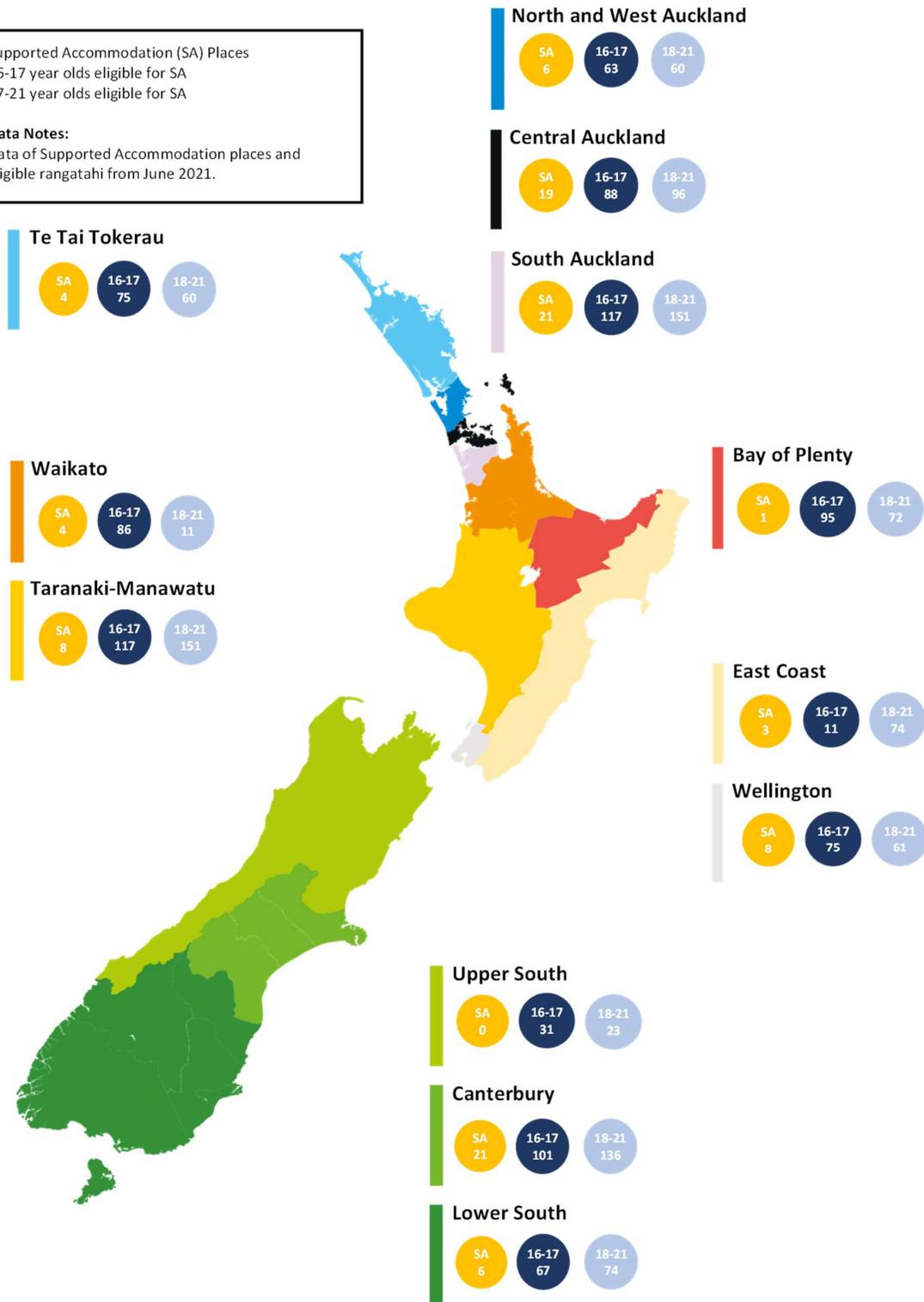
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<sup>15</sup> CYRAS

## Supported Accommodation Places

● Supported Accommodation (SA) Places  
● 16-17 year olds eligible for SA  
● 17-21 year olds eligible for SA

**Data Notes:**  
 Data of Supported Accommodation places and eligible rangatahi from June 2021.



### Key elements of Intensive Transition Support and Supported Accommodation<sup>16</sup>

- Flexible supported living models that fit with providers' organisational philosophies.
- The fit of the needs of individual rangatahi to the type of accommodation provided. Rangatahi who are close to independent living may do better with a scattered housing model while others, especially younger age groups, may need to live in a supportive family-type environment.
- Eligibility criteria for rangatahi needs to be carefully considered for the different types of Supported Accommodation. Some providers excluded those with violent criminal convictions to ensure the safety of others living in the same accommodation.
- Holistic support includes the need to remove financial and practical barriers to foundational needs such as health care. Navigator, youth worker and kaiāwhina roles were critical in facilitating these appointments and building rangatahi confidence so they could book and attend on their own. Many providers described long waiting lists for services such as counselling.
- All providers noted the importance of their community connections so they could make referrals to community services.
- Culturally safe support including ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age and ability is essential for rangatahi.
- Separation of tenancy management from the social worker/youth worker roles was different across the pilots depending on the kaupapa of the service organisation.
- Most providers supported whānau alongside rangatahi. Rangatahi were strengthened and positively affirmed by connecting with and learning about whānau, hapū and iwi.
- Continuity of support included 'sticking with' rangatahi even if they were incarcerated and post-programme follow-up with rangatahi after they had left the programmes. Support needs to be balanced with the risk of rangatahi becoming dependent.
- Goals, achievements and the time required for each young person to transition to independence (or interdependence with positive whānau) varied.

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<sup>16</sup> Supported accommodation evaluation reports are detailed in Appendix 2.

## 4. Pathways to transition

### Key points:

Oranga Tamariki has a statutory obligation to prepare young people for transition from care by assessing their transition needs and developing a transition plan with the young person. Although the requirements for transition planning are set out in the National Care Standards, there is variation in practice.

The 2020 Quality Practice Tool (QPT) found 43% of young people had a transition plan and 35% a skills assessment. In response to the 2021 Just Sayin' survey, 49% of young people in care in 2020 and 62% of those who had left care recalled pre-transition planning conversations; 30% of young people in care and 42% of those who had left care said they had a copy of their transition plan.

Understanding potential reasons why assessment and planning is not happening informs opportunities to strengthen pre-transition processes and improve pathways to transition support.

Young people leave Oranga Tamariki care when they turn 18. Preparation for leaving should start with discussions and transition planning happening from the time they turn 15.

Assessment and planning underpin the transition support model. A young person is entitled to a life-skills assessment and a transition plan regardless of whether they accept a referral to a TS partner.

### Assessment and planning requirements

A needs assessment identifies the needs of a young person, along with their goals and aspirations. A life-skills assessment identifies the skills a young person has and the skills they need to develop. This information is recorded in the Transition Plan with steps outlining how they are going to develop the life skills and what support they have available.

A Transition Plan is developed to assist rangatahi aged 15 years or older in care or a long-term youth justice residential placement to acquire the knowledge, skills, resources and support they need to thrive as they become increasingly independent young adults. It reflects the information from the needs assessment and is goal-oriented, task-focused and time-framed. It should include information about life-skills; living arrangements; health and wellbeing; networks of support including whānau, cultural and community groups; education, training and employment or volunteering; and contact and support arrangements.

Providing advice and assistance. In preparing to transition, a young person is entitled to advice and assistance to help them become increasingly independent, as per their Transition Plan.

Oranga Tamariki has the lead responsibility for all assessment and planning while the young person prepares to transition, including ensuring the transition worker is invited to all transition planning and facilitating whānau, caregiver and significant other participation. They are also responsible for monitoring and reviewing plans.

The transition worker is responsible for supporting young person's voice and participation during assessment and planning, as well as supporting the implementation of the Transition Plan.

#### 4.1. Oranga Tamariki assessment and planning for transition is inconsistent

Although the requirements for transition planning are set out in the National Care Standards, there is variation in practice.

The 2020 and 2021 Just Sayin' surveys found that planning conversations were not happening consistently, although there were some slight increases in planning conversations and FGC in 2021. In the 2021 survey, 68% of young people who had left care reported being part of planning discussions or Family Group Conferences (FGC).

Transition planning <sup>17</sup>	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin' <sup>2</sup> <sup>18</sup>
Young people in care		
Has anyone talked with you and worked out a plan for when you leave care? (% yes)	46%	49%
Have you been at a family group conference where people talked with you about what you wanted to do when you leave care? (% yes)	61%	68%
Do you have a copy of your plan for leaving care? (% yes)	N/A	30%
Young people who had left care		
Had anyone talked with you and worked out a plan for when you leave care? (% yes)	60%	62%
When you left care had you been part of an FGC to discuss your future? (% yes for those who have left care)	61%	68%
Did you have a copy of your plan for leaving care? (% yes)	N/A	42%

The 2020 QPT findings align with the survey findings and identified lower rates of pre-transition preparation with 43% of young people having a transition plan and 35% a life skills assessment.

<sup>17</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 and exclude those in a Youth Justice residence.

### Summary of QPT results

PPG sent out 404 cases and got 272 back (67%).

- 43% of the 272 young people had a transition plan
- 35% of the 272 had a life skills assessment.

Of the 43% who had a plan:

- 89% had it developed through a FGC or a hui-a-whānau
- 51% had their entitlement to ETRR explained.

Looking at all 272:

- 35% had evidence that their full entitlements had been explained to them
- 2% had evidence that we had assisted them to obtain official documentation.

Demographic differences

- Māori/Pacific rangatahi were less likely to have a transitions plan (41%) than other rangatahi (50%).
- Males were more likely to have a transition plan (48%) than females (38%)
- Males were significantly more likely to have evidence that their full entitlements have been explained to them (43%) than females (22%).
- Older rangatahi were more likely to have a transition plan, with 36% of 16 year olds having a plan, 58% of 17 year olds and 88% of 18 year olds.
- Older rangatahi were more likely to have evidence that their full entitlements had been explained to them, with 18% of 16 year olds, 48% of 17 and 63% of 18 year olds.

## 4.2. Lack of preparation for transition disadvantages young people

The quality of the pre-transition planning influences the effectiveness of the transition process.

*I was at a whānau care hui in Dunedin and in all of these hui, the first objection we're getting from all of our providers is, 'you're referring young people, but they're coming with no assessment, no planning, nothing'. It's a big problem. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Young people who are not part of transition planning are disadvantaged because of the link between effective planning and positive transition outcomes. Young people who needed transition support and did not engage were described by interviewed stakeholders as likely to appear again in a crisis context.

*I think everybody that's with them [Transition Support Service], gives them more of a chance to actually get somewhere like, like, [she] got me my first job. (Young person)*

Young people leaving Youth Justice residences, rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people who were interviewed by Malatest International, and young people in the Ngā Haerenga cohort described lack of preparation for transition and a lack of awareness about their entitlements and how they would access them.

In the Ngā Haerenga cohort, the rangatahi, who were still in Oranga Tamariki care, typically did not know what transition related entitlements they were eligible for or how to access the right services and supports for them.

Some rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people who had left care explained that transition planning had happened unexpectedly. Some were hesitant to engage because they had little to no understanding of the TS. They described very little support for their financial, health and housing needs and because they were not aware of their entitlements some had gone without the necessities. Their transition workers had gone to great lengths to advocate on behalf of them and their whānau so they could receive financial payments, and health and social service support.

#### 4.3. Linking young people with a TS partner

Eligible rangatahi must be referred to a Transition to Adulthood Service after they turn 16 years of age, or at least six months before they will leave care; whichever comes first.

The referral rate has gradually increased over time to 53% of eligible rangatahi to the end of June 2021<sup>19</sup>. Young people who are not referred or who decline TS partner support may be supported by the Transition Helpline within the National Contact Centre (NCC)<sup>20</sup>.

When referral rates are considered for groups of young people:

- Pacific young people are referred at a lower rate than young people from other ethnic groups. The addition of a Pacific TS partner in Auckland may increase referral rates for young Pacific.
- Gender minority young people are referred at a lower rate than males and females. However, numbers are very small. The Just Sayin'2 survey has information about young people who identify with the Rainbow community that may provide information about their attitudes and barriers to transition support.
- There are higher referral rates from young people who have a history of care and Youth Justice or Youth Justice only. In-depth interviews with young people and staff in Youth Justice settings suggest a high level of need for transition support amongst young people with Youth Justice histories. Youth Justice social workers may be more aware and place a higher priority on the need for transition support.

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<sup>19</sup> CYRAS data

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/transition-support-service/>

**Table 2. The characteristics of TW-eligible rangatahi referred and not referred to a TS**  
(Source: Oranga Tamariki, CYRAS snapshot June 2021)

Characteristics	All TW-eligible rangatahi (n=2,372) % of the cohort	Referral rates: % of eligible rangatahi referred to a TW (n=1,251)	% Supported by TS 0800 Helpline
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	43%	55%	48%
Male	56%	51%	51%
Gender diverse	1%	43%	1%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Māori	56%	53%	55%
Māori and Pacific	9%	50%	6%
Pacific	7%	44%	7%
Other	28%	55%	31%
<b>Experience</b>			
Care	84%	51%	78%
Care and Youth Justice	9%	68%	15%
Youth Justice residence	7%	59%	7%

A potential unknown in understanding referral rates is whether TS partners have a waiting list, as this information is not recorded in CYRAS.

Accessibility thresholds including age limits and severity criteria may also influence referral to a TS partner. Exploratory work by the Evidence Centre suggests that the referral rate is lower for young people with complex needs.

*You could play it one of two ways that nothing happens, and they're unsupported, or they're not referred because they've got support. (Oranga Tamariki)*

The rangatahi that social workers consider most need transition support assistance are those with complex needs that some TS partners do not have capability to support.

*Some of those providers, were saying they couldn't work with young people with high needs. And so that caused the young people we would most want connected to TS [to not be referred] because we'd be worried about their ability to succeed. (Oranga Tamariki)*

#### 4.4. Regional differences in referrals to TS partners

There are regional differences in referral rates to TS partners (Table 3).

**Table 3. Regional differences in referral rates of transition worker-eligible rangatahi**  
(Source: Oranga Tamariki, CYRAS snapshot June 2021)

Region	All TW-eligible rangatahi	Eligible rangatahi working with a TW	Region referral rates
Te Tai Tokerau	156	69	44%
Central Auckland	219	96	44%
North and West Auckland	141	70	50%
South Auckland	302	136	45%
Waikato	243	120	49%
Bay of Plenty	195	114	58%
East Coast	225	85	38%
Taranaki-Manawatu	214	125	58%
Wellington	161	99	61%
Upper South	66	45	68%
Canterbury	282	205	73%
Lower South	168	87	52%

Differences were attributed by those we interviewed to:

- Regional contexts including the availability of TS partners especially kaupapa Māori and Pacific partners
- Regional leadership  
*... the regions performing well in this area are performing well in everything. And the regions that are doing less well are doing less well, across the board. (Oranga Tamariki)*
- Oranga Tamariki caseloads and staff turnover which in areas with high demand for protection functions, may influence the focus on transitions  
*... my guess would be a combination of caseload and staff turnover. Staff turnover, I can see makes particularly connection with whānau [difficult] and, even just [influences] good enough preparation and planning. (Oranga Tamariki)*
- Acceptance of practice quality variations and practitioner passion and commitment  
*... It's dependent on the passion, commitment and energy of whoever is working with the customer. And if they are not committed to the jobs, then our customer doesn't get what they need. And unfortunately, we don't hold those practitioners accountable. ... (Oranga Tamariki)*

*... And it can't be just a job. You know, we are working with other people's children.  
(Oranga Tamariki)*

- **Regional prioritisation of transitions with champions and dedicated roles**  
*There's some areas of really good practice. And that's where Oranga Tamariki has had a champion of some kind who thought "this service looks amazing" or who cared about the cohort, and then [the relationship between Oranga Tamariki social workers and the TS workers] just worked really, really well. (Oranga Tamariki)*  
*There's been some funding from the TS to the [Oranga Tamariki] sites to have dedicated co-ordinators or navigators to help with [the relationship between Oranga Tamariki and the TS partners]. (Oranga Tamariki)*
- **Regional attitudes to and understandings of the TS partners and their roles**  
*When we have the [Oranga Tamariki] sites where they may be under siege, they feel everyone is out to get them, we've got horrible situations where young people have heard social workers disparaging the transitions kaimahi. So how can a good relationship build there? Or treating them like taxi drivers or at 16 kind of going [brushes hands]. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Regional differences will be explored in Year 3 of the evaluation using data from Just Sayin'2 and regional case studies.

#### 4.5. Transition support once they leave care is voluntary

Young people can:

- Receive transition support from a TS partner
- Contact the Transition Helpline or the National Contact Centre (NCC) to request information and support. The Transition Helpline can also link young people with a TS partner.
- Become independent but with the right to reconnect with Oranga Tamariki.

The Just Sayin' surveys and interviews provide some information about outcomes of referral. Some young people were supported by whānau or were already living independently and did not consider they needed additional support.

*Because I don't need one I'm independent in my own without anyone else tryin' a help me. (Just Sayin'2)*

*I felt as though I had enough support from my foster family. (Just Sayin'2)*

*I have a house and I have all the skills I need to survive I guess. (Just Sayin'2)*

Others had been referred and were still awaiting contact with a transition worker.

*Well I did but I haven't heard anything about a transition worker since. (Just Sayin'2)*

*I am still waiting for a phone call from the Transition team. I would like to be a part of the transition, as I need help with a few things. (Just Sayin'2)*

Some would consider engaging with a transition worker but did not know enough about the TS partner or the transition worker to engage. Oranga Tamariki are messaging potentially eligible young people through social media to raise awareness. Organisations such as VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai are also helping to establish links.

*I wasn't told about the process to join so wasn't sure how to go about getting one. (Just Sayin'2)*

A few wanted to engage with a transition worker, but either had no time or physical access (e.g. they were living in a Youth Justice residence or had moved regions).

Some young people's low confidence in Oranga Tamariki and social services contribute to a reluctance to ask for help and support and to engage in transition discussions with social workers and transition workers. Discussions may need to be reframed to better meet the needs of young people.

*They continuously told us they would do things for us and lied over and over. (Just Sayin'2)*

*Because they never understand, they say they do but deep down they just securing their next pay check. People need someone they can look up to not people who tell them stuff... (Just Sayin'2)*

*Oranga Tamariki never followed through by setting me up with bed, bedding etc. and my transition worker never followed up about it so just been left by myself. (Just Sayin'2)*

*I have been let down by many social workers in the past. (Just Sayin'2)*

#### 4.6. Opportunities to strengthen pathways to transition

The assessment and planning aspect of the TS was described by all interviewed stakeholders as the weakest aspect of the TS model.

*I think [lack of planning] is letting down the potential for rangatahi to get some really good support. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Oranga Tamariki social workers have many responsibilities and priorities and working with young people in the 16-18 age group is relatively new for some.

*... legislation isn't enough because resources and time and energy will always get diverted back to the young kids in the safety work in an overstretched system. And we are working in an overstretched system. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Opportunities to strengthen pathways to transition include improving social worker awareness and providing good, clear information about the TS and transition processes. In areas with a transition champion or a dedicated transition role the processes may be more consistent.

*Not everyone has them. So they're care and protection co-ordinators that have been given the focus on working on the transition FGCs. But lots of regions will just have*

*care and protection co-ordinators and it might be part of what they do. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Preparation for transition assessment and planning could be strengthened through:

- **Starting preparation early** as some conversations take time e.g. about where young people will live after transition.
- **Consistently involving the transition worker earlier.** Earlier involvement of transition workers and opportunities to provide more clarity to young people about the TS partners, their separation from Oranga Tamariki and what they can offer to young people.

*I think in an ideal situation, the transition worker is engaged as soon as the young person is mature enough to start having those conversations, ideally age 16. It's the way the service is currently structured. Interestingly, [at a whānau care hui], they were suggesting it could be earlier. (Oranga Tamariki)*

- **Developing a transition plan** as a fluid document that is reviewed and added to following discussions with young people and whānau as they prepare for transition.

*[Transition plan] should be a fluid document anyway, and if the planning hui is done responsibly as it should be done then the planning hui at 17, that's just a conversation to say, Isn't this amazing? This is done, you know, I've done this, and I've done this, but that changed, I wanted this. ... it's not that difficult... (Oranga Tamariki)*

- **Transition planning meetings.** There was discussion amongst stakeholders about whether FGCs<sup>21</sup> are the best place for transition discussions and whether there are specific transition planning FGCs that differ from other FGCs.

*When you get a backlog of FGCs, it's the transition FGCs that sort of get put aside ... An FGC is not going to be the right approach for every young person. And so we're hoping that shift to that more generic language of planning hui and maybe look at how we help those to happen. Because those really youth focused ones that the transition co-ordinators can do are a much more empowering experience for young people. (Oranga Tamariki)*

- **Involving whānau in assessment and planning.** In response to the Just Sayin' surveys only just over half of young people (55% in 2020 and 56% in 2021) agreed that the important people in their lives were involved as much as they would like in planning what happens.

*Whakapapa connection shouldn't be something that we wait for a transition provider to start doing. If you're back with your preparation and planning and you're doing whānau engagement in your preparation and planning and whānau are involved – they should be there as part of care standards. (Oranga Tamariki)*

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<sup>21</sup> Hui-a-whānau may also be used for transition planning

## 5. Responding to transitional needs

### Key points:

Young people described the breadth of different types of support they received from their transition workers. Support included help with life skills and becoming independent, getting an ID, passport and birth certificate, planning for their future and setting goals, with financial skills, with accommodation, getting into work, education and training, and by providing moral support.

The intensity and type of support young people need varies along with their different needs. Indications from Just Sayin'2 were that young people's contact with their transition worker varied and 63% considered the frequency of contact was about right; 25% would like to see their transition worker more and 12% less.

Responses to the Just Sayin' surveys confirmed young people's positive attitudes to their transition worker. Responses indicated more were positive about their transition worker than their Oranga Tamariki social worker. This difference confirms the need for this separate young person-centred role as a foundational element of the transition process.

The overarching principal for service delivery is that TS are responsive to the cultural and developmental needs of each rangatahi.

The TS has filled a support gap for young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care. Interviewed rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people appreciated their transition worker and considered them an extension of their whānau.

*[She helps me with] a whole lot of stuff. I feel like she cares. And when you care you know, you get the best work, the best out of the work that she's doing. She's helped me, you know, trying to achieve stuff, get stuff, get somewhere, learn. She's takes me to all these courses, relationship courses, just to be a better person, managing money, got my forklift license, my full licence. (Young person)*

Many interviewed rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people felt they had been let down by adults in their lives and specifically Oranga Tamariki. As a result, they felt disempowered, forgotten and that their voices had been suppressed. The relationship they have with their transition worker is important to them. This support has been young person focused and has provided secure attachment for young people. Building young people's confidence has helped many make small progressive steps towards achieving their goals.

Responses to the Just Sayin' surveys confirmed young people's positive attitudes to their transition worker. Male role models were important for many young people as this was missing for them growing up. They wanted a transition worker they could relate to, share with and look up to.

Many felt more positive about the transition worker than their Oranga Tamariki social worker. This difference confirms the need for this separate young person-centred role as a foundational element of the transition process.

*The bro's been real mean with like easing through this process of transitioning out with trying to help me explore my hobbies and that, because I don't have much hobbies. So him like, going out of the way and like going and checking on things I might like. (Young person)*

Rates of satisfaction were slightly lower than for the first iteration of the survey, possibly reflecting a larger group of TS partners, some new partners and feedback from a larger group of young people.

Young people's attitudes to social workers and transition workers	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin' <sup>22</sup>
Does Oranga Tamariki help make things better for you? (3-yes, I think so, to 4-yes, definitely on 4-point scale)	64%	61%
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)	72%	65%
Is your Oranga Tamariki social worker there when you need them? (% yes)	67%	66%
Does your transition worker help make things better for you? (3-yes, I think so, to 4-yes, definitely, on 4-point scale)	90%*	81%
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)	90%*	81%
Is your transition worker there when you need them? (% yes)	85%*	80%
(Of those with a transition worker) Do you feel you can talk to your transition worker about your worries? (3-yes, I think so, to 4-yes, definitely, on 4-point scale)	79%*	78%

### 5.1. The types of support TS partners provide

When a young person is in transition, it is responsibility of the TS partner to provide advice and assistance to the young person. This includes providing emotional support and mentoring, access to brokerage activities, and supporting them to identify and access services themselves. They are also responsible for acting at a high level by advocating on the behalf of the young person to ensure they have access to necessary services. TS partners may also develop specialist programmes if there is a gap in the community.

<sup>22</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

*[TS partners] just apply for a grant. We've got a short form, and that's to enable them to do courses or group programmes with young people that they're working with where they see that there might be a gap. And so we've had some people doing cooking, we've had some partners taking young people out to the forest, teaching them how to identify foods and some of that foraging stuff and then back to the Marae and learning how to cook meals ... We've got parenting programmes. There's been a whole range of different things that they're doing. (Oranga Tamariki)*

In response to Just Sayin'2, young people described the breadth of ways they had been supported to:

- **Get a driver licence, driving lessons and help purchasing a car**  
*Arranged driving lessons.  
Helped me get vouchers from AA for driving lessons.  
My transition worker has helped me by putting through a referral for funds to get a car.*
- **Get other forms of ID**  
*She is helping me to get my ... passport.  
Getting an 18 card.*
- **With food parcels and food vouchers**  
*They have ... helped with food like organising food parcels.*
- **Become independent**  
*Been very helpful with helping me become an adult and figure out the things I need to do to prepare myself.  
Asking me if there's anything I need or anything they can do to help before I leave their care. And asking me how I'm feeling about everything.  
Helped ease me into life without OT.  
She made sure I was good and had everything ready for when I moved out of my Foster Home.*
- **Plan for the future and help to achieve goals**  
*... We have made goals (which are my needs) and reached all my goals except one (which is my fault)-Restricted license .... But we are both determined to reach this goal still..... We get minor setbacks but she helps me step forwards either way!!  
Supported me with goals, showed me other ways to achieve my goals.  
They told me I can do anything to lead myself to the right path not the wrong.  
They organised a meeting and discussed with family my next steps.*
- **Obtain financial support**  
*Helped my financially with rent, a new bed, therapy sessions, grants, doctors/ dentist appointments.  
She found money for me when I was needing to buy things for school. Because my social worker had used my money before I had even left care.  
My transition worker helps me with lots of important things e.g. ... one of costs I need help with.  
Helped me get gumboots and trackpants for work.*

- **Learn financial skills**

*... helping in the basic level of adulthood such as budgeting and becoming confident with money.*  
*My transition worker has helped me ... saving up my money for anything I need in future.*
- **Learn life skills**

*She has helped me out with cleaning and shown me how to clean a floor.*  
*Has taught me skills that I need for the future such as, cooking and other stuff.*
- **Find accommodation and buying items needed for accommodation**

*Buying stuff for my house.*  
*He has moved me into a better home.*  
*We are currently working towards getting housing for not only myself but for my brother who has just started his transition which I find with the help with this has made it a lot less stressful journey as this whole idea of transitions are hard to try and work out.*
- **Get into work, training and education**

*Got me into Polytech for a mechanics course.*  
*... Helped me produce a CV to help me find placement for work.*  
*She helped figure out courses after school.*  
*Helping with job searching.*  
*... Finally getting me in a course after two years.*
- **Follow-up on their wellbeing by checking in on the young person, providing moral support and following-up any questions they have**

*She's awesome she looks out for me and makes sure that I'm doing okay.*  
*She is a great listener.*  
*She has helped me ... work towards bettering my mental health.*  
*... is there when i need a yarn.*  
*They were quite helpful by getting information when I had queries.*  
*My transition workers did more than just help me. They met me half way and helped me become the young lady I am today. They made me believe I could do anything and strive for what I want to be in life, and for that I appreciate them and their support system, very beautiful and nice people. I'm grateful .*  
*My transition worker/s have helped me a lot pushed me to become a better person mentally and have pushed me to come out of my comfort zone and push myself to do stuff I've been struggling to do myself.*  
*By listening to me.*  
*She has helped by always being reliable.*
- **To connect with and learn about whakapapa**

*She has helped me with learning about my background.*  
*... Helped me with my connect with my siblings.*  
*She helped me get back with my parents.*
- **Gain confidence**

*She was the BEST. She helped me believe in myself and was there for me whatsoever. She taught me to always strive for what's best for me and my whānau. She was like an older sister to me. I thank her for all she's done. Giving me a boost in confidence.*

- Provide transport

*She has ... taken me places were I need to go. They've driven me to and from therapy.*

- Access what they need

*Every way possible, she goes above and beyond. She is so amazing with her work and does everything she can you make sure I am okay and alright until I next see her.*

- Be a parent

*She ... helped with parenting school for six month old son. When I became a caregiver for a young girl they helped me with support She is awesome she pushes so hard to get things for me and my baby she's a massive help im so grateful of what she does for me and my child Brith certificate of my baby Helping find a home me myself and baby.*

- Connect with other organisations

*She helped me get in touch with WINZ.*

## 5.2. Frequency of contact

The TS partner is responsible for contacting a young person at least once a month to build the relationship and support implementation of the Transition Plan.

Young people's reports from Just Sayin'2 highlight a range of frequency of support received. Approximately half (55%) saw their transition worker monthly or more frequently. Many of those contacted less frequently had only recently been referred.

*I like how the more supportive their services are, they're more, she contacts me all the time. Like, I don't have to message her. She usually messages me and checks up on me, probably like, at least once every week or so. Whereas with my social workers, that was like every four weeks, once a month. Even when I just started like, getting to know her when I was still in care, she still messaged more than my social worker did. And I felt like she helped more than they did. (Young person)*

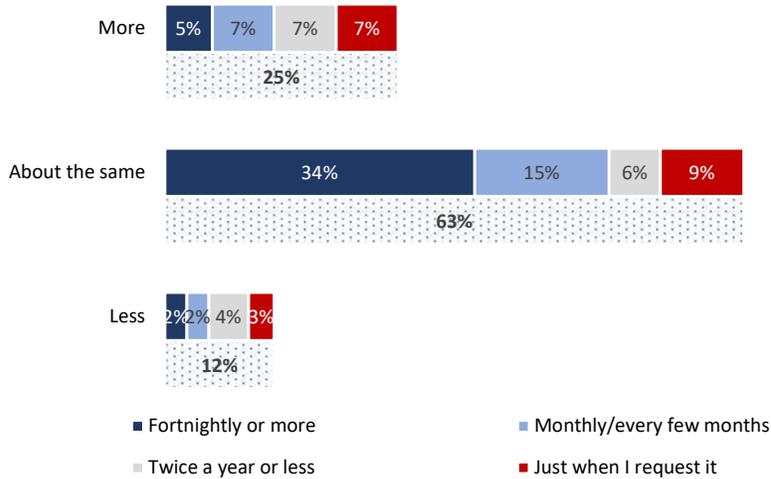
*They have helped me with any questions I have, we catch up once every couple months which is nice to see how both of us are doing and to discuss any issues we may have. Any problems I have my transition workers are fast to get me any help I need or options on what I can do. (Just Sayin'2)*

*Always checks up on me and we have weekly, if not fortnightly visits. (Just Sayin'2)*

Many young people (63%) considered the frequency of contact from their transition worker was about right; 25% would like to see their transition worker more and 12%

less. There was no correlation between whether young people wanted to see their transition worker more or less often and the frequency of contact they reported.

**Would you like to see more/less of your transition worker?**



**Figure 1. Frequency of transition worker contact by how much rangatahi want to see their transition worker (Source: Just Sayin’2 n=253)**

**5.3. Financial assistance**

While a young person prepares to transition, Oranga Tamariki has the lead responsibility for meeting their needs and providing financial assistance to support their Transition Plan. A young person is also entitled to a \$1,500 Discharge Grant to purchase the essential items needed to live independently.

From Nov 19 to June 2021, 1,864 payments were made by NCC – an average of \$425 per payment. For the 20/21 Financial year – 1,619 payments were made totalling \$673,747, an average of \$416 per payment.

**Table 4. Financial payments made to young people from NCC (Source: Oranga Tamariki)**

Quarter ending	Number of payments	Total amount	Average per payment
Mar-20	83	\$49,110	\$592
Jun-20	116	\$57,058	\$492
Sep-20	170	\$69,587	\$409
Dec-20	488	\$218,822	\$448
Mar-21	577	\$237,903	\$412
Jun-21	384	\$147,435	\$384

The purpose of financial support has varied. Over the past year the main category of financial support has been for travel and accommodation:

- Travel and accommodation (65%). Reduced travel in the March and June quarters of 2020 likely reflect the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Education (8%)
- Emergency (8%)
- Health (5%)
- Other (13%)

**Table 5. NCC purpose of payments (Source: Oranga Tamariki)**

Quarter ending	Travel	Accommodation	Education	Health	Emergency	Other
Mar-20	23%	37%	22%	3%	6%	9%
Jun-20	26%	48%	4%	5%	15%	1%
Sep-20	46%	9%	12%	2%	11%	17%
Dec-20	46%	25%	5%	1%	8%	14%
Mar-21	42%	14%	11%	10%	6%	15%
Jun-21	41%	6%	14%	5%	10%	25%

The TS partners also have an average of \$7,500 per rangatahi but have flexibility to use the amount as required to meet identified needs.

*So the partners get \$7,500 per FTE that they can use as they see fit. So what we've said is if you start to run out of money, let us know and we can look to do a top up. But so far, none of them have spent it all because I think there's been that hesitation to. ... There's no cap or expectation of spending per young person. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*A lot of our partners have struggled with actually getting that money out of the door. ... So often the young people are going through the call center. So the young people are still getting it, but it definitely hasn't worked out how we thought it would ... We've trained them one way and now we're asking them to do something different. And we've taken the protection away from them. (Oranga Tamariki)*

#### 5.4. Supporting young people transitioning from Youth Justice

Oranga Tamariki has four Youth Justice residences for children and young people who have or are alleged to have committed an offence. The aim of the Youth Justice residences is to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment where young people can get their lives back on track and improve their prospects for the future<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/youth-justice/youth-justice-residences/>

As part of the evaluation of the TS, in-depth interviews were completed with 17 young people and 19 staff across the four Youth Justice residences in Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim was to explore the transition process and to better understand their specific transition needs.

The interviews with young people and Youth Justice staff identified the following considerations for rangatahi transitioning from a Youth Justice residence:

- Many young people had complex health and social issues
- Many had a long history of being in Oranga Tamariki care or custody
- While some young people were supported by whānau, others had no-one to go to and nowhere to go after leaving Youth Justice
- It was not safe for some for young people to return to whānau or whānau were not able or wanting to have young people return to them
- Having children and parenting was a huge motivation for change
- The Youth Justice residence may be a safer and better place to live than other options young people had experienced.

The implications for transition support are:

- Most young people leaving a Youth Justice residence need intensive support immediately on leaving.
- Transition planning was not happening as early as indicated by the complexity of young people's needs. Transition workers were often involved later than ideal. Reasons included lack of understanding of the transition worker role, and lack of confidence that the transition worker had the necessary skills and experiences. Some young people would leave Youth Justice residences and go to another geographic location. Linking these young people with a TS partner was difficult and Youth Justice staff asked for access to a database of TS partners.
- Transition planning timing was challenging for young people on remand but transition workers could start to build relationships with young people over this time, providing a good foundation for transition planning.
- Accommodation was a major challenge for many young people. Supported Accommodation partners who offer intensive social support alongside accommodation may be the best option for young people with nowhere to go, at least in the short-term. Supported Accommodation offers young people opportunities to develop life skills while in a safe housing situation.
- As transition support needs for young people leaving Youth Justice are more intensive than those of other young people leaving care, they may require transition workers with experience in supporting young people with complex issues (anger management, trauma, mental health and addictions, cognitive disability) or who can support young people to access specialist services. A

database of TS partners would also need to profile the service and the transition workers.

- Transition goals should be achievable for the young people which may mean setting smaller achievable goals and working towards larger goals. Not 'setting young people up to fail' by lack of preparation for tasks such as obtaining a driver licence and unachievable goals is essential to build their confidence.
- Full-time engagement in education, training or employment may not be achievable and young people's experiences with exclusion from education may mean they are resistant to participation. Many young people described wanting practical skills and wanting employment related to construction, driving etc. Basic literacy is required for many of these occupations and there is an opportunity to look for innovative ways of leveraging off practical activities to build literacy and numeracy.
- Partners and other whānau are very influential and may also need holistic support for the issues in their lives to enable young people to return to a more positive whānau environment.
- Being or becoming parents was a huge motivator for change. Supporting young people to learn parenting skills and to parent also has the potential to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. Incorporating parenting and relationship skills into pre-transition and transition support is likely to also have future benefits for those not already parenting.
- Young people's histories of being let down by systems and a lack of trust highlights the importance of transition worker stability and reliability.

In addition to young people in Youth Justice residences, some young people in Corrections are eligible for support from a TS partner. As this group may move to another region when released, connections to TS partners in the region the young person has whakapapa links to is important. Working with Corrections also increases access to transitional housing, where a safe option is available.

### 5.5. Leaving transition support

The frequency and type of support needed by some young people will change as they age and develop life skills. Preliminary findings from Just Sayin'2 are that 17% of young people had had a transition worker in the past. Their main reason for leaving was that they considered they no longer needed help. Of note is the proportion who moved, highlighting the importance of communication between TS partners.

**Table 6. Reasons given by young people for stopping transition worker support (Source: Just Sayin'2)**

Reasons	Percentage
I no longer needed their help	41%
I wasn't getting any help from them anyway	23%
I moved to a different area	18%
Can't be bothered	4%
I didn't like my transition worker	9%
Another reason (includes: got too busy, didn't have to have one anymore, moved to another organisation and unspecified reasons)	21%

Some young people including those with high and complex needs may need transition support after they turn 21. Many of these young people do not meet the requirements for adult services.

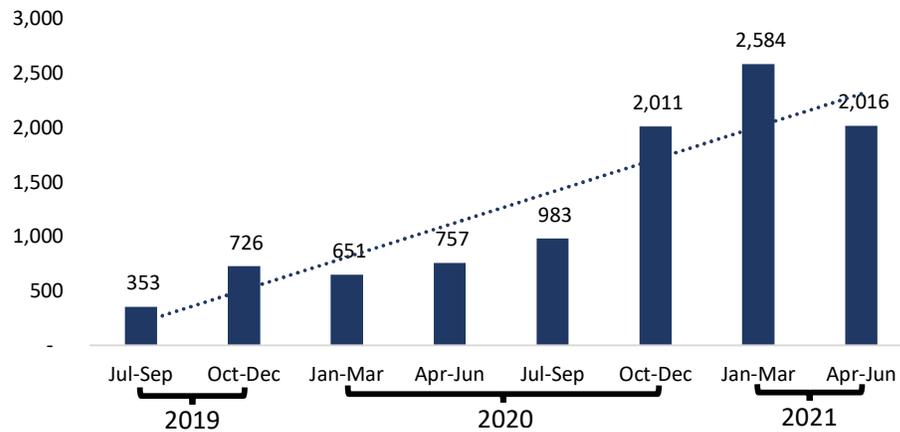
*I think that for some of the young people in the care of Oranga Tamariki, they don't meet the threshold for adult services because of all the support we've wrapped around them. And then when we rip that away ... then if we reassess them, they probably would meet the threshold. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*We've been buying, basically, advocacy services in perpetuity to sit alongside young people because we know they won't be able to advocate for themselves because they don't have the ability. But we stop at 25, so what's going to happen to them? (Oranga Tamariki)*

## 5.6. Maintaining contact

Oranga Tamariki has the lead responsibility for providing advice and assistance to young people under the age of 21 who are not actively engaged with a TS partner and call the Transition Helpline. They also act at a high level by identifying barriers to services that are impacting young people leaving care and advocating for better access to services for young people leaving care through government and community agencies.

The number of calls is increasing each quarter. Approximately two-thirds (69%) of young people said in response to Just Sayin'2 they knew how to get help from Oranga Tamariki and 48% knew how to contact VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai. Most of those who had contacted either organisation said they had been helped to at least some extent (80% who contacted Oranga Tamariki and 84% who contacted VOYCE).



**Figure 2. The number of calls to the National Contact Centre by quarter (Source: Oranga Tamariki)**

**Table 7. Awareness of how to contact Oranga Tamariki for support (Source: Just Sayin')**

Maintaining contact with young people	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin' <sup>24</sup>
Do you know how to get support from Oranga Tamariki if you needed help? (% yes)	79%	69%
Have you called the Transition Support Line at Oranga Tamariki? (% yes)	17%	21%
Those who have called: Did they help you?		
(% yes – a lot)	41%	53%
(% yes – a little)	41%	27%
Have you seen or heard about an organisation called VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai? (% yes)	61%	65%
(All survey respondents) Do you know how to contact VOYCE - Whakarongo Mai? (% yes)	46%	48%
Have you called VOYCE? (% yes)	N/A	10%
Those who have called VOYCE: Did they help you?		
(% yes – a lot)	N/A	50%
(% yes – a little)	N/A	34%

<sup>24</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

## 6. Progress towards the investment objectives

### Key points:

It is too early to assess the extent to which transition support has improved outcomes for young people leaving care.

Year three of implementation sees further expansion of the eligible cohort. Future iterations of the Just Sayin' surveys and comparison of outcomes for young people leaving care with other cohorts of young people will inform progress towards outcomes. Comparisons will be available from the National Youth Health and Wellbeing survey.

The 2020 Just Sayin' survey provides some baseline information against which to assess progress towards objectives. However, the first survey occurred just after the COVID-19 lock down and was limited by poor contact details. Findings from Just Sayin'2 in 2021 based on a larger population of young people confirm some of the baseline findings.

The outcomes focused questions in Just Sayin' were developed to align with the National Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey so there would be a comparison general population sample. The National Youth Health and Wellbeing survey was postponed from 2020 to 2021 because of school closures during COVID-19. Results will be available early in 2022.

## Overview of investment objectives

### More young people have safe and stable living arrangements

*Goal: 280 of those with the highest needs in Supported Accommodation, and for the remainder a reduction of around a quarter in rates of sleeping rough and 18% in couch surfing.*

Supported Accommodation places are below target. Qualitative data suggest demand exceeds places.

Just Sayin'2 will undercount those in unsafe accommodation but identified 9%.

Entitlement to remain or return (ETRR) - Targets not achieved.

Review the model and applicability to Aotearoa New Zealand and consider alternative housing options.

### More young people have a trusted adult in their lives

*Around 80% of the cohort engage regularly in trust based relational support with a transition specialist*

Referral rates have increased to 53% of eligible young people at the end of year 2.

### Young people have an improved sense of identity and belonging

In response to Just Sayin' 2, 72% felt secure in their identity and proud of who they are.

More support is required for young people to find out about their whakapapa.

### More young people are healthy and recovering from trauma

*13% reduction in depression, anxiety, and stress among these young people*

In response to Just Sayin' 59% responded often or more to at least one measure on the Washington disability scale.

The impact of the TS is confounded by access to health services.

### More young people have the life skills they need to thrive as adults

*Goal – 10% increase in transitioning young people getting a driver licence*

In response to Just Sayin'2, 52% of young people wanted to gain a driver licence. A range of support for other skills was described and 61% of young people said they were getting the support they needed to learn the skills they wanted to learn.

### More young people are in education, employment or training

*Goal – Up to twice as many in the cohort to remain in education to age 19, and a decrease in those who go on to chronic unemployment by around 10%*

In response to Just Sayin'2, 19% were not in education, training or employment. The year 4 impact analysis will inform this goal.

### Reduced disparities between rangatahi Māori and other young people

Rangatahi Māori are being referred to TS partners at the same rates as other young people.

The number of kaupapa Māori TS partners is increasing.

### Young people feel more listened to and better understood

*Goal - The provision of transition support outside of a statutory social worker contributes to a young person feeling listened to and understood*

Just over three-quarters (78%) felt they had a say in important decisions in their lives and 81% agreed that their transition worker understands the kind of support they need.

### 6.1. More young people have safe and stable living arrangements

*Goal: 280 of those with the highest needs in Supported Accommodation, and for the remainder a reduction of around a quarter in rates of sleeping rough and 18% in couch surfing.*

Oranga Tamariki has a high-level obligation regarding accommodation in that they are responsible for identifying barriers to services that are impacting young people leaving care and advocating for better access to accommodation for young people leaving care through government and community organisations.

Findings from the second Just Sayin' survey show similar findings to the 2021 survey about where young people live. Most (87%) of young people said they lived in one place.

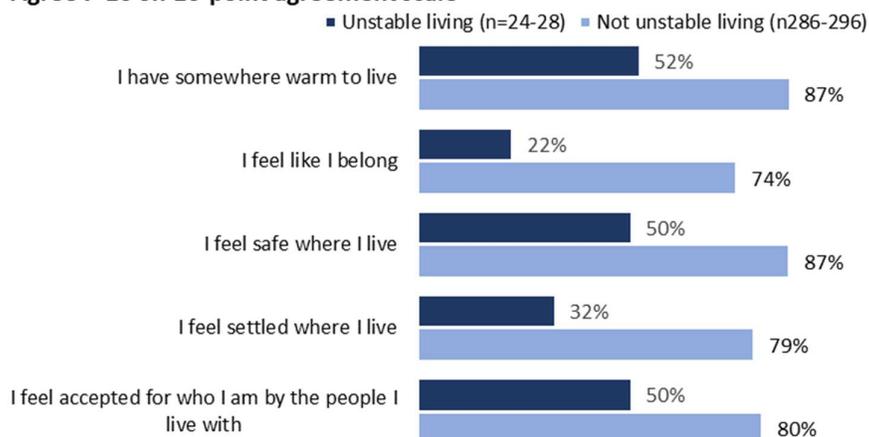
Accommodation	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin'2 <sup>25</sup>
A family home or homes	37%	43%
A foster home	19%	13%
A friend or partner's home	16%	19%
A flat you pay rent for	17%	16%
A group residence (or lock up residence)	10%	3%
Somewhere else	9%	10%
Unstable accommodation (living rough, garage, couch surfing, car/van, motel)	8%	9%
Who do you usually live with?		
Whakapapa whānau	34%	44%
Other whānau	32%	21%
Friends	15%	17%
By myself	7%	16%
Other (includes: carers, foster families, partner, flatmates, residence staff, random people, unspecified)	26%	20%
How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements about where you usually live: (7-10 agreement out of 10-point scale)		
I have somewhere warm to live	91%	84%
I feel like I belong	72%	70%
I feel safe where I live	84%	84%
I feel settled where I live	77%	75%
I feel accepted for who I am by the people I live with	83%	78%
<b>Young people in care</b>		
Do you think you will stay living in the same place as now after you leave Oranga Tamariki care? (% yes)	47%	38%
Has anyone talked with you about other places where you could live after you leave care? (% yes)	34%	32%

<sup>25</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

Young people who had left care		
Do you live in the same place as before you left care? (% yes)	42%	28%
Did you feel you had a choice about moving to live somewhere else? (% yes)	74%	68%
Did anyone at Oranga Tamariki or the TS talk with you about other places? (% yes)	46%	45%
Have you been told about the option to return to a caregiver until you are 21 (ETRR) <sup>26</sup> ? (% yes)	12%	46%

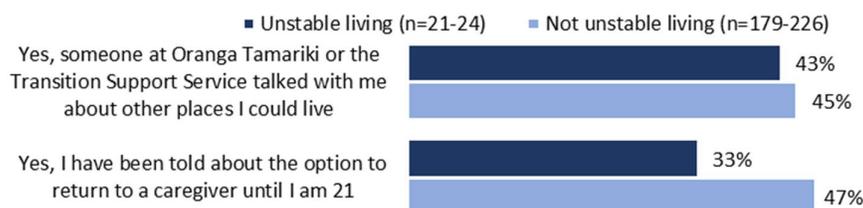
The Just Sayin’ surveys almost certainly undercount young people living in unstable accommodation. Of the young people who responded to the survey, 9% were living in unstable accommodation and they felt less safe, settled and accepted. Fewer felt they belonged where they lived and nearly half said they didn’t have anywhere warm to live (Figure 3).

**Agree 7-10 on 10-point agreement scale**



**Figure 3. How rangatahi feel about where they live (rangatahi in unstable living situations (Source: Just Sayin’ 2)**

Approximately the same proportion living in unstable accommodation had someone at Oranga Tamariki talk with them about other places they could live but fewer had been told about options to return to a caregiver (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Support and knowledge about accommodation (Source: Just Sayin’ 2)**

<sup>26</sup> In 2020 young people were asked have you heard about (ETRR)?

### 6.1.1. Entitlement to remain or return (ETRR) is a key part of the transition service policy

The TS cabinet paper outlined the intended aim of trialling a wide-range of needs-based housing solutions to sit alongside and complement other housing supports available to young people, including those funded by the Ministry of Social Development. ETRR was the main accommodation option funded as part of transition support.

One of the Oranga Tamariki transition planning functions is to make sure that young people know of this entitlement and find a caregiver if a young person wishes to remain or return to living with a caregiver. Additionally, Oranga Tamariki has the lead responsibility to provide on-going training and support for caregivers, monitor the living arrangements, and provide financial assistance to meet the reasonable costs of the living arrangement.

ETRR was based on similar programmes in the United Kingdom including Staying Put (England), Going the Extra Mile (Northern Ireland), When I am Ready (Wales) and Continuing Care (Scotland) which in turn were based on a MidWest study in the United States. Although we were not able to find evaluations of the United Kingdom models, the demand for places exceeds the available funding in some areas, suggesting high take-up. ETRR has a quarterly target of 80 which is not achieved, although numbers of ETRR placements are increasing monthly.

A formative evaluation of ETRR based on four locality case studies was completed in April 2020. A key finding was of low awareness of ETRR and ETRR processes amongst Oranga Tamariki social workers. A lack of clear information provided to both social workers and transition workers made it difficult for them to understand and promote the service.

*Our whānau care partners, who are the majority of our caregivers, are still unaware of the service. Now we're two years in, so there's still a need to continue this communication of entitlement, not only to our providers, not only to young people, but also to our own staff. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*... can they just stop calling it ETRR? Do they think social workers on sites know what they are talking about ... calling it ETRR, is unhelpful. And there's a complete lack of understanding about ETRR. The Transition Service understand it really well. But the rest of the business doesn't. (Oranga Tamariki)*

The lack of awareness and small numbers of referrals meant the ETRR model could not be evaluated and resulted in a recommendation that subsequent evaluation was required after wider take-up of ETRR.

Housing shortages for young people, including those leaving care has been a common theme across the evaluation of TS suggesting low take up of ETRR is not a result of lack of need for safe and stable housing for young people.

Securing a safe, stable place to live was a top priority for most rangatahi in the Ngā Haerenga cohort. Definitions of safe and stable housing varied from person to

person and ranged from independent living (either alone or in flatting situations), remaining with current caregivers, moving in with whānau, staying in a shared Oranga Tamariki living environment (including a Youth Justice residence) and remaining in or accessing supported living facilities.

The locality case studies, interviews with young people and a literature review of accommodation models for young people<sup>27</sup> identified features of the design of ETRR that limited eligibility of rangatahi and the feasibility of implementing ETRR:

- The number of rangatahi potentially eligible for ETRR may be fewer than expected because:
  - Many rangatahi in the age group are ready to live independently or are already doing so  
*She helped me transition into a flat. (Just Sayin'2)*
  - Rangatahi may remain with their caregiver without calling on ETRR  
*I think we have this assumption that every caregiver wants to be paid lots of money. And some of the feedback that we're getting from caregivers is especially the whānau care team, caring families have heard it.. When they're out of care, actually, they can stay with us. They can pay board. And that said, we don't want to keep getting paid. (Oranga Tamariki)*
  - Others have chosen to live with whānau who may not be approved as caregivers by Oranga Tamariki. Section 7AA emphasis on reconnection and Transition Service outcomes that young people are engaged with family cultural and community groups emphasising the need to develop appropriate accommodation and support options for rangatahi Māori.  
*There have been conversations about ETRR and how do we make that more flexible so if an Aunty or a Grandma wanted to support them, we would fund them. (Oranga Tamariki)*
- The Just Sayin' surveys have highlighted the mobility of young people who leave care, with only 28% living in the same place as before they left care. Of those who had moved, 32% did not feel they had a choice. Aotearoa New Zealand's rurality and number of small urban locations may mean that many young people need to leave their carers and find somewhere else to live to enrol in study or to find employment.
- Oranga Tamariki social workers in the case studies described a shortage of carers for young people the 18-21 age-group, especially for those with complex needs.

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<sup>27</sup> Malatest International (June 2021). Jurisdictional literature review of accommodation support.

- The option to return to care may become more significant over time after rangatahi trial independent living or returning to whānau and find it more challenging than they expected.

ETRR is not available for young people leaving Youth Justice residences or who have been in high support placements during their time in care. In interviews with staff at Youth Justice residences, finding somewhere for young people to live was a major theme. Some young people leaving Youth Justice residences had nowhere to go. For some living in a Youth Justice residence was warm, safe and stable housing. Supported Accommodation partners provide some accommodation for these groups but the capacity does not meet the demand.

Finding safe and stable accommodation for young people leaving care requires cross-agency initiatives. Oranga Tamariki is working with the Ministry of Social Development and Housing and Urban Development to explore housing options. For young people with complex needs the interface with the Ministry of Health is also important. However, most young people leaving care with complex needs will not meet Ministry of Health thresholds for residential or supported living options.

*We know housing is a huge issue, we know access to mental health is a huge issue we know that the interface with Work and Income is difficult and there's lots of barriers there. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*We've got young people where we've had in quite high cost, high support placements that end at 18, that can't really fit any ETRR because they're unstaffed sort of care arrangements rather than individual caregivers. But then they've not been able to access an adult pathway through Ministry of Health services. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Interviewed Oranga Tamariki stakeholders highlighted the need for more information to inform ETRR and other accommodation options. There is the potential for ETRR funding to be moved to other options, but some options such as rent subsidies may be constrained by the need for legislative changes.

*... And so we are actively working in the homelessness space ... And we're working with policy on that whole continuum, looking at all sorts of different models like the Foyer model, which is linked to employment as well. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*I think we just don't understand enough [about ETRR]. (Oranga Tamariki)*

## 6.2. More young people have a trusted adult in their lives

*Goal: Around 80% of the cohort engage regularly in trust based relational support with a transition specialist*

Just over half the cohort (53%) have engaged with a transition worker. For most young people who have engaged with a transition worker, their transition worker is a trusted adult in their lives.

Findings from the second Just Sayin' survey show 76% of young people considered they had someone they could turn to for help if they were going through a difficult time.

More young people have a trusted adult in their lives	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin' <sup>28</sup>
If you were going through a difficult time and needed help, do you have someone you could turn to? (% yes)	80%	76%
Rangatahi who could turn to...		
An adult	68%*	68%
Only a friend or sibling	26%*	21%
No one	6%*	11%
How much do you disagree or agree with the following... (4-5 agree out of 5-point agreement scale)		
I have friends I trust	61%	57%
I feel safe with my friends	73%	69%
My friends accept me for who I am	75%	72%

Good connection with whānau, current and past caregivers, and various support networks (including with professional and community organisations) was identified in Ngā Haerenga as an enabler of a successful transition to independence.

One of the transition support roles of the transition worker is to help young people to build connections and/or reconnect with whānau and others in their lives.

*And I think that's the key of coming back to the transition worker being able to build up that network of support around the young person so they're not their only person they feel like they can rely on, which can be hard for some young people because for some young people, there's not many reliable people in their lives. (Oranga Tamariki)*

The in-depth interviews with rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people highlighted the roles of the transition workers in building connections.

*But nah, the Māori programmes are good, it taught me a lot about my background and my ancestry and that sort of stuff. Where I come from, I sort of already knew, but it just gave me more of picture of where we all sort of come from. (Young person)*

*Māori, I can go do wānangas and that. But the Fijian thing, I talked to [OT social worker] about that, being able to go to my village in Fiji, instead of having to learn through books and that. I'd rather just go there and learn first-hand, or just observing. (Young person)*

Some young people in the Ngā Haerenga cohort also had goals around breaking connections to ensure a better path forward. While this included friends and

<sup>28</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

whānau, it also included intentions to sever ties with Oranga Tamariki social workers as soon as they could.

Similarly, in response to the Just Sayin' surveys some young people wanted to have Oranga Tamariki out of their lives as soon as possible. Breaking connections with Oranga Tamariki highlighted the importance of engagement with a transition worker or another trusted adult who could provide support.

### 6.3. Young people have an improved sense of identity and belonging

In response to the 2021 Just Sayin' survey, 72% felt secure in their identity and proud of who they are. Approximately half wanted to know more about their whakapapa – this group included young people from all ethnic groups.

Young people have an improved sense of identity and belonging	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin' <sup>29</sup>
To what extent do you feel secure in your identity? (3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale)	75%	72%
To what extent do you feel proud of who you are? (3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale)	72%	72%
Do you have as many chances as you would like to connect with your whakapapa whānau? (% yes)	65%	69%
Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)? (3=yes, I think so, to 4=yes, definitely on 4-point scale)	41%	54%
Do you want to know more about your ancestry or whakapapa? (% yes)	46%	51%
Are you being supported to find out more about your ancestry/whakapapa? (% yes - of those who wanted to know more)	52%	54%

### 6.4. More young people are healthy and recovering from trauma

*Goal: 13% reduction in depression, anxiety, and stress among these young people*

All young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care have experienced the trauma of separation from parents and some have experienced abuse, highlighting the need for transition workers to be able to provide or access trauma-informed care to support young people.

*It can be particularly hard when a young person goes home and they've had siblings that didn't come into care. Because there can be that resentment from them ... And there can be that resentment from the other siblings ... I know our partners talk*

<sup>29</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

*about the need for healing work to happen. And it's important that that starts to happen earlier. (Oranga Tamariki)*

In response to the 2021 Just Sayin' survey, 40% of young people felt their life in general was very good or excellent. This overarching feeling was confirmed by young people's ratings of their spiritual, family, physical and mental health. These findings highlight young people's needs for holistic support. In response to Just Sayin' 59% responded often or more to at least one measure on the Washington disability scale. The impact of the TS is confounded by access to Ministry of Health services. Only 56% were receiving the health support they felt they needed.

Life in general	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin' <sup>2</sup> <sup>30</sup>
How do you feel about your life in general? (4-very good, to 5-excellent on 5-point scale)	39%	40%
To what extent do you feel hopeful about your future? (3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale)	72%	72%
<b>Self-reported holistic wellbeing (based on Te Whare Tapa Whā) (4-, very good, to 5-excellent on 5-point scale)</b>		
In general, would you say your taha wairua - spiritual health is?	36%	36%
In general, would you say your taha whānau or family health is?	36%	38%
In general, would you say your taha tinana - physical health is?	39%	37%
In general, would you say your taha hinengaro - mental health is?	34%	33%
<b>Self-reported difficulties (3-often, to 4-always on 4-point scale)</b>		
Do you have any difficulty seeing?	19%	19%
Do you have difficulty hearing?	7%	10%
Do you have any difficulty doing physical activities?	5%	6%
Do you have difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating?	32%	34%
Do you have any emotional, psychological or mental health conditions?	37%	38%
Has at least one difficulty rated as often or always	55%	59%
Are you receiving the health support you need? (% yes)	69%	56%
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)	29%	34%

<sup>30</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

## 6.5. More young people have the life skills they need to thrive as adults

*Goal – 10% increase in transitioning young people getting a driver licence*

In response to Just Sayin'2, young people were asked about the skills they needed. Obtaining a driver licence was the most frequently mentioned skill (Table 8).

*I'll go with you to find out what you have to do to get your driver's licence. And I'll help you put your name down. And I'll make sure you get some driving lessons. And I'll go out with you and see if you're ready to set your test. Social workers haven't got the time to do that. And that's exactly what this cohort of young people need.  
(Oranga Tamariki)*

**Table 8. Life skills young people wanted to develop (Source: Just Sayin'2)**

Skills required	Number	Percent
Driver licence	165	52%
Money management (loans, debt and banking)	160	50%
Relationship skills	116	36%
Becoming work ready	118	37%
Cooking	98	31%
Getting ID	74	23%
Connecting with culture	65	20%
Enrolling in training	71	22%
Parenting skills	62	19%
Other	22	7%

Life skills	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin'2 <sup>31</sup>
Are you getting the support you need to learn the skills you want to learn? (% yes)	63%	61%
<b>Financial capability (% yes)</b>		
At the end of each week do you have money left over?	29%	32%
At the end of each week do you have a budget?	44%	41%
At the end of each week do you have any savings	38%	36%
At the end of each week do you have any debts?	20%	23%

In response to the Just Sayin' surveys and Ngā Haerenga, while some young people could clearly articulate goals for the future and the skills they need to achieve their goals, many struggled to do so. 'I don't know' was a common survey response to being asked about where they thought they would be in five years. Of those who

<sup>31</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

identified skills, 61% said they were receiving the support they needed to learn the skills.

#### 6.6. More young people are in education, employment or training

*Goal: Twice as many in the cohort remain in education to age 19, and a decrease in those who go onto chronic unemployment of around 10%.*

Approximately one in five young people responding to the Just Sayin' surveys were not in education, training or employment.

Education and employment	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin' <sup>32</sup>
NEET	21%	19%
In education or training	53%	49%
Employed full-time	14%	21%
Employed part-time	32%	25%
[Those not working] Wanted a paid job	99%	91%
[Those working] Wanted more hours	71%	62%
Volunteered in the last 12 months	37%	37%
Received money from Work and Income or StudyLink	37%	45%

Being in work, training or education was very important to most rangatahi in the Ngā Haerenga cohort. Finding work or a career was seen as essential for financial and housing security as well as to establish a positive future. A primary focus for some was on obtaining a job now so that they could earn money to support themselves. Some rangatahi had a longer-term plan which included continuing their education to tertiary level or undertaking on the job training. Notably many wāhine were interested in working in the social services and wanted to improve the lives of other disadvantaged rangatahi.

Oranga Tamariki run an intern programme for young people leaving care to provide work experience and skills development.

*We run a nine month programme in which, it's sort of dependent on the capability of the young person and what they're interested in, we'll try as best we can to match to an opportunity in the agency. And so there's an element of work-readiness and then work shadowing and then actually working. (Oranga Tamariki)*

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<sup>32</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

## 6.7. Reduced disparities between rangatahi Māori and other young people

The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 creates a clear obligation for Oranga Tamariki to support rangatahi Māori during transition, specifically to focus on mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga. Section 7AA of the Act states:

*(b) the policies, practices and services of the department [Oranga Tamariki] have regard to mana tamaiti (tamariki) and the whakapapa of Māori children and young persons and the whanaungatanga responsibilities of their whānau, hapū, and iwi.*

Māori and Pacific identities were a pillar of strength for many young people. Their identities provided them with a sense-of-belonging and stability although their historical and current living situations may have been transient.

*But as I got older, it's like, wow, when you really have something to lean back on, or to like, you know, fall back on when it comes to like hard times in life and you know that your culture is always going to be there for you. (Young person)*

Connections with culture, particularly Te Ao Māori and connections with whānau, marae and tūrangawaewae were identified in the Ngā Haerenga report as a key enabler for several rangatahi Māori. These connections were seen as important to enable rangatahi to have a strong cultural identity, and, as with tauiwi, to have links to employment and study opportunities, to have access to safe and supportive housing and to support mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Kaupapa Māori TS partners recognise the importance of giving young people the opportunity to learn their whakapapa and connect with whānau. Providing the opportunities to (re)connect young people with their cultures (whakapapa, language, cultural traditions, dance) contributes to strengthening their identity.

*... some of the work that they're doing with young people is actually taking them back so they can stand on their land. (Oranga Tamariki)*

*... some of our kaupapa Māori partners ... have Māori healing and counselling in-house and working with whānau and it might be quite different to traditionally how we might look at some of that sort of family therapy, trauma counselling. And probably a lot more useful. (Oranga Tamariki)*

Effective transition support is an important mechanism to reducing disparities between Māori and non-Māori. In response to Just Sayin'2, 52% of rangatahi Māori were supported by either a Māori TS partner or transition worker. Of those not supported by a Māori TS partner, 23% would like to be. Although some said it made no difference as long as they trusted their transition worker, many provided examples of the benefits for them of being supported by Māori:

*Being able to connect, and understanding each other's values.*

*Helps me learn about my culture.*

*They actually understood everything I said. They understood.*

*In general, when you have a Māori support person, there are differences in relationship, they're able to understand from multiple perspectives. Tikanga; bringing kai and taking off shoes. Not just there to tick the boxes. Different impression, more welcoming.*

*Way more caring, they've got aroha. They're true to who they're trying to be and who they are. They really care and will try to get stuff done. You don't just feel like a piece of paper ... You feel like their equal. They treat you like a real person.*

## 6.8. Young people feel more listened to and better understood

*Goal - The provision of transition support outside of a statutory social worker contributes to a young person feeling listened to and understood*

Mana Tamaiti describes the elements of quality practice as including contact with rangatahi, respectful, honest and clear communication and taking into account what tamariki say and involving whānau. In response to Just Sayin'2, just over three-quarters (78%) felt they had a say in important decisions in their lives and 81% that their transition worker understood the kind of support they needed.

Including young people's voices	Just Sayin'	Just Sayin'2 <sup>33</sup>
Do you feel you get to have a say in important decisions about your life? (3-most of the time, to 4-all of the time, on 4-point scale)	82%	78%
Do you think your Oranga Tamariki social worker understands what kinds of support you need after you leave care (% yes)	64%	65%
Do you think your transition worker understands what kinds of support you need? (% yes)	89%*	81%

A smaller proportion of young people considered their Oranga Tamariki social worker understood what kinds of support they needed after turning 18. A dominant theme in response to the Just Sayin'2 question : "How could Oranga Tamariki make changes to better hear your views about the supports you need?" was to listen. Examples of young people's suggestions include:

*Have a better communication relationship.*

*LISTEN TO THE KIDS Be more considerate towards the kids and remember what they have to face.*

*Listen to me and not go behind my back and make decisions for me.*

*Actually giving me answers for questions I might ask that are crucial to moving into independence.*

<sup>33</sup> Just Sayin' survey findings include Just Sayin' 16 (with the exception of percentages with an asterisk) and exclude young people currently in a Youth Justice residence.

*I just would like the tamariki to be more involved with the hiring of new social workers. The tamariki are the ones who have to interact and trust them so should have more of a say in who gets the jobs.*

*Take in what the children say more rather than what the adults have to say because the children's voice is what's most important.*

*Being more supportive and involved when the person needs it. Having better and more communication. Not taking on a case/file if the worker isn't able to support and be there for all the people in care.*

## 7. Overview of progress

Progress is summarised against the programme intentions outlined in the Collated Budget Bids document provided to the TS Advisory Group.

### **Programme intent: Delivering a Transition Support Service that will improve wellbeing outcomes for young people leaving care or Youth Justice**

The TS model was designed to fill an identified gap. A new service has been established comprising 63 Transition Service partners and 121.25 transition workers.

### **Programme intent: A new resource has been established that sits outside of Oranga Tamariki.**

The TS model was co-designed with the NGO sector including the partners who would deliver the service. The aim of contracting transition support to NGO and iwi partners was to provide a separation from Oranga Tamariki and to have services delivered by a workforce with a youth focus and capability to work with this group.

The use of TS partners is an effective model because:

- It provides a fresh start with a trusted adult for young people who have not had a positive care experience.
- It provides support towards independence for young people who have had positive support from Oranga Tamariki and need further support to transition towards independence.
- TS partner choice in some localities enables a fit between young people and TS partners. This is particularly important for those young people who value support from a kaupapa Māori partner.

The model was developed as a flexible model that could develop in response to findings. The Transition Support team has focused on provider capability and capacity building to grow the service.

**Programme intent: Support is underpinned by a relationship-based model that meets the needs of most young people.**

While many young people have a positive experience of being in care, many do not feel they have had a positive experience. During their time in care young people have an estimated average 5.5 caregivers and 9 social workers<sup>34</sup>. Building trust with a new provider is challenged by experiences of uncertainty and instability. Interviews with young people and information from the 2021 Just Sayin' survey demonstrates that young people supported by a transition worker agreed their transition worker:

- Does what they say they will do (81%)
- Is there when the young person needs them (80%)
- Feel they can talk to their transition worker about their worries (78%).

However, some young people decline transition support from a TS partner. Some are supported by their whānau and/or foster family and others are supported by the Transition Support Helpline.

Young people are mobile and continuing to develop communication and understandings between the TS partners is important in not losing touch with young people who move. Youth Justice staff recommended the development of a database of TS partners so that could learn who was available outside of their geographic area.

Stable relationships are important in a relationship-based service so enabling a secure TS partner workforce is important in supporting young people through transition.

**Programme intent: Start planning and preparation early while young people are still in care or custody.**

Based on qualitative data, the QPT and the Just Sayin' surveys, planning and preparation appear to not be starting early enough to enable good conversations about what young people need when they leave care. Transition workers are also not being included early enough. Early involvement of a transition worker allows time for them to build relationships and establish trust with a young person.

Oranga Tamariki planning and assessment processes are the weakest part of the Transition Service and care standards are not being met. Interviewed stakeholders provided a range of views about why planning and assessment were not happening as intended but there was general consensus that effective processes were associated with:

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<sup>34</sup> Harding, S (2018). Understanding the transitions population: Multi-analysis of the transition cohort of young people and young adults, to inform the service design of transition support. Oranga Tamariki: Wellington. Unpublished analysis of the 2001 birth cohort. Cited from the Cabinet paper.

- Strong leadership that supported the transition process
- A transition co-ordinator, transition champion or other dedicated transition resource at a site.

Establishing a dedicated transition co-ordination role within Oranga Tamariki maintains the separation with the TS partners. Transition worker responsibilities and early engagement could be increased as long as that clear separation remains for young people.

**Programme intent: Provides or facilitates a range of housing supports for young people where this is needed.**

The main accommodation options provided for young people transitioning out of care are:

- Supported Accommodation provided by Supported Accommodation partners. Supported Accommodation capacity has increased from 47 at the end of June 2020 to 107 at the end of June 2021<sup>35</sup>, however, demand exceeds the places available.
- ETRR is the main type of accommodation support funded as part of the Transition Service. There is a quarterly target of 80 which is not achieved.

Young people leaving care are mobile, and many said they lived or would live somewhere different when they left care. Conversations about where young people would live were recalled by 32% of those still in Oranga Tamariki care and 45% of those who had left care.

A substantial proportion of the remaining young people may have safe and stable living arrangements with whānau or foster families, but at least 9% were living rough, couch surfing or similar. Housing shortages for young people have been raised in every evaluation as a major challenge for young people transitioning from care. Young people leaving Youth Justice residences were often linked with a Supported Accommodation partner but demand exceeds supply and some were disconnected from whānau and had nowhere to go.

**ETRR** may not be the best model in Aotearoa New Zealand settings. Young people may be more mobile than in the United Kingdom countries ETRR was modelled on. Oranga Tamariki are working with the Ministry of Social Development and Housing and Urban Development to explore housing options for young people. Safe, stable housing underpins many health, education and wellbeing outcomes for young people. There is an opportunity to develop more and innovative housing options. Some ETRR budget could be diverted to other housing options.

Returning to whānau was a huge drive for many young people. Whānau may not be approved caregivers. However, the potential for whānau focused support and the

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<sup>35</sup> CYRAS

extent to which intensive outreach services can effect change could be explored. The Ministry of Health has trialled intensive outreach services for parents with addiction issues who have young children. Whānau have been able to make changes and improve their parenting. Evaluation of these pilots has highlighted that the participants have never received positive parenting. Parenting education alongside a breadth of other support for addiction and social issues has strengthened whānau and enabled them to have their children returned from Oranga Tamariki care.

**Programme intent: Provides or brokers advice, assistance, and services and responds to reasonable requests for financial assistance.**

Financial assistance has been provided through the NCC for a range of supports for young people. TS partners can also provide financial support but it has taken longer for them to adapt their processes to the flexibility Oranga Tamariki has for the Transition Service. Financial support has been a valuable tool to support a range of needs, including travel to reconnect with whānau.

**Programme intent: Provides after-hours crisis support.**

Numbers of calls to the Transition Support Helpline have been increasing with 2,016 calls in the last quarter.

**Programme intent: The Transition Service needs to have regard for mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga.**

Almost two-thirds of young people eligible for transition support are Māori. A focus on increasing the number of kaupapa Māori and Pacific partners through new approaches to procurement and strategic investment is enabling support that has regard for mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga.

In response to Just Sayin'2, 40% of Māori rangatahi were supported by a Māori TS partner and 52% by either a Māori TS partner or a Māori transition worker. Of those not supported by a Māori TS partner, 23% would like to be. Many gave examples of the benefits for them.

Increased investment in kaupapa Māori partners and whānau-focused support that meets the needs of rangatahi Māori is likely to reduce disparities in outcomes for young people from different ethnic groups leaving care.

**Programme intent: Have regard for young people's views and take these into account in services and policy.**

In response to the Just Sayin' surveys, most young people (82% in Just Sayin' and 78% in Just Sayin'2) felt they had a say in important decisions about their lives all or most of the time. However, the main way they considered Oranga Tamariki support could be improved for them was by listening to them more.

**Programme intent: Maintain contact to age 21 and provide advice and assistance to age 25.**

Maintaining contact with young people if they do not have a transition worker will be the role of the NCC. A challenge to be addressed is how to support young people who need ongoing support. This group will include those with high and complex needs who will not be eligible for support from other agencies. Provision of advice and assistance to young people aged 21-25 was not the focus of this evaluation as few young people have reached 21 by end of June 2021.

7.1. Challenges and opportunities

Challenges	Opportunities
<b>System level issues</b>	
<p>Lack of data to inform service development by providing information about the way young people are supported, the assessment and intervention models used, and what aspects work and for whom.</p>	<p>Data challenges are both with Oranga Tamariki systems and with the need for more information from TS partners.</p> <p><i>Because there's lots of those care standard elements that aren't actually recorded in CYRAS, we have to rely on assurance to actually see performance and so I think there's more work to do on the assurance framework to make sure that that's adequate. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p> <p>Working with TS partners to develop reporting templates, build an understanding of the value of individual level data and build trust about how that data would be used by Oranga Tamariki. Involvement of third-party providers and the use of de-identified data may be required. Initial development could focus on a sample of TS partners with electronic case management systems.</p> <p><i>I think if we had proper systems in place. There are some things that we do that just don't have any value. And if we had data, we could be like, 'oh right', and then there would be other things that are really effective and we could concentrate our resources on them. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p>
<b>Oranga Tamariki processes</b>	
<p>Improving contact information to enable contact to be maintained</p>	<p>Social workers may have good contact details for the young people they support. However, contact information is not being consistently recorded or updated in CYRAS.</p>
<p>Improving preparation and planning processes</p>	<p>Understanding more about the barriers and facilitators for sites to improve planning and preparation. Responses to learnings many include the establishment of dedicated transition social worker roles.</p>

	<p><i>There is a frustration about I can't understand why sites haven't embraced it. Those that haven't. Yeah, because it's like, oh my god, here's this incredible service was people who do such a good job. Make your life easier. It's a no brainer. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p>
Increasing Oranga Tamariki social worker awareness of the TS	<p>Time has passed since the establishment of the TS. There is an opportunity to consider ways to communicate the benefits of transitions, where processes could be strengthened, and to improve the clarity of information to social workers. This could be part of a relaunch to promote the TS.</p>
<b>TS Partners</b>	
Understanding practice to enable feedback to inform continuous development and to provide quality assurance across partner delivered services.	<p>Information from TS partners would inform the development of quality standards. In keeping with the TS kaupapa, it is essential that quality standards are developed with TS partners, young people and whānau, that they include kaupapa Māori approaches and recognise cultural expertise, and they are used as a capability building process.</p> <p><i>I've been engaging with Ara Taiohi and VOYCE to look at them doing a participatory approach to develop some quality standards. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p>
TS workforce supply	<p>TS partners are competing with each other and with Oranga Tamariki and other agencies for workforce. It is important that TS partners have adequate funding to pay competitive salaries and secure contracts so they can employ people into permanent roles.</p> <p><i>I worry that [the TS] is taking kaimahi from other services that we don't fund so well, like social workers in schools. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p>
<b>The Transition Support model</b>	
Housing options for young people	<p>Low take-up of ETRR suggests it may not meet the needs of young people in Aotearoa New Zealand to the same extent as it has in the United Kingdom. Caregiver supply is also a challenge for young people who might wish to take up ETRR.</p> <p>There is a need for a wider range of housing options. Shifting ETRR funding towards other housing options including more Supported Accommodation places, may reduce housing barriers to transition.</p>

<p>Extending support to whānau and siblings</p>	<p>Recognising the importance of whānau and siblings and the drive for some young people to return. Successful transition will require a focus on rebuilding whānau relationships.</p> <p><i>At what point can a young person decide that they want to be supported by that person, and they may have been their ex meth addict or they may have not been such a good person in their time. But I believe I can get the support that I require from this person. And I just need a bit of support for that to happen. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p> <p><i>I think we've had a few [cases] where one sibling is eligible for the service, and another is not, but really trying to push for them both to get the service, for there to be an exception to the eligible so that we're keeping them together ... I feel like it almost should be like if someone in the family is entitled to transitions, all of the tamariki in the family should be entitled. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p>
<p>Strategies to support mobile young people</p>	<p>A database of TS partners would enable social workers to communicate and connect with TS partners out of their region to support young people who planned to move after leaving care.</p> <p><i>There's a bit of movement. I think there's a better process now around how to transfer them between providers so that the provider who made the referral knows that a safe pair of hands has got the young person at the other end. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p>
<p><b>Responding to identified gaps</b></p>	
<p>Young people with high and complex needs</p>	<p>Supporting young people with high and complex needs was noted as a focus area to be addressed after the base TS was in place. A high intensity service was considered that would provide a high intensity of support across all services and all need levels. It would include a dedicated workforce, lower case ratios that vary by need (1:5-1:15), a high level of financial assistance and supported housing provision.</p> <p>For TS partners and Oranga Tamariki social workers, there is capability building required to understand how to support young people with high and complex needs.</p> <p><i>We have to work really differently. And I think there just isn't enough knowledge in our workforce. (Oranga Tamariki)</i></p> <p>Some TS partners with expertise in supporting young people with complex needs and residential homes are available in a few locations. Partners with expertise may be able to have a role in building capability of others.</p>

Interfaces with other government agencies	
Streamlining interfaces with other government agencies.	Young people’s access to transition needs such as health support, education, housing all require interfaces with other government agencies. Further work is required to ensure young people leaving Oranga Tamariki care are not disadvantaged in accessing these services. Formalised mandates for cross-sector working may be required.
Organised advocacy to better hear the voices of young people with care experience.	Continuing to support organisations that provide advocacy for young people leaving care. New Zealand has VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai <sup>36</sup> that provides support and advocacy for young people with care experience, and the Ministry of Social Development Youth Service – Ratonga taioho <sup>37</sup> that provides support and advice to all young people.
Building private sector and local government support.	<i>Overseas local government do things like giving free bus passes, free trips to swimming pools, you know, that kind of thing. Private sector sponsoring a child until into a flat or something. (Oranga Tamariki)</i>

<sup>36</sup> <https://voyce.org.nz/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.youthservice.govt.nz/>

## 7.2. Further development of the Transition Service

Although the scope of transition support has been widened, it is not fully implemented. Full roll-out to young people leaving care has another year to go and most eligible young people have not yet aged past 21.

The need to consolidate achievements and strengthen the foundation was also noted.

*I think we do have a risk [from growing too much at once], particularly as we are across the organisation expanding quite quickly with some of our kaupapa Māori partners. (Oranga Tamariki)*

There is more to understand about how TS partners support young people. While some young people may just need a trusted adult to support them, others need more specialised assessments and interventions.

Many also noted uncertainty around the planned restructure of Oranga Tamariki and the new operating model and how any shifts in thinking would affect implementation particularly the planning and assessment aspects.

*I think the principal risk is probably with all of the change going on across the organisation. It's, I think we need to guard against this [planning] getting even worse. (Oranga Tamariki)*

## Appendix 1: The evaluation of the Transition Service

The evaluation of the TS is run 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).

An evaluation advisory group has been established by the Evidence Centre. Advisory group members are asked to share their knowledge and expertise to make the evaluation as useful as possible for the TS partners and clients<sup>38</sup>.

The TS evaluation is a system-level evaluation that comprises all aspects of the TS. The evaluation approach comprises:

- Implementation monitoring to explore the extent initiatives are implemented and operating as intended, who is participating, what resources are being utilised and how
- Process evaluation to investigate the delivery of particular processes and practices in-depth
- Outcomes evaluation exploring the outcomes being achieved by individual service elements
- Impact evaluation exploring the impact of the new TS on the longer-term outcomes for young people.

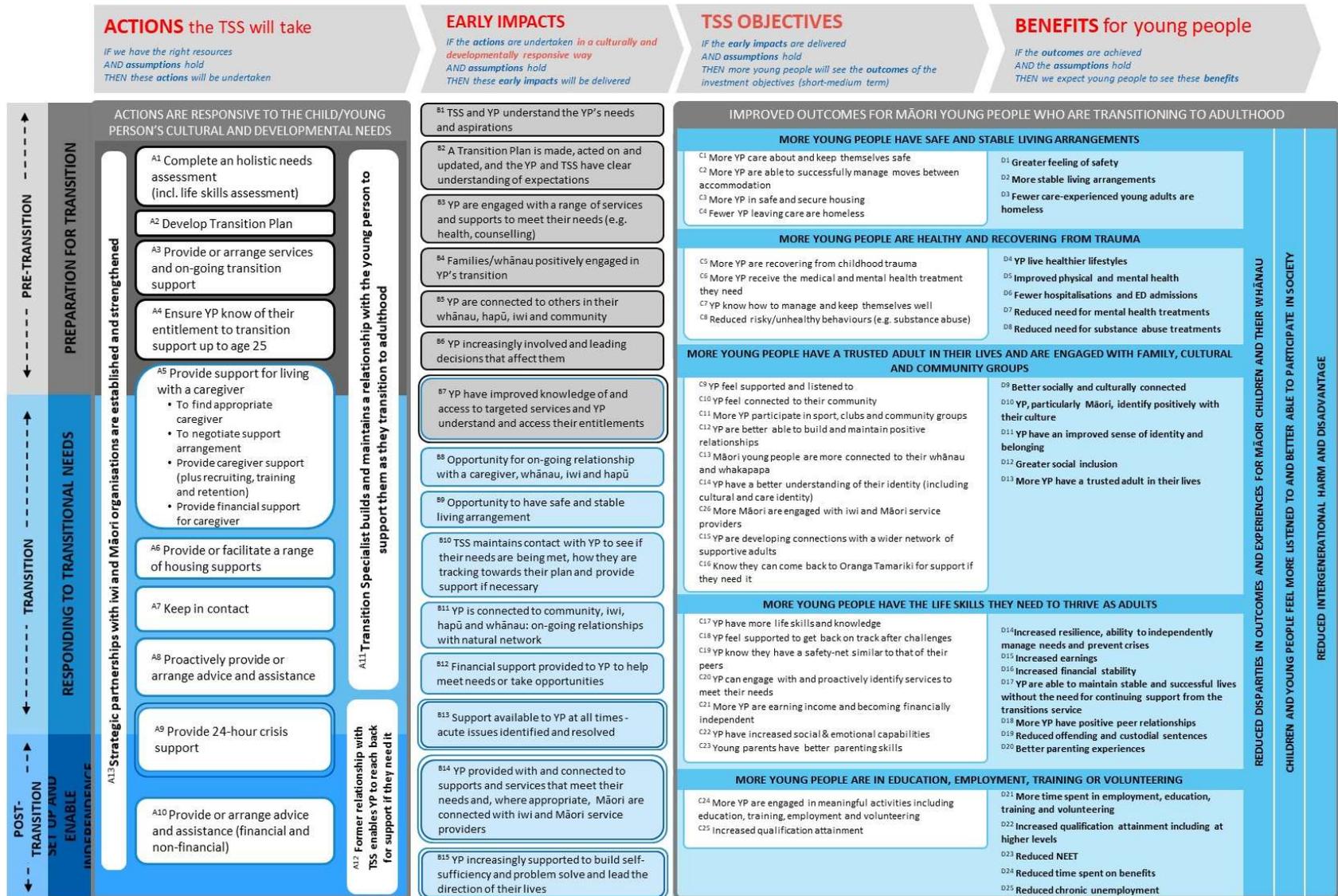
### **The TS logic model provides the theoretical foundation for the evaluation.**

A logic model developed by the Transition Support Service and an evaluation plan developed by the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre provide the foundation for the evaluation approach. Evaluation priorities are reassessed annually and the evaluation adapted to respond to changing needs for information.

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<sup>38</sup> Advisory group terms of reference

# TRANSITION SUPPORT SERVICE (TSS) - INTERVENTION LOGIC



## Evaluation questions

Key evaluation questions were set out in the original evaluation plan. The evaluation activities are linked to the evaluation questions with a focus on the three elements of transition support: preparing for transition, responding to transitional needs<sup>39</sup>, setting-up and enabling independence.

Evaluation questions	Evaluation activities to date	Planned evaluation
What is best practice in existing transition support services? Are the services fit for the cohort as we have learned more? Have any gaps emerged?	Literature reviews, jurisdictional review of housing options. Ngā Haerenga, Just Sayin', TS partner interviews, interviews with young people, interviews with stakeholders.	Provider case studies. Ngā Haerenga longitudinal interviews.
How is service delivery operating in practice and how can processes be improved?	Transition planning: Just Sayin', QPT, Stakeholder interviews. Transition: Interviews with TS partners and young people, Supported Living providers. Maintaining contact: Contact Centre data. ETRR formative evaluation.	Ngā Haerenga longitudinal interviews. Analysis of regional data. Quality assessment of transition plans. Provider case studies. Just Sayin'3.
What are the needs, experience and challenges for young people leaving care over the medium term (2-4 years)?	Just Sayin', TS partner interviews, interviews with young people.	Thematic reports combining qualitative information with Just Sayin' and CYRAS data for rangatahi Māori, young Pacific, young people in unstable housing, Rainbow young people, Young people leaving YJ residences, young people with high and complex needs, young parents. Just Sayin'3.
Do young people feel listened to and supported?	Just Sayin', interviews with young people.	Just Sayin'3.

<sup>39</sup> Rangatahi may move between independence and support as it suits their needs – the support remains available even if they move to independence before the age of 21.

What short to medium-term outcomes are being achieved through participation in individual programmes and services? For which populations are they most effective?	Just Sayin', interviews with young people. CYRAS data.	Thematic reports of Just Sayin' and qualitative data Just Sayin'3. Year 4 Impact analysis.
What are the impacts on high-level, longer-term outcomes, including TS investment objectives and Mana Tamaiti objectives?	Interviews with rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people	Thematic reports of Just Sayin'. Māori and Pacific TS partner case studies. Just Sayin'3. Comparison of Just Sayin'2 with National Youth Health and Wellbeing data.
How effectively are we addressing needs, enhancing experiences and improving outcomes for Māori (including relative to non-Māori)? How effective is the service at meeting the needs of Pasifika young people?	Interviews with rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people.	Thematic analysis of Just Sayin'. Interviews with Māori and Pacific TS partners. Just Sayin'3.

### Information to inform this report

- A document review of key policy documents
- Quantitative data from CYRAS provided by the Transition Support team to the end of May 2021
- A September 2020, thematic review of the key elements of practice with rangatahi eligible for transition to adulthood services. The review was completed by the Oranga Tamariki Professional Practice Group (PPG) using a Quality Practice Tool (QPT). This QPT assessed 272<sup>40</sup> selected cases against criteria derived from the Care Standards.
- Annual Just Sayin' surveys of young people eligible for a transition worker (Appendix 3):
  - 2020 Just Sayin': 165 responses
  - 2021 Just Sayin': 331 responses
  - Note: This does not include young people who were in Youth Justice residences at the time of the survey who completed the survey (2020: 20 responses, 2021: 24 responses)

<sup>40</sup> 272 responses from 404 cases. A response rate of 67%.

- Synthesis of key information from evaluation reports completed by Malatest International and by the Evidence Centre team (Appendix 2):
  - Formative evaluation of Entitlement to Remain or Return
  - Evaluation of the Supported Living pilots
  - Provider profiles – interviews with TS partners
  - Qualitative exploration of the needs of young people transitioning from Youth Justice residences
  - Qualitative exploration of the needs of rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people transitioning from Oranga Tamariki care
  - Jurisdictional literature review of accommodation support
  - Phase 1 findings from Ngā Haerenga: Voices of rangatahi anticipating the move from Statutory Care to self-determined living<sup>41</sup>.
- Interviews with key people at Oranga Tamariki including:
  - Director - Transition Support
  - Insights and Data Manager Transition Support
  - Service Manager Transition Support
  - Service Manager Transition Support, National team
  - Commissioning Manager - Rangatahi
  - Policy manager, Policy and Organisational Support.

## Ethics

Evaluation components involving interviews with Oranga Tamariki frontline staff, TS partners and rangatahi were reviewed by Oranga Tamariki ethics experts or an alternative ethics committee. Evaluation adhered to the ANZEA principles.

The focus of the rangatahi voice in the evaluation was limited to those 16 years and older, as the group approaching transition to adulthood.

## Preparing for an impact analysis

The eval plan includes an impact analysis at the end of year 4 to examine the difference the TS has made. The role of the impact assessment is to assess the extent to which the investment in the programme has caused a change in social or economic outcomes. This involves trying to isolate the extent to which support from the Transitions Service has changed outcomes, isolating this from the effects of

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<sup>41</sup> The Ngā Haerenga Research Rōpū: Ria Schroder, Catherine Love, Debbie Goodwin, Sarah Wylie, Louise Were, Cheyenne Scown, Eugene Davis, Dan Love, Hami Love and Damian O’Neill.

anything else that may have changed that outcome. To do this it will be necessary to identify counterfactual scenarios.

The Children’s Wellbeing Model is central to an impact assessment or evaluation. The IDI can provide the main data needed (e.g. employment, benefit, education, justice), and will enable actual data to look at real outcomes. The caveat would be around timing since data available in the IDI would relate to early in the implementation of the TS.

Given the impossibility of any form of randomised control trial, we could compare outcomes for:

- A cohort who would have been eligible for transitions if it had existed (i.e. they aged out before the service existed)
- The cohort who have been eligible for transitions.

There is no current specific marker in the IDI for people who have been referred to the TS. However, since the impact assessment is designed to look at the impact of the investment of the service as a whole rather than outcomes for individuals, it is not necessarily a major issue if it is not possible to identify those who have participated in the programme. This approach will require controlling for external factors (e.g. economic conditions at the time of aging out).

It would also be possible to examine the extent to which outcomes gaps between the eligible cohort and the wider population have reduced.

If it proves possible to identify the cohort in the IDI, it becomes possible to use techniques such as Difference-in-Difference analysis comparing those who have been supported by the service and those who have opted not to take part (assuming the latter group is large enough for valid analysis).

The major challenge is the availability of data that can be used in an impact analysis. At a population level, the baseline analysis of data from the IDI that informed the TS Cabinet paper could be repeated.

**Table 9. Population level measures that could be used in an impact evaluation**

	<b>Care or Youth Justice experienced young people are</b>
Offending	Between 20 and 80 times more likely to be involved in serious offending, and between nine and twenty times more likely to be involved in low-level offending.
Benefit receipt	Five to seven times more likely to be on a benefit
Mental health	Three to seven times more likely to access mental health services
Substance abuse	12 to 30 times more likely to access substance abuse services
Hospitalisation	Two to four times more likely to be hospitalised
Education	Half as likely to achieve a tertiary qualification

However, there are risks to this approach:

- It may not have sufficient statistical power to detect the difference the TS has made because young people who have had transition support cannot be identified and their 'exposure' to support is unknown.
- A comparison group of young people with care experience who did not receive transition support can also not be identified. This group may differ substantially from young people who received transition support because a higher proportion may be receiving support from whānau or foster families.

There is the potential to include questions about transition support in future iterations of the National Youth Health and Wellbeing survey. This would enable comparison of a range of wellbeing measures between different groups within the sample.

Preparation work required for the impact analysis includes:

- Defining the focus
- Identifying the intervention groups – exposure (dose), age
- Specifying the comparison groups (general population or young people leaving care without a transition worker)
- Discussing how the outcomes are defined and whether they should be the same for rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people
- Agreeing on what meaningful, measurable benefits are, and the basis for costings.

### **Strengths and limitations of information for the evaluation**

The evaluation is strengthened by the partnership approach and triangulation of information from different sources.

The risk that CYRAS and TS partner administrative data were not of sufficient quality to support robust monitoring and analysis was noted as a potential evaluation risk in the TS Evaluation Plan. Challenges in access to quantitative data have been a major limitation of the evaluation:

- Oranga Tamariki administrative data system CYRAS does not contain the contact details for a substantial proportion of young people eligible for a transition worker. Lack of contact details limits the reach of invitations to participate in surveys and other evaluation activities.
- There is no systematic way of collecting provider data that would inform the intensity and type of support given to rangatahi.

- Ethnicity data – prioritised rather than a total count approach results in undercounting of all ethnic groups other than Māori.

Other challenges include:

- Time has passed since some of the evaluation components have been produced and some information may be dated as the TS has responded to change and grown.
- Lack of a shared understanding of some evaluation terms e.g. outcomes and impact evaluation.
- Information to inform outcomes is sourced from the Just Sayin’ surveys. The first survey was limited by missing contact details and took place just after the COVID-19 lockdowns so may not be typical of young people’s situations. The second Just Sayin’ survey includes a larger sample size which may further limit comparisons to the first survey.

## Appendix 2: Transition Service evaluation reports

The following evaluation reports have informed the synthesis evaluation report.

Malatest International (June 2018). Qualitative process evaluation of the Supported Living Demonstration.

Malatest International (April 2020). Evaluation of the Supported Living extension pilots.

Malatest International (April 2020 – finalised June 2020). Formative evaluation of Entitlement to Remain or Return.

Malatest International (November 2020). Transition Support provider profiles.

Malatest International (June 2021). Qualitative exploration of the needs of young people transitioning from Youth Justice residences.

Malatest International (July 2021). Qualitative exploration of the needs of rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people transitioning from Oranga Tamariki care.

Malatest International (January 2021). Summary report – Survey of rangatahi/young people eligible for a transition worker. Supplemented by findings from the Just Sayin' survey of 16 year olds. <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Just-Sayin-Survey-of-rangatahi-eligible-for-a-Transition-Worker/Just-Sayin-Survey-of-rangatahi-eligible-for-a-Transition-Worker.pdf>

Malatest International (June 2021). Jurisdictional literature review of accommodation support.

Malatest International (June 2021). Just Sayin': Survey of rangatahi eligible for a transition worker. <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/research/our-research/tss/>

The Ngā Haerenga Research Rōpū: Ria Schroder, Catherine Love, Debbie Goodwin, Sarah Wylie, Louise Were, Cheyenne Scown, Eugene Davis, Dan Love, Hami Love and Damian O'Neill. (2021) Phase 1 findings from Ngā Haerenga: Voices of rangatahi anticipating the move from Statutory Care to self-determined living.

## Appendix 3: Just Sayin' details

### Just Sayin':

Just Sayin' has been developed as an annual survey to hear young people's voices about how they are being supported, what difference transition worker support has made for them and to understand their living situations.

The purpose of Just Sayin' is to:

- Provide insights into the services and support young people receive from Oranga Tamariki in the pre-transition phase
- Explore the extent to which young people consider their transitional needs are met and over time, the extent to which they feel enabled to achieve positive changes in their lives
- Establish baseline measures of the key outcomes the TS aims to enable young people to achieve, against which change can be estimated in subsequent years
- Give a vehicle to the voices of young people about their experiences and challenges.

The first annual survey of young people eligible for a transition worker was implemented between May and July 2020. The survey topics were developed based on the priority activities and outcomes in the TS logic model developed by Oranga Tamariki. The survey was reviewed by Oranga Tamariki's ethics advisor and approved prior to the commencement of any work involving young people.

Young people could complete the survey online or by telephone. The survey and all information about the survey was available in English and te reo Māori. Those who completed the survey received a \$25 voucher in recognition of their time.

The survey was completed by 141 young people eligible for support from a transition worker. We removed 20 of these young people who were currently in a Youth Justice residence at the time of the survey as discussed below, leaving a total of 121 young people. They were broadly representative of all young people eligible for transition worker support. Our responses were limited by not being able to reach many young people as their contact details were not recorded in the Oranga Tamariki central database.

A shorter survey was completed by 49 young people not eligible for a transition worker but potentially eligible for transition support who heard about the survey, such as through social media.

More information about the Just Sayin' surveys can be found on the Just Sayin' website [www.Justsayin.nz](http://www.Justsayin.nz)

#### **Just Sayin' – 16-year-olds:**

A similar (but shorter) Just Sayin' survey was run in December 2020 for 16-year-olds. The process was the same as the main survey however the survey only targeted eligible rangatahi. Rangatahi who completed the survey received a \$25 voucher.

The survey was completed by 44 16-year-olds. The results of this survey have been merged with the Just Sayin' 2020 survey to create a sample of 165.

#### **Just Sayin'2:**

Just Sayin'2 is the second iteration of the annual survey and ran in 2021. Data collection began in June and finished at the end of August.

The process for Just Sayin' 2 was the same as for Just Sayin'. Just Sayin'2 was completed by 355 rangatahi of which 24 were in a Youth Justice residence at the time of the survey, these young people were removed from analysis, leaving 331 people.

#### **Youth Justice cohort**

In both 2020 and 2021, we ran the Just Sayin' survey at the four Youth Justice facilities around Aotearoa. The survey was completed by 20 young people in 2020 and 24 young people in 2021. Several questions were inappropriate for rangatahi in the Youth Justice residences and because of the very different circumstances of young people in Youth Justice residences, the findings from this group are analysed and presented separately. Results will be included with qualitative information from interviews with young people and staff in Youth Justice residences.

#### **Cohort comparisons**

Table 10 outlines the demographics of the young people who completed the survey compared to the Oranga Tamariki population. We considered weighting the results of the 2021 Just Sayin' 2 survey to more closely align with the cohort demographics. Weighting was tested for gender and ethnicity and the differences between the weighted sample compared to the unweighted sample were very small (usually 0-1% but up to 3% different for some specific questions). We decided that non-contact bias because we did not have contact details for was a larger factor with an unknown effect. Therefore, it was decided no weighting would be done for the analysis.

**Table 10. Comparison between the Just Sayin' survey cohorts and the characteristics of young people eligible for transition worker support recorded in CYRAS**

		2020 includes 16-year-olds (n=165)	2021 (n=331)	2021 OT cohort (n=2000) <sup>42</sup>
Age	16	27%	18%	24%
	17	30%	25%	25%
	18	33%	28%	22%
	19	5%	19%	20%
	20	5%	9%	8%
	21	0%	2%	0%
Gender	Female	67%	63%	44%
	Male	30%	36%	56%
	Gender diverse	2%	2%	1%
Ethnicity	Māori	42%	51%	57%
	Māori and Pacific	12%	10%	9%
	Pacific	4%	4%	7%
	Other	42%	36%	27%
Region	Te Tai Tokerau		6%	7%
	Auckland		21%	29%
	Waikato		8%	10%
	Bay of Plenty		7%	8%
	Taranaki-Manawatu		13%	9%
	East Coast		15%	9%
	Wellington		9%	7%
	Upper South		5%	3%
	Canterbury		14%	12%
	Lower South		12%	7%
Has a TW	Yes (current)	37%	60%	62%
	Used to	Not asked	17%	

<sup>42</sup> Includes all young people eligible for transition worker support aged 16 and older.