

# Fast Track

## Service Specification

## Publication details

### Acknowledgements

Oranga Tamariki acknowledges the excellent work of all partners and government agencies involved in the Fast Track pilot, with thanks.

### Publication status

16 September 2024: information released to potential partners as part of procurement process

December 2024: published on the Oranga Tamariki website when the service begins

Service specifications will be updated as required – depending on the nature of the update, it may or may not require a contract variation. While Oranga Tamariki will make best efforts to inform all relevant partners of any updates, it is safest to check back to the list of service specifications published on the website, to ensure you are using the current version. All current specifications are published under [Service providers/Information for providers and partners/Service Specifications/Guidelines](#).



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# Section 1: About this service specification

## 1.1 What is the purpose of this service specification?

This service specification is for agencies (partners) that Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) has partnered with to provide the Fast Track service (service) to support tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau.

This service specification forms part of the Outcome Agreement with Oranga Tamariki. It sets out the overarching principles, the responsibilities of each party, and the minimum outcomes to be delivered by the partner through the service. The ways that partners achieve these outcomes will depend on their philosophy, their unique approach, and the needs of tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau they support.

## 1.2 Working together

Both the partner and Oranga Tamariki bring valuable expertise to this working relationship. The parties acknowledge the relationship principles included in the Outcome Agreement Terms and Conditions, which include the commitments to:

- act honestly and in good faith
- communicate openly and in a timely manner
- work in a collaborative and constructive manner
- recognise each other's responsibilities
- encourage quality and innovation to achieve positive outcomes

### 1.2.1 Escalation

If either the partner or Oranga Tamariki has a question or concern about day-to-day working practice, that party should raise this to the other by applying the above relationship principles. Examples of matters raised in this way could include whether the other party has met a responsibility outlined in this service specification, whether an action of the other party is best suited to the service being delivered, or if relationship management between the parties might be helpful.

The preferred method of handling day-to-day questions or concerns is to discuss and handle the matter promptly at a local level through discussion between the staff involved from both parties.

Only then if needed, either party can escalate the discussion to their supervisor. After that, if the matter remains unresolved, either party can escalate the discussion to the party's Relationship/Contract Manager under the Outcome Agreement.

If the question or concern is about the immediate safety of anyone supported by the service, this should be raised and handled immediately. Note also that there are processes for handling an allegation of harm and responding to a critical or serious incident (see section 5).



## 1.3 Definitions

Word or phrase	Definition and comments
kaimahi	The professional staff provided by the partner to deliver this service. Used in this specification to encompass a range of roles, which could include Youth Worker, Senior Youth Worker, Whānau Worker, Social Worker, Navigator, Mentor, Administrator, and so on.
rangatahi	<p>Teenager/s or young adult/s, aged between 14 and 17 (under 18). Refers to young people of all cultures, unless otherwise specified.</p> <p>Used in this specification to refer to rangatahi who have been placed in the aged-14-to-17 cohort of the Fast Track service.</p>
service	Short for “Fast Track service”
tamaiti or tamariki	<p>Child or children, aged between 10 and 13 (under 14). Refers to children of all cultures, unless otherwise specified.</p> <p>Used in this specification to refer to tamariki who have been placed the aged-10-to-13 cohort of the Fast Track service.</p>
team	The multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team assembled to deliver Fast Track in each region, made up of members from government agencies and local iwi and community partners.
whānau	<p>Whānau encompasses the immediate and wider family and support network of the tamariki and rangatahi, including caregivers. It specially includes their siblings, as they are also at risk of offending.</p> <p>Whānau refers to families and whānau of all cultures, unless otherwise specified.</p>

# Section 2: About the service

## 2.1 What is Fast Track?

Fast Track provides a rapid response pathway for tamariki and rangatahi who have come to the attention of the Police and meet specific criteria (for the criteria per age group, see sections 2.2 and 2.3). Recognising that tamariki and rangatahi are embedded in whānau, the service also works closely with and supports the whānau.

Police contact Oranga Tamariki within 24 hours of these tamariki or rangatahi coming to their attention. Within 48 hours, Oranga Tamariki and the Police develop an initial plan on how to support te tamaiti or rangatahi and their whānau.

The Fast Track service is then delivered by a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team (the team), made up of members from government agencies and local iwi and community providers. The team sets up a wrap-around service tailored to the specific needs of each tamaiti or rangatahi, and their whānau, to ensure that relevant supports and tools are employed as soon as possible.

This team works as a collective, with all members responding quickly, collaboratively and flexibly. (See section 3.2 The kaimahi provided by the partner.)

In essence, the service’s purpose is to support tamariki, rangatahi and whānau so that offending and reoffending is reduced, for the wellbeing of the tamariki, rangatahi and whānau involved and also for the greater good of the community and wider society. (See more detail on the outcomes in section 2.5.)

### 2.1.1 Context: from pilot to service

The Fast Track pilot began in the Auckland region in December 2022, for tamariki aged 10 to 13 with serious or persistent offending behaviour. As it achieved highly positive outcomes, the initiative was rolled out to nine locations across the country in 2023. An older cohort was added in some regions, with targeted referral criteria and services for rangatahi aged 14 to 17.

Oranga Tamariki acknowledges the excellent work of all partners and government agencies involved, with thanks, and has reflected on the learnings.

Following the initiative’s success across the country, Fast Track was formalised as a nationwide service from December 2024. This service specification sets out the overarching requirements that are consistent across the country and allows for regional variation in how the service is delivered as appropriate to regional need.

### 2.1.2 Locations and cohorts

Fast Track is delivered as follows.

**Table 1: Locations and cohorts**

Location	Aged 10–13	Aged 14–17
Whangārei	✓	n/a
West Auckland	✓	✓



Central Auckland	✓	✓
South Auckland	✓	✓
Hamilton	✓	✓
Rotorua	✓	✓
Lower Hutt	✓	n/a
Christchurch	✓	✓
Dunedin	✓	n/a

## 2.2 About the tamariki

Fast Track delivers an urgent intervention for tamariki, aged between 10 and 13, who have offended.

These tamariki are referred to the service when the Police consider that their behaviour and/or welfare is of concern as a result of either their serious or their persistent offending. The participation of the tamariki is voluntary, not statutory.

### 2.2.1 What is serious offending?

The definitions include but are not limited to:

1. Where the behaviour of te tamaiti compromises their safety and that of others, either within the group they are with or the general public. Compromise to safety can be determined as in danger of suffering physical, psychological or emotional harm. For example – fleeing driver events either as the driver or passenger.
2. Offences where the maximum penalty available is 14 years or more. For example, aggravated robbery.
3. Where their actions have resulted in excessive damage while committing the offence. For example, “ramraids” or “smash and grabs”.
4. Where te tamaiti has acted within a group that collectively is acting in a “mob” fashion that is enabling an offence to be carried out. For example, robbery or burglary.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Aggravated robbery, aggravated burglary, ramraid/smash and grab burglary
- Aggravated assault, injuries and wounding assaults where weapons are used
- Unlawfully taking a motor vehicle where dangerous driving was a significant factor
- Sexual offending
- Animal cruelty
- Where recklessness of actions had the potential of causing a more significant outcome than what eventuated (such as a passenger in a fleeing vehicle)

## 2.2.2 What is persistent offending?

The definitions include but are not limited to:

1. The continued behaviour of te tamaiti is leading to significant harm of their own welfare.
2. Te tamaiti has been involved in continuous offending over a short period.
3. On initial Police assessment, the attitude of te tamaiti towards their offending leads to the belief that a further pattern of offending would continue and/or intensify.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Recidivist shoplifting, theft from within a vehicle, theft, burglary
- Wilful damage
- Unlawful interference, unlawfully gets into motor vehicle
- Common assaults
- Drug offending
- Disorder

## 2.3 About the rangatahi

Fast Track delivers an urgent intervention for rangatahi, aged between 14 and 17, who may not have offended or may be at a lower level of offending, but whose circumstances are still of concern.

Rangatahi are referred to the service when the Police consider that their behaviour and/or welfare is of concern and that targeted, appropriate interventions will address risk factors and prevent escalation. The rangatahi may be at the lower end of involvement with the youth justice system (but not generally those who have offended only once). In this case, the focus of the service is to offer a prevention and early support approach.

The participation of the rangatahi is voluntary, not statutory.

The criteria for referral include but are not limited to, rangatahi who:

- have no current youth justice involvement or Oranga Tamariki status
- have minimal offending history
- have been arrested but not charged
- committed any offence, to be considered case by case or according to a local decision on tariff of offending
- have aged out from the younger Fast Track cohort
- have siblings in the youth justice system
- have had matters withdrawn from Youth Court for Alternative Action or multi-agency response
- meet regionally-specific criteria for this service (not covered in this specification – partners should consult with their Oranga Tamariki Contract Manager)

There may also be flexibility for the team to work with rangatahi outside these criteria, based on their knowledge of the rangatahi and their whānau, and their assessment that the Fast Track approach would benefit the rangatahi and their whānau.

## **2.4 Duration of the service**

### **2.4.1 How long are tamariki and rangatahi within the service?**

There is no set length to the service, as the types and duration of support provided vary according to the needs, circumstances, and response of the tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau.

### **2.4.2 How do tamariki and rangatahi exit the service?**

#### **Mutually-agreed exit**

Tamariki and rangatahi should exit the service as a result of an agreed and informed discussion involving themselves, their whānau and the team. Their exit should be supported by a mutually-agreed exit plan that includes how to access ongoing supports as needed.

#### **Disengagement**

It is also possible for tamariki and rangatahi to exit the service by disengaging with it. They may either confirm that they are disengaging with it, or just withdraw their engagement.

If any kaimahi within the team are concerned that there might be signs of disengagement, they will bring this concern to the whole team, for the team to discuss and create a plan for re-engagement, as a matter of priority. If the team has attempted contact for six months, with no response, this is considered to be disengagement.

## **2.5 Outcomes**

The following outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau are to be delivered through this service.

It is recognised that the outcomes can only be delivered through the collaborative work of all team members, and that many of these outcomes rely on the input of other agencies. Therefore it is not the role of the partner to guarantee delivery of each of these outcomes – but it is the role of the partner to work collaboratively within the team to advocate for, enable and facilitate progress towards the outcomes.

For the tamariki and rangatahi:

- Reduction in offending and/or reduction in severity or frequency of offending
- Improved/increased pro-social outlook regarding offending
- Engaged in education, training, or employment
- Engaged in positive activities
- Increased cultural/spiritual connections



- Improved relationship with whānau
- Improved physical health/wellbeing

For the whānau:

- Improved life management skills, including in resilience, stress management and parenting
- Sibling engagement in education and other pro-social activities
- Improvement in the meeting of their material needs, including housing, food, entitlements, etc



# Section 3: Roles and responsibilities of the partner and Oranga Tamariki

## 3.1 The partner

### 3.1.1 Organisational management

The partner needs to meet [Social Services Accreditation](#) Level 2, as managed by [Te Kāhui Kāhu](#), and to maintain this approval level. As per this accreditation, the partner manages its own organisational responsibilities, including:

- having appropriate policies and procedures
- upholding its general financial responsibilities, including day-to-day costs and insurances
- complying with all relevant legislation, including section 66K of the Orange Tamariki Act (regarding information sharing)
- recruiting, vetting, training, managing and reviewing its staff, ensuring that kaimahi who deliver this service meet the minimum characteristics, skills, knowledge and attributes outlined in section 3.2
- actively maintaining strong working relationships with other agencies and community supports within its region, to be well equipped to refer and connect tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau to additional supports that are right for them

### 3.1.2 Contractual obligations

The partner is responsible for:

- complying with the Outcome Agreement, which includes all the requirements on the partner outlined in this service specification
- monitoring and recording its performance under this contract, reporting to Oranga Tamariki in the methods and timings detailed in the Outcome Agreement and this service specification (see Section 4: Quarterly reporting)

## 3.2 The kaimahi provided by the partner

The roles and numbers of kaimahi provided by the partner will differ across the service locations, according to regional needs. The roles could include Youth Worker, Senior Youth Worker, Whānau Worker, Social Worker, Navigator, Mentor, Administrator, and so on.

### 3.2.1 Key characteristics of the kaimahi

Regardless of their job title, it is essential that all kaimahi provided by the partner have the personal characteristics and genuinely willingness to:

- work in a collective and collaborative way in the multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team with kaimahi from other agencies, with no set hierarchies



- work in a fluid, flexible way, according to the priorities, needs and resources of any given day
- deliver rapid response, working urgently and intensively, including at short notice, and in evenings, weekends and holidays as necessary to respond to tamariki, rangatahi and whānau needs and availability
- be responsive to needs holistically, including physical, mental and emotional, spiritual, family and social needs, and according to cultural and indigenous models such as Te Whare Tapa Whā
- build positive and trusting relationships with the tamariki, rangatahi and whānau through strong personal skills (empathy, resilience, respect) and professional boundaries
- offer whānau-led practice: “with” not “to” whānau
- build and maintain strong working relationships with other agencies and community supports within the region, to be well equipped to facilitate, refer and connect tamariki, rangatahi and whānau to additional supports that are right for them

### **3.2.2 Minimum requirements for Youth Workers, Senior Youth Workers, Whānau Workers, Social Workers, Navigators and Mentors**

In addition to the characteristics outlined in section 3.2.1, kaimahi delivering this service need to have the following minimum skills, knowledge and attributes. These can be demonstrated in part by holding a relevant, recognised qualification (for example: psychotherapy, psychology, counselling, youth work, social work, family therapy), or by other relevant ways of demonstrating depth of experience.

- Examples of suitable qualifications include the New Zealand Certificate in Youth Work (Level 3 or 4), a Bachelor of Youth Development, a current Practising Certificate and registration with the Social Workers Registration Board, or similar qualifications in a Māori context
- Skilled and experienced in working with high-risk tamariki and rangatahi with offending behaviour and whānau supports that are disengaged
- Experienced in working with tamariki and rangatahi who have a range of care and protection and youth justice statuses and needs, and in contributing to and following their plans relating to these statuses
- Experienced in offering therapeutic support, helping tamariki and rangatahi resolve their emotional, behavioural and psychological issues, and facilitating self-awareness, self-expression and personal growth
- Responsive to all core aspects of identity, which may include culture, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, any cognitive or physical disability, migrant experience and religious or spiritual beliefs
- Experienced in personal dysregulation management, regarding how people manage or control their emotions, impulses and behaviours. This involves strategies to help the tamariki, rangatahi, and whānau develop emotional regulation skills and adaptive coping mechanisms

- Experienced in modelling and supporting pro-social behaviour, in terms of the connections and social relationships that tamariki and rangatahi build to give them a sense of belonging to a community that promotes moral and ethical values
- Offer trauma-informed practice, recognising the impact of past or present exposure to traumatic experiences on the tamariki and rangatahi and their behaviour. This approach aims to empower the tamariki and rangatahi, foster positive relationships, and ensure that interventions are sensitive to individual needs and experiences, to reduce the risk of re-traumatising

### 3.2.3 Working within the multi-agency teams

The make-up of these teams, practical matters as to how the teams are resourced and located, and the availability of facilities and supports in their location, varies across the country.

Teams create their own working models, processes and procedures, including assessment models and incident reporting procedures. It is likely that all members of the team will support each tamaiti, rangatahi and whānau, offering supports in education, health needs, financial entitlements, employment, housing needs and so on, alongside personal and holistic support.

Teams work alongside tamariki, rangatahi and whānau to develop plans and goals that are whānau-led. The kaimahi of the partner is often the face for the whānau, who brings the whānau voice back to the table.

A team approach and considerable flexibility is required of all team members to step in and step up as required, regardless of role. Caseloads may need to be urgently shared, according to resource and circumstances. Solution and strength-focused thinking is necessary to find ways to navigate and resolve system and process barriers.

Working in this way requires strong relationship building, communication and planning within the team. Daily morning meetings are likely (in person or virtual), to learn of and triage any new referrals, review existing cases and plan the activities of the day. Contact will likely continue as needed throughout the day.

The day's activities could include a very wide range of activities, including visiting whānau, accompanying tamariki or rangatahi to an education facility or an activity, transporting them to health or other essential appointments, facilitating a day or holiday programme, leading life skills sessions, and maintaining reporting and case note updating requirements.

Kaimahi of government agencies are likely to still hold their substantive role, meaning that their timings and availability may be reduced. This matter is outside the control and scope of this Outcome Agreement, which is between Oranga Tamariki and the partner.

Kaimahi of partners are expected to be in their Fast Track role fulltime unless otherwise arranged with the Oranga Tamariki Contract Manager.

The work is intensive, for example, the expectation is that contact with tamariki, rangatahi and whānau occurs at least every one to two days initially, to build trust and address immediate needs. This level of intensity will reduce as positive progress is made, and re-intensify if behaviour starts to escalate.

### 3.3 Oranga Tamariki

Oranga Tamariki is responsible for:

- meeting its payment obligations as detailed in the Outcome Agreement
- reviewing the partner’s quarterly reports and raising any requests for further information
- responding quickly to any matters of escalation, or to any reported allegations of harm or of critical or serious incidents that arise during and as a direct result of participation in this service
- raising or escalating any concerns to the partner at any point in time as considered necessary

Oranga Tamariki will work in partnership with the partner for any sharing of learnings, or additional discussions or guidance as reasonably requested by the partner.

# Section 4: Quarterly reporting

## 4.1 Reporting overview

Reporting ensures accountability to Government for the funding provided under an Outcome Agreement. The contractual reporting outlined below is necessary to meet the obligations set out in the Outcome Agreement for this service, and to report what has been achieved.

Partners should note that kaimahi will also be involved in more frequent operational reporting, including through their regular meetings with the team.

Please note:

- The layout of the below reporting material is indicative – an electronic contractual reporting format will be provided
- To maintain tamariki or rangatahi privacy and confidentiality, refer to the young person by their first initial and age, eg John aged 14 is referred to as J14
- Reporting is quarterly, as per the dates in the Outcome Agreement

## 4.2 Reporting measures

1. Number of re-referrals to Fast Track as a result of offending in the last 12 months (or less if te tamaiti or rangatahi was referred less than 12 months ago).

Measured by: Police arrest and referral to the programme records.

2. Number of tamariki and rangatahi involved in education, training, programme or employment for at least 20 hours per week or for the appropriate time set out in their plan in the last 12 months (or less if te tamaiti or rangatahi was referred less than 12 months ago).

Measured by: tamariki and rangatahi Fast Track attendance plans and records from the relevant institutions, endorsed by appropriate representatives of those institutions while on the programme. Can include the weekly set hours with a mentor or other kaimahi that lead up into more formal re-entry and/or sustained education or employment.

3. Number of reports of concern in the last 12 months (or less if te tamaiti or rangatahi was referred less than 12 months ago).

Measured by: reports of concern via the Oranga Tamariki systems while on the programme.

## Section 5: Incident reporting

The kaimahi might be the first person to become aware of an allegation that tamariki or rangatahi in the service have been harmed, or have been involved in a critical or serious incident.

Harm is defined as: “ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation. This includes, but is not limited to, actions or omissions that cause emotional, physical or sexual harm, or sexual harassment.”

Critical or serious incidents include death; suicide attempt; hospitalisation; assault; involvement in the manufacture, cultivation or supply of controlled drugs; wilful property damage; inappropriate sexual behaviour; the use of alcohol or possession or use of Class C drugs; hunger strikes or other serious eating-disorder-related incidents; occasions that involve calling on emergency services for assistance, eg needing the Fire Service to gain access to a rooftop or a locked room; te tamaiti or rangatahi is missing or runaway.

If the kaimahi is with te tamaiti and rangatahi when any of the above occur, or is the first person to become aware of any of the above, their responsibility is as follows.

### **Immediately:**

1. Support the safety and wellbeing of te tamaiti or rangatahi through any essential urgent and appropriate response
2. Alert the rest of the team, and begin the reporting procedures established within the team
3. If te tamaiti or rangatahi has an allocated Oranga Tamariki social worker, phone and speak to the social worker. It is the social worker’s statutory role to carry out the correct processes from that point. If it is not possible to get through to the social worker urgently, speak to someone at the Oranga Tamariki national contact centre, which is open 24 hours on 0508 FAMILY/0508 326 459

### **In the short and medium term:**

- Work with the team to plan and carry out a coordinated response to protect the tamariki or rangatahi, their whānau, and anyone else at risk

**Document ends**