



Previously Malatest International

Second preliminary evaluation report

Military Style Academy Pilot

Community phase

March 2025



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Acknowledgement

The evaluation team wishes to acknowledge the passing of one of the rangatahi participating in the MSA programme. The loss of a young person and their potential has been felt by our team and by the rangatahi, kaimahi and whānau involved in MSA.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of all of the people who contributed their time and energy to contributing to the evaluation.

The TIRIA Evaluation team

April 2025



Executive summary

The Military Style Academy (MSA) is a new initiative aiming to help rangatahi develop new skills and move into education, training or employment

MSA aims to address serious repeat youth offending by helping rangatahi to develop skills to support relationships, health, wellbeing and community integration and to move into education, training or employment.

The MSA Pilot was developed for small groups of serious and persistent youth offenders sentenced to time in a Youth Justice Residence. The Pilot runs from July 2024 to July 2025. It consists of three phases: assessment; a twelve-week residential phase in a Youth Justice Residence; and a nine-month transition back into the community supported by intensive mentorship.

The rangatahi in MSA are aged between 15 and 17, and all are Māori. There have been 11 participants. One elected to leave the programme in the first weeks and was replaced, and another one passed away.

The second preliminary report for the evaluation focuses on rangatahi transitions from the residential phase to the community

The first preliminary evaluation report covered the residential phase including the development of MSA, the composition of the residential phase, what was working well and opportunities to strengthen the residential phase.

This second preliminary report covers the first three months in the community (November 2024 – January 2025). Findings also include reflections on transition preparation during the residential phase.

Early outcomes and the remainder of the community phase will be the focus of a final evaluation report in October 2025 once rangatahi have experienced the full MSA programme. The final report will summarise evaluation findings and provide recommendations to inform future delivery of the MSA and the design and delivery of youth justice programmes.

Though some of the rangatahi have returned to residence, they spent longer in the community than on their previous return to the community

Ending offending behaviour and avoiding returns to residence were the key aims for the MSA rangatahi but stakeholders were realistic about the challenges and timelines to achieve these changes given the profile and histories of the participating rangatahi.

Te Puna Oranga (integral to the new Oranga Tamariki Practice Approach) was used as a complementary framework to the Good Lives Model in the delivery of MSA. The evaluation used Te Whare Tapa Whā as a framework for describing wellbeing changes for rangatahi and how they contribute to the overall MSA Pilot outcomes.



Many rangatahi demonstrated positive changes which can be considered as a foundation for future positive changes in offending outcomes. Changes included involvement in education, work experience and employment, improved wairua and physical health, reconnection with whānau and stable living situations.

Reduction in the seriousness and frequency of offending and spending longer in the community were successes and had been observed for some but not all the rangatahi in the MSA cohort:

- Spending longer in the community. Some rangatahi remained in the community and some had returned to supervision with residence because of either breaching their conditions or alleged re-offending. Preliminary analysis of Oranga Tamariki data showed the MSA cohort spent an average of 41 additional days (median of 31 additional days) in the community following the MSA pilot residential phase than they did in their previous period in the community after a custody order.
- Mentors, Oranga Tamariki kaimahi and stakeholders had observed a reduction in the overall seriousness and frequency of reoffending.

Oranga Tamariki are analysing Police data, which will be included in the final evaluation report. However, it is important to note that the small number of participants means it is unlikely any statistically robust conclusions may be drawn about the impact of the MSA programme on re-offending in comparison to other youth justice residences.

Transition plans, transition hui and establishment of the mentor role and the site social worker role in MSA were the key parts of the design of the transition to the community

The recognition of the importance of the community phase and the transition to the community is reflected in the three-phase design of MSA. The pilot context and high-profile of MSA increased the complexity of transition planning.

The community phase was broadly scoped in the initial planning. Design of the community phase included development of transition plans (My Good Life plans) in the residential phase, and transition hui with rangatahi, whānau and community to finalise a transition plan for each rangatahi. The aims were to set up and prepare rangatahi living situations, ensure basic necessities were in place, identify goals and coping strategies and the support rangatahi needed.

The design and planning for the community transitions phase was delayed by time constraints for implementation of MSA and the need for an initial focus on the residential phase.

Detailed design and planning of the transition phase began late in the residential phase leading to a disconnect between the residential and community phases

The transition process was complex and involved many moving parts and different roles and responsibilities. Involvement of legal processes could also limit the options available and keep some parts of plans uncertain until the last minute.

Although many stakeholders worked hard to compensate delays, the delays impacted the individual transition planning for rangatahi and workforce preparation for transition. Rangatahi, whānau,



mentors and site social workers thought the plans for rangatahi transitions were a good fit for what they wanted and needed and were better than transition plans from other youth justice residences.

However, stakeholders saw a disconnect between the residential phase kaimahi and community kaimahi as a key challenge. Site social workers, whānau, mentors and MDTs had little to no involvement in developing the My Good Life plans that formed the basis for the transition plans resulting from the transition hui. Some stakeholders thought the final transition plans had moved away from the Good Lives Plans rangatahi developed in residence.

Site social workers had key roles in transition and worked well with mentors but did not have enough preparation or capacity

Site social workers were the main point of contact between Oranga Tamariki and rangatahi in the community phase. They were all in existing youth justice social work roles and continued to manage a caseload of other youth justice rangatahi alongside their work with the MSA rangatahi. The key points of difference for MSA site social worker roles, compared to usual youth justice social worker roles were understanding of the Good Lives model, support for rangatahi and whānau, and working intensively with mentors.

Challenges with clarity around the social work role in the residential phase continued into the transition to the community. Limited communication with the MSA residential phase kaimahi meant social workers did not have a good understanding of rangatahi plans or how they had been supported during the residential phase.

A Community of practice was established by Oranga Tamariki for site social workers to provide them with information about the Good Lives plans and their roles. Some stakeholders observed that the MSA cohort and all rangatahi fitting the MSA target group needed specialist therapeutic support informed by experience in transitioning rangatahi from youth justice or prison into the community. The MSA residential phase clinical team were able to provide some therapeutic support, in some cases in person but more often over video call. Site social workers did not have the capacity to continue therapy begun by clinical teams with rangatahi in the residential phase.

Working alongside mentors was key to MSA support for rangatahi and whānau. Time delays had limited opportunities for site social workers and mentors to develop working relationships and ways of working together were still developing. Boundaries between roles were still unclear in this early stage of implementation of the community phase.

Most community mentors formed close relationships with rangatahi and worked intensively to support their transitions

Success of the mentor role depended on establishing a strong relationship with rangatahi. In most cases, the mentors were a good fit with rangatahi. One mentor relationship did not work out because of a mismatch between the rangatahi and mentor styles.

There was also uncertainty about the mentor roles. The number of hours of contact and non-contact time was clear, but it was not clear whether mentors should support whānau, how they should work



with site social workers and how the mentor role would continue if rangatahi return to residence where 30 hours of contact time was not feasible.

Multi-disciplinary teams began with existing Fast-Track groups and were most successful in supporting rangatahi transitions when they shifted to a group tailored to the MSA rangatahi

MDTs were a key element of the transition phase. Each of the regions rangatahi transitioned to had an MDT overseen by the national MDT oversight group. The national group gave regional MDTs access to decision makers across government who could overcome issues regional MDTs encountered in accessing support through local staff. Examples included accessing housing for whānau through Kainga Ora and speeding up access to Work and Income entitlements for rangatahi.

The community organisations already involved in Fast-Track were a starting point to support the regional MDTs. Many of these organisations were relevant to rangatahi transitions and aimed to support both rangatahi and their whānau. However, all three regions found the scope of Fast-Track MDTs were not a good fit for MSA. While the right organisations were involved, the existing groups had a focus on younger rangatahi (13-15 year olds) with less serious offending.

In response, two regions successfully established new groups and/or MDT representation for MSA with a sole focus on the MSA rangatahi. They included mentors and site social workers along with community providers and regional decision makers from Oranga Tamariki and other government agencies. Stakeholders saw the groups in these two regions as success factors for rangatahi. In a third region, the Fast-Track group determined they were not able to provide support to the MSA rangatahi and disengaged.

Transitions from residence represented change in rangatahi structure and support, exposing them to risk factors not present in the residential phase

The intention of the MSA transition process was to bridge the residential and community phases for rangatahi. Bridging the phases required MSA to provide the physical environment rangatahi required (living situations), support relationships and address risk factors associated with reoffending.

Rangatahi exited the residential phase into a range of different living situations. An early challenge was delay in the preparation of living environments and the physical needs identified in the transition plans. Failure to provide the needs identified in the transition plans eroded rangatahi trust as they felt like 'broken promises'. Stakeholders attributed delays to lack of funding availability and too much focus on physical items in transition plans.

Some of the rangatahi exited the residential phase into employment and courses but not all had a main activity pre-planned. Graduating from the residential phase close to the end of the calendar year limited the number of courses available. Mentors and site social workers supported rangatahi to search for the right opportunity. Not having a main activity added risk of boredom and having too much time available.

Like the Oranga Tamariki kaimahi in the residential phase, the MSA programme team, site social workers and mentors demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting rangatahi. They worked intensively to support rangatahi in the weeks immediately following transitions because they saw the



transition as a period of heightened risk and need for their rangatahi. Many mentors worked beyond the scope of their contracts but saw it as an essential part of success for their rangatahi.

Site social workers and mentors worked intensively to support rangatahi and to identify and address risk factors in the community

Rangatahi Good Life plans included thinking about the things rangatahi found triggering and the things that might get in the way of achieving their goals. Mentors and site social workers worked to identify and address factors that created a risk of reoffending for rangatahi.

Risk factors for reoffending behaviour included the lack of structure, connections with mates who engage in and/or encourage offending behaviour, substance use and boredom. Mentors and site social workers worked to support rangatahi and get them involved in positive activities like employment, courses and physical activity.

One of MSA participants passed away early in the transition to the community. This unexpected event had a significant impact on the other rangatahi as they were close to the rangatahi and most had known him before MSA, including longstanding friendships from the community for some. Oranga Tamariki supported all of the MSA rangatahi and their mentors to attend the tangi and offered support through this initial response and funding for further support from a community partner known to rangatahi in the following months.

Whānau of MSA rangatahi were supported, but this did not begin early enough and roles were unclear

A focus on support for whānau was a point of difference for MSA compared to previous experiences with transitions from youth justice residence. Some of the MSA whānau had asked for and not received support in the past.

Interviews provided good examples of whānau engaging with and benefiting from the whānau support. One cluster of whānau accessed a shared parenting and life coach and benefited from their support. Other changes included purchase of new furniture and cleaning up the whānau property. Positive changes for whānau also benefitted rangatahi.

Lack of clarity about responsibility and expectations for whānau support and the fast pace of transition meant relationships and work with whānau were more limited than kaimahi and stakeholders envisaged.

Summary of key messages

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| What worked well | Key learnings |
| Early indications of outcomes | |



| What worked well | Key learnings |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for rangatahi through mentors and the effective MDTs connected with positive outcomes achieved in the community. • Rangatahi spent longer in the community than in their previous transition from supervision with residence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic expectations for rangatahi outcomes included reduction in the frequency and seriousness of offending, spending more time outside residence. • Rangatahi could achieve positive outcomes in their broader wellbeing even where they had returned to residence. |
| Planning and design of the transition to the community | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design for transitions recognised the importance of supporting rangatahi in the community to achieving the programme outcomes. • The community phase included intensive mentoring, support for whānau and community MDTs, which stakeholders saw as strengths compared to the support for transitions out of other youth justice residences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting detailed planning late in the residential phase impacted individual transition planning, bridging the residential and community phases and preparation of kaimahi for their roles in MSA. • Beginning detailed planning for rangatahi transitions earlier would have created more opportunities to bring community kaimahi into rangatahi plans, potentially improving the quality and whānau involvement. • Clear boundaries around what could be included in transition plans and what resources were available needed to be set and communicated consistently. |
| Implementation – roles and responsibilities | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site social workers had access to training through a community of practice to support their roles in MSA. • Social workers wanted to apply their expertise to supporting whānau. • Mentors had an intensive role that allowed them scope to respond to the needs of each rangatahi. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers needed capacity freed up to allow them to participate in training and development and to work in different ways. • Stakeholders advocated for an approach that invested more in preparing social workers for the role and stepping back to let them work. • Clarifying the roles of the mentors and site social workers in supporting rangatahi and whānau would help all kaimahi prepare for and fulfil their roles. • MDTs tailored to individual rangatahi proactively supporting rangatahi and whānau were most effective. |
| Support for rangatahi to transition to the community | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high intensity of support from the community mentors led to strong relationships and was a key point of difference from other youth justice residences. • Site social workers and mentors demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting rangatahi, working intensively to support rangatahi in the weeks immediately following transitions • Most mentors and rangatahi formed close relationships. • Connecting rangatahi with employment or courses right at the point of transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of rangatahi living situations including basic necessities, Work and Income arrangements and a main daily activity could smooth the transitions. • Transitions from residence were changes in most aspects of the day to day lives of rangatahi. They moved out of the structure and access to therapeutic support in the residential phase and were exposed to risk factors and triggers for offending in the community. • Including a ‘step-down’ living arrangement before full independent living or return to whānau could help rangatahi adjust more smoothly. • Rangatahi would likely have benefited from continuing the therapeutic care offered in the |



| What worked well | Key learnings |
|--|--|
| <p>helped rangatahi move into a new structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support addressed risk factors for re-offending and engaged rangatahi with positive activities. | <p>residential phase. Continuing the therapeutic care rangatahi received in residence required a high degree of expertise. Connecting rangatahi with new supports in the community was difficult.</p> |
| Support for whānau | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes for whānau could have positive effects for rangatahi even if they exited residence into independent living. Offering support for whānau was a motivator for rangatahi to participate in MSA. Support for whānau through the life coach, mentor support and access to housing made a positive impact. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whānau support happened at the same time as transitions to the community and after transitions, rather than before. This part of the programme could be strengthened by beginning support for whānau earlier, strengthening the whānau role in transition planning offering a broader range of support. Connecting with whānau was part of the mentor role but organisations who focused on whānau support appeared more able to extend their role from the rangatahi to the wider whānau. |



1. The Military-Style Academy programme (MSA) was a new initiative

1.1. MSA was a pilot emphasising assessment, therapeutic care and support through residential and community phases

In 2024, the New Zealand government developed a Military-Style Academy (MSA) for small groups of serious and persistent youth offenders sentenced to time in a Youth Justice Residence. MSA aims to help rangatahi to develop new skills to support relationships, health, wellbeing and community integration and to move into education, training or employment. Rangatahi are given the option to complete their Youth Residence order in the MSA Pilot facility or a standard Youth Justice Residence.

The MSA Pilot places a strong emphasis on assessment, therapeutic care, case management, health, learning and wellbeing, intensive support in the transition to the community and whānau involvement throughout. MSA has been established as a pilot so that approaches can be trialled and refined in future initiatives.

MSA consists of three phases:

1. **Assessment:** Assessment of rangatahi, including clinical assessments and conversations with whānau.
2. **Residential:** A twelve-week residential phase in a Youth Justice Residence. Activities follow a daily curriculum that includes sessions on vocations, life skills, wellness, physical education and physical activity and/or military-style drills. Individualised plans for transition back into the community are developed for each rangatahi. The residential phase ended in October 2024.
3. **Community:** Nine-month transition back into the community supported by intensive mentorship. Mentors are connected with rangatahi in the residential phase and are the main source of support for rangatahi in the community. Other professionals, including Oranga Tamariki site social workers and a clinical psychologist, continue to provide support.

More details are included in Appendix One.

1.2. Eleven rangatahi participated in MSA

The first MSA pilot was for males only. The rangatahi in the pilot were aged between 15 and 17, all were Māori with two also identifying Pacific and New Zealand European whakapapa. The pilot runs from July 2024 to July 2025. There have been 11 participants:

- Nine began and completed the full residential phase
- One began the residential phase but elected to leave MSA two-weeks into the residential phase.
- One entered MSA to replace the rangatahi who left.

One rangatahi passed away early in the community phase.



2. This evaluation of MSA

2.1. The evaluation focused on planning, implementation and the contribution to change

The preliminary evaluation of the MSA Pilot focuses on how the pilot has been implemented, what has been delivered, and early outcomes. The key evaluation questions focused on:

- Planning: How well did the MSA design align with the objectives?
- Implementation: How was the MSA implemented? What was learnt during implementation?
- Changes: To what degree did the MSA pilot contribute to meaningful change, including short-term outcomes?
- Conclusions: What factors are key for a future MSA programme?

2.2. This report focuses on rangatahi transitions to the community

The first preliminary evaluation report covered the residential phase and focused on the development of MSA, the composition of the residential phase and what was working well and opportunities to strengthen the residential phase. There will be a final report in October 2025 to describe findings from the remainder of the community phase and focus on the evaluative conclusions.

2.3. The evaluation foundations are a logic model and evaluation framework

Oranga Tamariki developed intervention logic models for MSA in parallel with the design and development of the programme. The evaluators built on these earlier versions to develop a logic model to support the evaluation. Te Whare Tapa Whā provides a framework for describing early outcomes for rangatahi and how they contribute to the overall MSA Pilot outcomes. It is used in the logic model (Appendix Two).

The logic model provided the basis for development of an evaluation framework, which unpacked the evaluation aims into high-level questions, sub-questions, indicators and information sources. It is included in Appendix Three. The evaluation framework is partially covered in this second preliminary report. The final report will address the evaluation framework in full.

2.4. Data collection included interviews with rangatahi, whānau, kaimahi and stakeholders

The evaluation sourced information from interviews with a range of Oranga Tamariki stakeholders, kaimahi, mentors and community providers. MSA rangatahi and whānau were all invited to have their voices included in the evaluation. Table 1 provides an overview of the information collected for this report.

Data collection for this preliminary report built on interviews completed for the first preliminary report. The evaluation data collection took place through the early stages of the transition to the community in November and December but was primarily completed three to four months after the transition to the community.



Table 1. Information sources for the second preliminary report.

| Information source | Transition to the community data collection |
|--|---|
| Tangata whenua | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One group interview with the residential phase tangata whenua |
| Engagement with rangatahi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with seven rangatahi - completed in the community (1) or in residence (6) |
| Engagement with whānau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with five whānau |
| Interviews with Oranga Tamariki leadership, stakeholders and other clinical advisory group members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with ten Oranga Tamariki and other stakeholders |
| Interviews with Oranga Tamariki site social workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with nine site social workers |
| Interviews with mentors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with eight mentors |
| Interviews with partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with three community partners |
| Review of documentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rangatahi profiles and documents updated for the transition phase MSA documentation, for example clinical advisory group information packs and published documents describing MSA |
| Analysis of Oranga Tamariki data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oranga Tamariki provided figures on how long rangatahi spent in the community after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their last transition from supervision with residence prior to MSA Their transition from the MSA residential phase into the community. |

2.5. Strengths and limitations

The evaluation was strengthened by:

- A theoretical foundation and information from different sources (a mixed methods approach)
- A kaupapa Māori approach that provided rangatahi and whānau with confidence that their perspectives and contexts were understood by the evaluators
- A consistent evaluation team enabling relationships to be built with rangatahi
- A collaborative approach with Oranga Tamariki and the MSA kaimahi.

MSA includes a small number of rangatahi and whānau so any quantitative and qualitative evidence for the evaluation is therefore based on small numbers.

Although the evaluators engaged with rangatahi and whānau, taking part in the evaluation was voluntary and some rangatahi did not want their whānau included to avoid placing additional burden on their whānau.

The exact number of rangatahi who have returned to supervision with residence or remained in the community are not included in this report to protect the privacy of individual rangatahi. Analysis of this data will be included in the final evaluation report.



3. The extent the MSA pilot is contributing to meaningful changes

This section describes the evidence of early outcomes achieved by rangatahi through the transition to the community phase and includes wellbeing outcomes as the foundation for changes in reoffending.

3.1. No re-offending was an ideal outcome, but stakeholders saw reduced severity and frequency of offending and spending longer in the community as successes

Kaimahi and stakeholders were concerned about the impact of unrealistic public expectations on the rangatahi and kaimahi. While ending offending behaviour and avoiding returns to residence were part of the ideal outcome, Oranga Tamariki and other stakeholders had a clear view that this was not realistic for the whole cohort given the profile and histories of the participating rangatahi and the MSA timeframes.

Their definitions of success for MSA, looking across the cohort, included:

- **A small number of the rangatahi not returning to residence:** Oranga Tamariki stakeholders considered that disrupting a trajectory to adult prison and avoiding a return to residence for even a small number of the rangatahi would be an achievement for the programme.

I can sleep well at night because we've got [some] young men still in community on a journey, yeah, and that for me, is success, right? And the other young men, we have not given up on ... (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- **Reduced severity and frequency of offending:** Mentors, Oranga Tamariki kaimahi and stakeholders thought a reduction in the seriousness and frequency of offending would be a marker of success.

Well, it's probably reduction in the seriousness of their offending. And probably frequency. Probably frequency, severity and type and obviously also the other side of it. (Stakeholder)

In terms of [rangatahi]'s offending, we've seen a decrease, he hasn't gone up back up to violent offending. So to me, that would already be a success. (Oranga Tamariki kaimahi)

- **Spending longer in the community than on previous transitions from residence:** Spending more time in the community before receiving a further residential sentence than following previous releases from residence was an achievement, even if it was followed by re-offending.

... Each one of these boys could do better than they've ever done in their lives and it still wouldn't be seen as success by the public and by the politicians because these are boys who, by and large, have never done more than a week or ten days successfully in the community after being in residence. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Well, based on his ability to stay out in the community longer than he ever has, something's happened, whether it's within himself or the programme itself, has supported him to make that happen. (Site social worker)



He was out for 10 weeks, which is the longest he's ever been out for but then it's, I guess, not so obvious to relate that back to his time at the MSA.... when you look at his new offending, it's definitely less severe than what he was doing before. (Site social worker)

- **Broader outcomes:** Evaluation participants also defined success in terms of improvements in other aspects of rangatahi wellbeing, for example engagement with education and training and receiving support for broader needs.

Success for me looks like some who have reoffended being integrated back into community and us being able to reengage them in employment and education. Success for me looks like the health needs of these young people have been identified and are being remediated. Success looks like that where whānau relationships have not been as strong and or they've been strained for whatever reason, we have collectively worked to help restore the integrity of those relationships. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Oranga Tamariki are analysing Police data on the frequency and seriousness of offending, which will be included in the final evaluation report. However, it is important to note that the small number of participants means it is unlikely any statistically robust conclusions may be drawn about the impact of the MSA programme on re-offending in comparison to other youth justice residences.

3.2. There were some positive wellbeing changes across Te Whare Tapa Whā domains

Te Puna Oranga (integral to the new Oranga Tamariki Practice Approach) was used as a complementary framework to the Good Lives Model in the delivery of MSA. The evaluation used Te Whare Tapa Whā as a framework for describing wellbeing changes for rangatahi and how they contribute to the overall MSA Pilot outcomes.

3.2.1. Positive changes in taha wairua included increased understanding of who they are, where they come from, and strengthened identity

Intended outcomes: Taha wairua

Rangatahi have:

- Increased understanding of where they came from, who they are
- Increased feelings of belonging, purpose, identity
- Have built new/stronger relationships with whānau, iwi, culture.

The intended rangatahi outcomes for MSA in taha wairua connected with the cultural components of the residential phase. Kaimahi and rangatahi feedback on these connections focused on changes they saw through work in the residential phase. Community phase mentors and site social workers for some rangatahi were planning opportunities for rangatahi to connect with their culture and whakapapa:

- One whānau was working on connecting the rangatahi with their whakapapa through a family member.
- One mentor and social worker had planned a trip for the rangatahi back to his marae but he returned to residence before the trip took place.



- One rangatahi supported by a kaupapa Māori provider had strong cultural support and connection through his whānau.
- Two rangatahi said they were not interested in knowing more about their whakapapa.

One social worker commented on not being able to prioritise cultural connection because they were always responding to a crisis. Another mentioned the rangatahi himself struggled with competing priorities.

I think for [rangatahi], he wants to be, I think, more connected than he currently is. However, for him and his priorities, it kind of gets knocked down the list for him. (Site social worker)

Connecting with Rangitāne iwi later in the community phase was an opportunity to build on connections from the residential phase.

Table 2. Examples of current state for rangatahi showing progress and challenges in taha wairua connected to MSA intended outcomes.

| Intended outcomes | Examples of current state for rangatahi showing progress and challenges |
|---|---|
| <p>Increased understanding of where they came from, who they are</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One whānau mentioned they had seen significant changes for their rangatahi; that he had become more mature, more patient and more open in communicating with siblings and his parents. They felt he seemed more comfortable in his own skin and able to be himself. • One social worker mentioned feeling their rangatahi had some improvement in his cultural identity. • For a few of the rangatahi, cultural connections continued through the community phase. The cultural connection for [rangatahi] was returning back home, so that kind of then allowed for that connection to flourish, which it has. It's been amazing. (Site social worker) |
| <p>Increased feelings of belonging, purpose, identity</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two rangatahi felt their wairua was strengthened through the residential phase and noted that they particularly enjoyed learning their pepeha. Cultural identity, that was a good thing I learned there. The Māori things, my pepeha and stories. It was good to learn about that. (Rangatahi) • For one rangatahi, returning home had facilitated his connection with his culture. • One rangatahi had participated in a noho at his marae and did mau rakau. His whānau had refreshed a connection to an uncle who was going to spend time with the whānau helping them connect with their whakapapa. While he did not think MSA had strengthened his wairua, he felt fine with his cultural side. |
| <p>Have built new/stronger relationships with whānau, iwi, culture</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangatahi iwi were not successfully engaged in planning for and supporting rangatahi transitions into the community. • Rangatahi performed their MSA haka at the tangi for the member of the cohort who passed away. |



3.2.2. Physical activity and eating well contributed to positive changes in taha tinana but there were changes in rangatahi living situations

Intended outcomes: Taha Tinana

Rangatahi:

- Are healthier and aware of the importance of healthy living
- Have safe and stable housing
- Have healthy eating and nutrition
- Have good personal hygiene
- Take part in physical activity.

Physical fitness was important to the rangatahi and a big focus of the residential phase with time spent in the gym and doing other physical activity. Continuing physical activity in the community was a positive activity rangatahi and mentors did together.

Changes in living arrangements were common in the transition period, including movements into and out of the whānau home. Rangatahi also changed living situations when they returned to residence.

Table 3. Examples of current state for rangatahi showing progress and challenges in taha tinana connected to MSA intended outcomes.

| Intended outcomes | Examples of current state for rangatahi showing progress and challenges |
|---|--|
| Physically active | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the rangatahi felt they had become fitter through the residential programme. Some rangatahi felt they were at their peak physical fitness at the end of MSA. • Four social workers mentioned their rangatahi remained physically active when they transitioned to the community, through gym, team or individual sports. One social worker said they ‘couldn’t gain traction with the gym’. |
| Healthy living, eating and nutrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One social worker felt their rangatahi was eating well in the community, and others did not specifically comment on this aspect of health. It is unclear whether healthy eating can be attributed to MSA. He definitely did quite a bit of work with [Mentor] at the gym, even though he didn't always want to go. But he ate well. (Site social worker) |
| Safe and stable housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangatahi living arrangements were identified in transition plans. Five of the nine rangatahi changed their original community living situations through the transition period. Two had planned moves – one started a course and one moved between whānau members when one was away. • Two rangatahi were removed from independent living due to behaviour related to alcohol consumption. One was able to be settled in a new independent living arrangement but the other was moved into a remand home in another region. |



3.2.3. There were some changes in taha hinengaro and evidence of rangatahi applying learning from the residential phase, but progress was affected by the passing of a MSA rangatahi and substance use

Intended outcomes: Taha Hinengaro

Rangatahi have:

- Progress in addressing mental health and wellbeing
- Improved behaviour and self-regulation
- Improved ability to manage emotions and decision making
- Take responsibility, show respect for self and others
- Improved mood, motivation, happiness, positivity, hopefulness, confidence, self-esteem and feelings of worth and opportunity
- Demonstrated growth, development and self-control

Pre-and post-residential phase results of the clinical assessments completed for rangatahi not available for the previous evaluation report were now available. One of the clinicians from the residential phase completed assessments with rangatahi in the assessment phase before residence and then re-assessed them at the end of the residential phase. The results identified areas where rangatahi had achieved change by the end of the residential period. Average scores for the cohort showed an improvement from the pre- to post-residential phase measurements (Appendix Five).

Almost all rangatahi left the residential phase with a positive attitude and hope not to reoffend.

His general mindset has been that ‘I don't want to go back to residence and I want good things for my family’. (Site social worker)

Whānau, site social workers and mentors all spoke of the impact of the passing of the rangatahi in the MSA cohort on their rangatahi. They also saw drops in mood resulting from re-offending and returning to residence.

I could see he was trying to hide his true emotions but what I noticed with [rangatahi] was it affected him, like affected him like this boy was his own biological brother. [Rangatahi] went into quiet, silent moods, quite a lot, actually, where he just stayed in his room, he didn't really talk with any of us. (Whānau)

Table 4. Changes in taha hinengaro connected to the intended outcomes.

| Intended outcomes | Examples of current state for rangatahi showing progress and challenges |
|---|---|
| Progress in addressing mental health and wellbeing, improved mood and positivity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The in-residence therapeutic intervention aimed to address mental health and wellbeing for rangatahi. All rangatahi had some improvements in their attitudes and readiness toward treatment. • One rangatahi had changed his mindset from not caring about returning to residence to wanting to stay in the community. • Another mentor connected the positive state of mind of their rangatahi to pride in not returning to residence. <p style="padding-left: 20px;">He's quite proud of himself for being out this long. He's mentioned it too. Like, he was like, ‘Bro, they all thought I was going to be the first one to get locked back up.’ He's like, ‘Nah, I</p> |



| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>don't want to go back in there.' So yeah, I think he's quite proud</p> |
| <p>Use of alcohol and other drugs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some rangatahi returned to alcohol, cannabis and methamphetamine use once they returned to community. <p>In the third week, he started coming to mentoring, just like stoned out of his tree because he's just overwhelmed and stressed and then he turns to self-medication. (Site social worker)</p> |
| <p>Improved behaviour and self-regulation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One rangatahi mentioned learning a breathing exercise that helped him with self-regulation. |
| <p>Improved ability to manage emotions and decision making</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One rangatahi mentioned struggling with changing his decision-making. <p>I don't even know, my mind's just f**ked up, I don't know how to think properly.... I'm just too used to this place. (Rangatahi)</p> One social worker noted their rangatahi was still unequipped to manage his emotions, which were tied to his offending. <p>...he has no emotional intelligence on how to deal with it. So then, well, I probably am setting him up to re-offend because it's just going to be so overwhelming. (Site social worker)</p> <p>I always think I'm not going to get caught. I know I can stop. I was a dumb c**t then, when I was 13. I've matured since then. Everyone always regrets what they do. I do a little bit. Got some money, clothes, shopping. I don't get the adrenaline rush anymore. I get paranoid. (Rangatahi)</p> |
| <p>Take responsibility, show respect for self and others</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two whānau said that this time their rangatahi had responded differently following reoffending rather than laughing it off. They felt he had regretted the mistake he made and acknowledged that he had let everyone down. <p>I noticed a little bit more maturity coming out and he was a little bit more mature when he came out of boot camp. Because when he reoffended again, I've never seen him emotional and I knew that how sorry he was because I saw the emotions that was coming out because he knew he stuffed up. (Whānau)</p> One rangatahi shifted from initially viewing the problem as solely the result of others or circumstances (no responsibility) to viewing himself as part of the problem (taking ownership). |

3.2.4. Rangatahi relationships with friends and whānau were sources of support in some cases and added to risk of re-offending in others

Intended outcomes: Taha Whānau

Rangatahi:

- Feel supported by whānau, friends and other important people in their life
- Rebuilt or strengthened whānau relationships and connection with whānau
- Are employed or engaged in education and training
- Have reduced offending

Connections with whānau and friends could be sources of support as well as triggers for offending behaviour. Rangatahi reconnected with their mates on returning to their community but many associated their mates on their broader connections with offending. Three rangatahi had tension



with whānau or conflict with siblings listed among their re-offending triggers. Relationships with their mentors and with their social workers were sources of positive support.

Table 5. Examples of current state for rangatahi showing progress and challenges in taha whānau connected to MSA intended outcomes.

| Outcome areas | Examples of current state for rangatahi showing progress and challenges |
|---|---|
| Feel supported by whānau, friends and other important people in their life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentors had become an important figure for rangatahi in their day to day lives, helping them stick to a routine. It's been good with [mentor], we are fine, he comes every day to see what the plan is today and how I'm doing (Rangatahi) • All of the rangatahi had someone who supported them, including immediate or wider whānau, friends or a girlfriend. • One rangatahi was described by their social worker as not having good family support. There were periods of time [in the past] where [rangatahi] would go missing from home for like three months. It's like, home isn't a place that he longs for, home isn't a place that he misses. Home is just four walls. Which is very sad but, yeah. (Site social Worker) |
| Rebuilt or strengthened whānau relationships and connection with whānau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of those who have strong relationships with their whānau already had them before MSA. • One rangatahi started building a relationship with a parent who he was not talking to before. Another had rebuilt a relationship with his parents as part of his plan. It is unclear whether this has happened. • Another was released to a family member he had not lived with before and was building a relationship with him. • Two rangatahi have fragile relationships with whānau members, with one rangatahi falling out with his whānau after the Christmas period. Both have some people in their lives who support them. |

3.2.5. Positive education, training and employment outcomes contributed to wellbeing outcomes

Engagement in education and training included:

- One rangatahi started completing courses through NZME
- One entered a residential course in another region
- One rangatahi was doing correspondence through Te Kura.

Engagement in employment following transition to the community included:

- One rangatahi had a landscaping job arranged while in the residential phase and began working immediately after transition. However, he left work after a few days after clashing with the employer.
- One rangatahi began work as part of a team connecting utilities to new-build houses. He maintained his employment through to Christmas. It was a source of pride, and he had enjoyed his work. It only ended because they employer did not have enough work available, but the employer provided him a positive reference and said they would re-employ him if more work became available.



A [Rangatahi] said, ‘man, it feels so good to buy my own s**t with my own money....he hasn't lost a job, they've run out of work and so that's the bummer is he was really looking forward to signing a contract because they did tell him, ‘you can sign a contract on January 13th’ but when that didn't happen, that put him off and then he obviously went to pick up the pipe and stuff. (Site social worker)

- One rangatahi began a work experience job and continued with it part-time through the transition phase facilitated by the mentor picking him up and dropping him off at work.
- One rangatahi mentioned that he completed his first ever job interview after transitioning to the community. One was about to start his job the following week when he allegedly reoffended.

He wanted to, he wasn't ready to work. You know, we were looking at Te Kura for him and there was a delay with Te Kura but those times were filled with something else. Every time we bring up employment, he's like, ‘I'm not ready’. And eventually, he was getting ready, he was thinking about it towards the end, closer to the latest offending. And we were looking at employment opportunities, like a training and things like through Sense. So he had Sense appointments and things like that. But unfortunately, this happened. (Site social worker)

Other achievements included acquiring their learner's licence and working toward getting their restricted. One rangatahi had achieved his diving certificate. Another rangatahi had aspirations to take part in a life skills course, but this hadn't begun yet. One was completing a confidence-building course.

One rangatahi had started completing courses through NZME, one had entered a residential course in another region and one rangatahi was doing correspondence through Te Kura.

3.3. Some rangatahi have returned to supervision with residence but most spent longer in the community than on their previous transitions out of residence

Exact numbers for re-offending and returns to supervision with residence

The exact number of rangatahi who have returned to supervision with residence or remained in the community are not included in this report to protect the privacy of individual rangatahi. Analysis of this data will be included in the final evaluation report.

The transition of the MSA rangatahi cohort to the community has involved breaches of conditions and alleged re-offending, some minor and some more serious. By the end of January 2025, the end of the transition period, some of the MSA rangatahi had returned to youth justice residences. One of the rangatahi in the community was highlighted by the kaimahi supporting him as a positive example for the other rangatahi.

[Rangatahi] has been with his whānau, involved in the marae, that's huge. In terms of his trajectory before, that's incredible how well he's doing and how well he wants to continue to do. He's been sort of a real shining light for the other boys in terms of thinking and if [rangatahi] can do it, then I can do it. (Oranga Tamariki kaimahi)

Many of the rangatahi described how hard they had tried to stay out.



I tried to change but f**k it's hard ... I tried to stay out but it didn't last very long. (Rangatahi)

Some were sent back to Youth Justice residence for breaching their conditions, such as being out past their curfew, while others were facing other new offences, or a combination of both.

Analysis of Oranga Tamariki data for the final evaluation report

Oranga Tamariki are analysing Police and Oranga Tamariki data, which will be included in the final evaluation report. The analysis will quantify the frequency and seriousness of re-offending but it is important to note that the small number of participants means it is unlikely any statistically robust conclusions may be drawn about the MSA programme impact on re-offending in comparison to other youth justice residences.

Rangatahi spent longer in the community than on their last exit from residence

Preliminary analysis¹ of Oranga Tamariki data showed rangatahi had spent more time in the community following their transition from the MSA residential phase than they had in their previous return to the community. The nine MSA pilot participants spent an average of 90 days (median 74 days) in the community after being released from residence up to the start of any subsequent return to residence or April 5, whichever was the earliest. As a point of comparison, rangatahi spent an average of 50 days (median 43 days) in the community after their last transition from residence.

This means that the MSA cohort spent an average of 41 additional days (median of 31 additional days) in the community following the MSA pilot residential phase than they did in their previous period in the community after a custody order. These figures will increase as some of the rangatahi continue in the community.

Qualitative data from evaluation interviews supported the finding that rangatahi had spent more time in the community after the residential phase than they had in returns to the community over the preceding years.

Well, based on his ability to stay out in the community longer than he ever has, something's happened, whether it's within himself or the programme itself, has supported him to make that happen. (Site social worker)

After returning to residence from the transition to the community, some rangatahi said this would be the last time they return. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi thought they saw differences in attitudes towards re-offending and being in residence than before MSA. Some rangatahi reported that after this return to residence they were committed to not returning again. One rangatahi mentioned when he gets out next, he is determined to ensure his peers will not influence him to reoffend.

This is the last time I'm coming back. (Rangatahi)

I'm just gonna be good and I'll just make [my boys] be good too. I'll just say we on a plan. (Rangatahi)

The return to residence had coincided with periods of feeling down and hopeless for rangatahi. For some, their return to residence meant it was likely they would now face adult sentencing.

¹ Note that results from this preliminary analysis are as at 5 April 2025, outside the coverage of other findings in this report.



Stakeholders and kaimahi working with the rangatahi said they had seen a reduction in the seriousness and volume of offending compared to before MSA.



4. Planning and design of community transitions

Evidence from research and past New Zealand programmes highlights the importance of continuing to support rangatahi as they transition from youth justice programmes to life in the community. Oranga Tamariki team recognition of the importance of the community phase and the transition to the community is reflected in the three-phase design of MSA.

The community phase was broadly scoped in the initial planning. Design of the community phase included development of transition plans (My Good Life plans) in the residential phase and transition hui with rangatahi, whānau and community to finalise a transition plan for each rangatahi. The MSA programme design documents included a high-level description of the community phase with a focus on the role of the community mentors.

4.1. Transitions were guided by individual transition plans and transition hui for each rangatahi

Rangatahi transition plans and transition hui aimed to prepare for rangatahi transitions to the community. Information about transition planning is included in the first preliminary evaluation report. Interviews for this report on community transitions also included reflections on the plans and processes.

4.1.1. Transition plans connected with My Good Life plans and were stronger than plans developed for previous returns to the community

The residential phase clinical team began to develop transition plans in the last month of the residential phase drawing on the work done in residence to develop My Good Life plans with the rangatahi. Oranga Tamariki staff worked intensively to prepare the plans, showing their commitment to the rangatahi. By the end of the residential phase, all rangatahi had a transition plan to guide their return to the community based on the Good Lives model.

Table 6. Aspects of the Good Life Plan

| Plan component | Coverage |
|--------------------|--|
| My community plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My home • My health and wellbeing • My education • My prosocial connections • My work • My other commitments |
| My Good Life plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pepeha • My good life (e.g., what a 'good life' looks like) • What might get in the way? • What can I do about things that get in the way? • Who else will be helping? What will they do? • What pathways to offending do we need to watch out for? |
| My Good Life plan: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the goal • What does this look like/How will I reach my goal? • How will I know I am on track? |



| | |
|--|--|
| Goals – answered for each of the four goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will others know I am on track? • What might get in the way of reaching my goal? • How will I manage the things that get in the way? |
| Our whānau Good Life plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are our Good Life goals? • What would help us to lead out good life? • How do our good life goals contribute to our rangatahi being on track? • Who will be helping us to keep things on track? • What if our rangatahi offends again? • What is the most helpful thing we can all do if this happens? |
| My kitbag (the skills, tools, resources, experiences I can access) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distress Tolerance (e.g., distraction tools) • Motivation Change Matrix • Good Life and Reflections of My Future Self • Stop, Think, Act Coping Skills • Values • My Strengths • Connection – Respectful Relationships • Mindfulness • Sleep Hygiene |
| My coping plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the things that trigger me • My coping strategies • My early warning signs |
| In-Community Daily Planner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocked day-by-day plan for first 12 weeks of community phase. |

Many of the rangatahi, whānau, mentors and site social workers thought the plans for rangatahi transitions were a good fit for what they wanted and needed and were better than transition plans from other youth justice residences.

... The plan that he came out with was very intensive and it was busy. ... It was all the things that he said in residence that he wanted to do. So actually, I don't know if there would be anything that I would have done differently, to be honest. (Site social worker)

It was a solid plan for me. Going to the gym, boxing, stuff like that. (Rangatahi)

I'm just hoping that this work, this plan we have, it's a really great plan. He's never had a full plan before. ... The times that [rangatahi] has come out before, it's either wrong time of the year where everything is closing down or finishing up and then just the mentor, it was maybe like two or four hours a week and so it wasn't really hands on deck for [rangatahi] at those times. (Whānau)

Site social workers also commented on the importance of transition plan format, explanation and detail in engaging rangatahi with their plans. The length and level of detail could be overwhelming. Presenting one rangatahi plan in picture form helped the rangatahi to engage with it.

At the transition hui, the mentor had also talked over goals, and he had actively gone out into the community and started to set some of that stuff up. This is the service. This is the place. This is who we would go through. ... not only was it visual, because my boy needed to be talked through it to give him enough time to process the information that was being presented, but they also did it in a step by step. And they set time frames around the goals.



They looked at the support people to achieve those tasks. The way they mapped it for him, they sent us these beautiful picture templates of it. And so it was a really beautiful transition plan. (Site social worker)

4.1.2. Transition hui connected rangatahi communities with their plans but could have been strengthened by beginning earlier, involving whānau earlier and including residential kaimahi

Positivity in the residential phase about the transition hui continued into the community phase. All stakeholders supported the concept of bringing the professional groups together with rangatahi and their whānau to make sure the right plans and supports were in place.

It was really, really good. A really good platform to bring all the whānau together and they created a very whānau driven plan. (Site social worker)

Stakeholders identified opportunities to improve the transition hui process:

- Inclusion in the hui of residential phase clinical kaimahi who developed Good Lives Model plans with rangatahi. The kaimahi did not attend the transition hui and site social workers had to develop the final versions of the plans based on transition hui discussion.

It caused all sorts of other problems for the social workers because then they were getting critiqued on a plan that didn't match what was being done in residence but they didn't know what was being done in residence. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- Increased site social worker involvement in plan development to avoid unexpected elements in rangatahi transition plans at the transition hui.

There was a lot of things... that we didn't realise MSA had put in his plan. So there were things like helping out at the soup kitchen on the weekend. I was like, what is that? I've not even heard of that place. (Site social worker)

- Increased whānau involvement in the earlier stages of planning or in additional transition hui.

Whānau involvement, inclusion, working with, should have been happening throughout. Again, historically, contemporary, youth justice have not had a focus on whānau ... (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

4.2. Site social worker roles differed from other youth justice social work

Site social workers were all in existing youth justice social work roles and had worked with rangatahi prior to MSA, in some cases with MSA rangatahi and whānau for multiple years. The first preliminary evaluation report highlighted a lack of clarity in the site social worker role through the residential phase. Site social workers were commonly disconnected from the rangatahi while the rangatahi was in residential care. The short timeframe for developing plans meant residential phase clinical kaimahi developed the transition plans without input from site social workers, whānau, mentors and MDTs then handed them over for the transition hui. Social workers wanted to be more involved in the plan development.



I think early on in the transition phase, in the transition planning stage, it should have been social work-led because we know what's in our community, we know what's likely to work, we know how the individual agencies work, we know what vendors we have and we know how to do it. We get kids out of residence all the time. Let us do it, is what it kind of comes down to. (Site social worker)

Late completion of the design and planning for transitions to the community and the community phase overall limited the time available for the practice team to clarify site social worker roles, put the right tools and guidance in place and prepare social workers for the transition phase.

The MSA community phase involved the site social workers working with the same rangatahi and whānau social workers but in a different way. The key points of difference for MSA site social worker roles, compared to usual youth justice social worker roles were:

- **Good Lives Model:** None of the site social workers had used the Good Lives Model before but were experienced in working with existing Oranga Tamariki practice frameworks, models and tools. They received a two-hour initial training with learning built through weekly communities of practice sessions.
- **Support for rangatahi:** Site social workers were expected to continue the support rangatahi received in the residential phase. The approach centred around the Good Lives Model. This differed from usual youth justice practice where social workers focus on connecting rangatahi with other supports for care. In addition, along with their offending histories, the rangatahi participating in MSA had complex backgrounds with experience of trauma and need for health, mental health and other support.

They don't routinely do assessments. Their plans are largely about brokering other services to come in and be the mentor or be the AOD person or be the whatever. So the long-standing culture of practice, we were trying to adjust sharply. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- **Assessments and court papers:** Site social workers had to sign and submit plans to the courts informed by work in the residential phase even though they had no direct involvement. The different assessments and plans used in the residential phase had to be translated into the forms expected by the courts.
- **Support for whānau:** Site social workers were expected to provide support to whānau. Usual youth justice social worker roles involved communication with whānau but focused on the rangatahi. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of the role of social work in connecting with whānau.
- **Working with mentors:** The intensity of the mentor support in MSA exceeded that of other youth justice mentoring programmes. Social workers had to work differently with the MSA mentors because the mentors were spending far more time with the rangatahi.

The pilot context and high-profile of MSA increased the complexity of transition planning and support for rangatahi and affected the site social workers in their roles. They had an increased level of scrutiny on their practice from leadership who expected them to practice differently from their usual youth justice approaches. Site social workers within MSA were expected to have a much closer watch on the MSA rangatahi and had contact with senior managers within Oranga Tamariki above



their direct management line when things went wrong. Some stakeholders advocated for an approach that invested more in preparing social workers for the different role in MSA then stepping back to let them work.

4.3. The community mentor role was designed to provide rangatahi with high-intensity support

Oranga Tamariki contracted community organisations to provide mentors for each of the rangatahi. The procurement process was completed early in the residential phase so mentors could start building relationships with rangatahi before they transitioned to the community. The service specifications for the mentors (Appendix Four) describe the mentor role as a key point of contact for rangatahi and whānau, as well as the site social workers and MDT groups. Many of the MSA rangatahi had been mentored before but MSA offered a much higher intensity of mentorship support. Thirty hours of contact time and 10 hours of non-contact time per week aimed to enable mentors to spend time with rangatahi every day to support their transitions to the community.

The mentor service specifications are also clear that mentors would be required to adjust their hours to fit rangatahi and whānau needs, including being available to support rangatahi in the evenings, weekends and on public holidays.

4.4. Starting detailed planning and design of transitions late limited the connection between the residential and community phases

While the high-level MSA design aligned with the evidence about what was needed, the transition processes were complex and implementing the design involved many moving parts and different roles and responsibilities that required detailed planning. Outcomes of court proceedings could also limit the options available and keep some parts of plans uncertain until the last minute.

Detailed planning of transitions and the community phase were delayed by the early focus on planning and design for the residential phase. As described in the first preliminary evaluation report, the design and implementation of the residential phase required intensive work from Oranga Tamariki kaimahi in a short time frame and continuing design input as it was being delivered.

Planning and design focus did not shift to the detail of the rangatahi transitions to the community until later in the residential phase, although mentors and their organisations were contracted early in the residential phase.

So much energy and focus on going live, and then once the residential phase went live, the focus and attention then became on operationalising it ... and the transition planning in a really detailed comprehensive way just got pushed out and then it got too late to do it in that way. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Oranga Tamariki restructuring also disrupted the detailed planning required for the transition phase. Oranga Tamariki stakeholders noted that key experts were lost from roles leading the transitions work stream. Adding more resource could have helped but beginning planning for the transition phase late was the main issue.



Could we have done with more resource? Possibly, but that's the world we're in. Not wanting a gold standard resource, but in hindsight, would it have made any difference? I'm not actually sure, just with the timeframes and things as well. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Completing work at the programme level would also have allowed planning and preparation for individual rangatahi to begin earlier.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but we would certainly do this extremely differently moving forward. You've really got to start that transition planning from day one, the day the young person enters the residence for the programme, because you can also then layer the clinical intervention work and really do the step change work, so that ... it's continued immediately on transition from the programme, and that didn't happen. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Although many stakeholders worked hard to compensate for the time delays, the delays in detailed transition phase planning affected the quality of the transition plans and workforce preparation for transition.

We did not place enough emphasis on the development of quality, robust, measurable transition plans for the rangatahi. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

It ended up being a little bit like the transition that we already see for young people leaving residences, which is really poor and I think we did some things better and there's some things that we could have done even better. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Starting the planning process earlier would have enabled plan development and transition hui to be iterative processes, working with rangatahi, their whānau, mentors and site social workers to refine each plan.

The transition hui happened very, very quickly with a lack of planning. There was good intent from people who were involved, albeit late, but those sort of critical success measures that you'd be looking for were not there. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

The transition hui really should have been four weeks into the residential phase and they should have been every four weeks. And the one that we held should finalise the plan. That should have been the third or fourth transition meeting as opposed to the first. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Completing design and planning at the programme level would have allowed more time to prepare site social workers, community mentors and their organisations for their roles. It would also have enabled more work to align practice in the residential phase with the community phases, for example by aligning planning templates and assessments with the paperwork site social workers were required to submit to the courts on rangatahi release from residence.



5. Roles and responsibilities in implementing the MSA transition phase

5.1. Advisory groups brought additional expertise to the MSA pilot

Several advisory groups remained in place to support transitions to the community and the community phase including:

- **External reference group:** To provide Oranga Tamariki with independent advice, support, critical thinking and challenge the implementation of the MSA Pilot. The ERG was advisory only and had no decision-making responsibility. It was disbanded in the transition to the community phase.
- **Clinical advisory group:** The clinical advisory group did not have a formal terms of reference but provided a point of review and advice from a clinical perspective for kaimahi. The group also provided advice on monitoring rangatahi progress and received updates on rangatahi progress in the community.
- **National MDT oversight group:** Regional MDTs provided weekly insights and updates to senior management within Oranga Tamariki which were shared with a national MDT oversight group. The group consisted of key decision makers across government who were able to overcome issues regional MDTs encounter in accessing support through local staff.

5.1.1. Clarification of the role of the advisory group and where their input could influence the programme could have strengthened their contribution

The advisory groups provided an avenue for Oranga Tamariki to draw on the knowledge and experience of people and organisations with expertise in working with rangatahi and in the youth development and youth justice spaces. Stakeholders thought Oranga Tamariki could make better use of the advisory groups by:

- **More clearly defining the roles of the advisory groups**

The roles of the advisory groups were not well defined through terms of reference so members did not have a clear understanding of their roles on the groups and how they could contribute.

It probably hasn't been utilised as it could have been at all ... I think that you have people that are well meaning but I don't think they have a real understanding of the role, of function of what groups could play. (Advisory group member)

Oranga Tamariki kaimahi provided detailed updates to the group throughout the implementation of the residential and community phases, but it was not clear whether there was an opportunity for feedback or advice from the group to influence delivery. As for many aspects of the MSA programme, timeline pressure meant advisory groups often heard about what had been done rather than what the plans and intentions were in advance so opportunity to provide guidance was limited.

- **Reducing the focus on individual updates**



All of the groups received detailed updates on the status of the individual participants. While the advisory groups had members who could provide valuable advice on individual rangatahi, work at that level was not efficient in large groups and made it harder for them to provide higher level advice at a governance and strategic level. Some members of the groups identified an opportunity to make more use of the members' collective expertise at a more strategic level.

- **Extending membership**

The advisory groups had broad representation, but members identified two groups they thought should be involved in the future:

- Department of Corrections: Several stakeholders spoke of the expertise and resources the Department of Corrections could have brought to bear on planning and supporting rangatahi transitions back to the community and were unsure why they had not been represented.

I don't know why they didn't lean into a certain Ministry that has got the most experience in rehabilitating offenders within this country. I believe that's quite an oversight. (Stakeholder)

- Iwi: Rangitāne were involved in the advisory groups in their role as tangata whenua for the residential phase and brought valuable experience and expertise to the programme leadership. Some stakeholders thought there should also have been involvement from the iwi of the rangatahi and the regions they returned to in the transitions to the community.

5.2. Site social workers, mentors and MDTs were the key roles in transitions to the community

Site social workers, mentors and MDTs were key roles in transitions to the community. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the elements of rangatahi transitions to the community including kaimahi roles and responsibilities in each stage of the process.



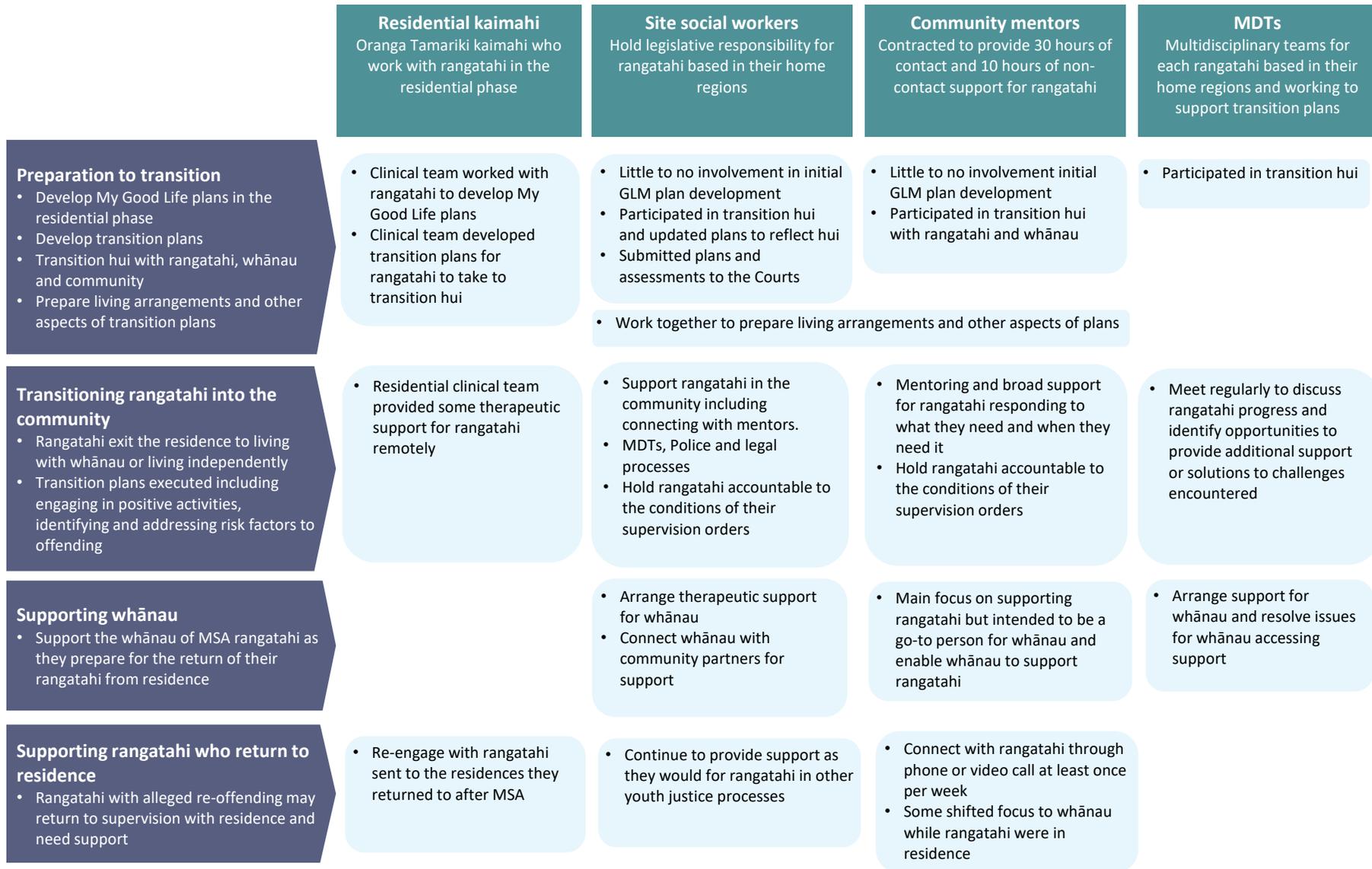


Figure 1. Overview of the rangatahi transitions to the community through the MSA programme.



5.3. Site social workers were the key point of contact for mentors, rangatahi and whānau within Oranga Tamariki

5.3.1. Social workers caseloads were not reduced to support their roles in MSA

Site social workers were told that their caseloads would be reduced while they supported MSA rangatahi to give them time for training in the new programme. However, their caseloads were not reduced and site social workers had to continue to manage their existing caseloads through the transition to the community. Six of the rangatahi were based in one region, which stakeholders noted was a large and busy site where site social workers already carried higher caseloads. The requirements of existing caseloads limited site social worker capacity for the parts of MSA that distinguished it from other youth justice social work.

They did not have a reduced caseload. Not at all. Their caseload looked the same as anybody else's, in fact higher. ... so their caseloads are higher anyway ... (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

5.3.2. Capacity limited participation in the community of practice

The national practice team ran weekly community of practice sessions for the site social workers to support them in their roles in MSA. The sessions provided training on the Good Lives Model (described in Appendix One) and other aspects of MSA. They also allowed the site social workers to problem solve and share reflections on their practice, including what was working well. There was some valuable learning in the sessions and site social workers found support in their peers and the national practice team strengthening their practice.

The ones who have consistently attended those community of practice sessions, their work is so much better. Their understanding of the Good Lives model, their planning's better, their communication is better. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

However, many of the social workers found it difficult to attend because of the demands of their caseloads and attendance dropped over time.

The social workers don't have time to kind of commit a couple of hours every week, I think it was initially. And I think it's fortnightly still, but that's a time commitment that they don't necessarily have. And so I think attendance at that was a bit up and down and all over the place. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Stakeholders did not see any involvement from the Oranga Tamariki learning and development team in this process and thought their involvement could have strengthened the support available to social workers. Overall, Oranga Tamariki stakeholders reflected that the preparation offered for site social workers was not sufficient.

The social workers told us that they learnt from each other. So They found a support structure about the intensity and expectations of this body of work. But unfortunately, the supervisors and practice leaders, they needed to come together more. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)



5.3.3. Stakeholders had different views about the role site social workers could play in continuing therapeutic care for rangatahi in the community

Some stakeholders saw the site social worker role as central to supporting rangatahi in the community but that it needed to be supported by robust practice models, training and development along with additional capacity. Other stakeholders thought the kaimahi providing therapeutic care to address rangatahi offending needed expertise that would take extensive specialist training and that site social workers did not have the training required to support rangatahi with therapy or counselling.

There has been serious under investment in our youth justice social workforce. They are expected to work at an extraordinary level, without that detailed training. They might finish at university, they join Oranga Tamariki, they go through an induction that is really focused on care and protection. Then we throw them into the youth justice world, and then they learn on the job. Yes, that's not acceptable for the work we're doing. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

They need to be more specialist youth justice, designed and calibrated if we're really going to kind of shift the dial on, on serious, persistent youth offending. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

The site social workers' positions of authority and connection with the legal processes could also make it difficult for rangatahi to be open with social workers and mentors in therapeutic conversations.

If you want this person to be the young person's person, ... how as a young person are you really going to open-up and completely confide in an adult who you're worried is going to report back to your family or people like that? (Oranga Tamariki kaimahi)

5.3.4. Site social worker support for whānau differed from other youth justice work

Social work support for whānau fits within site social workers' expertise and training but was not a focus within wider youth justice practice at Oranga Tamariki.

... there was an entire culture of [rangatahi] goes to residence, social worker goes 'pew, I can get on with other things.' It's just such a wrong move, because the work for the whānau and family is as important as the accountability and justice of rangatahi, because we just haven't spent time understanding their needs. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Some site social workers were enthusiastic about working more with whānau because they saw it as a gap in their normal practice in youth justice. Others wanted more support to develop their skills to support whānau. They highlighted the importance of continuing to work with whānau through periods where rangatahi were in residence. Some stakeholders also raised that therapeutic intervention through clinical therapy and counselling could benefit whānau but required different expertise and training.

Therapeutic support for the families is not something that sits naturally with a youth justice social worker. It should be work that they are able to do in terms of like family assessment and support but it's not work that they ordinarily do. Youth justice is moving in that way but it kind of has very much been young person-focused. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)



I think what would have been really helpful was if like the social workers were given the skills kind of in that family functional therapy space, so that we could offer some kind of work alongside the whānau as well as the parenting coach aspect of it. But we were promised all of this training and we never received it. (Site social worker)

5.3.5. Site social workers and mentors worked together to support rangatahi

As the two key supports for rangatahi and whānau, mentors and site social workers had to work closely together and make joint decisions about support and activity options for rangatahi. All mentors and site social workers described positive relationships with good communication.

You know, we work together really well and they do their mahi. I can completely trust them, you know, if they don't have to, they don't have something available, they fill that time with something else. (Site social worker)

In some cases, they began working closely together in the residential phase. The relationships established in the residential phase carried through into the community phase. Social workers appreciated that mentors could provide a level of support they could not offer rangatahi.

His mentor stayed with him for like two weeks at his whare it's just been amazing. And I think with the three of us, because I think that's what's key as a social worker, the mentor and the rangatahi working together, I hear from them every day. They hear from me every day, and it's yeah, it's just been amazing to see the growth, the maturity, the engagement, because he previously, he wouldn't last [in the community]. I think the longest he's lasted is maybe three days, and we're going on to week four. (Site social worker)

5.4. Community mentors worked intensively with rangatahi, but their roles were still developing

Oranga Tamariki contracted community organisations to provide mentors for each of the rangatahi. The procurement process was completed early in the residential phase so mentors could start building relationships with rangatahi before they transitioned to the community. The service specifications for the mentors (Appendix Four) describe the mentor role as a key point of contact for rangatahi and whānau, as well as the site social workers and MDT groups.

Mentors' training and preparation for MSA was limited. Like the social workers, the Good Lives Model and My Good Life plans were new to mentors. Initially there were weekly group discussions with all the mentors joining together but these did not last beyond the very early stages. Generally, mentors had limited involvement in preparing the transition plans, but they did need to work with the plans as rangatahi moved into the community. Better understanding of the Good Lives Model and earlier inclusion in planning rangatahi transitions to the community would have helped mentors prepare for rangatahi arrivals in the community.



5.4.1. The matching process could have been strengthened but most rangatahi connected well with their mentors

Mentors had to have the right skillset and experience. They also had to be a good fit with rangatahi and whānau at a personal level to establish trusting, high-quality and adult relationships in a relatively short time.

We need the mentors to have a quality collegiate, adult relationship with these young men, not necessarily try and be their mate or friend, because boundaries can potentially be crossed, right? (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Most of the mentors were a good fit with their rangatahi and connected in the residential phase laying the groundwork for good relationships through the transition phase. However, stakeholders identified opportunities to strengthen the processes to select community organisations and mentors:

- Procurement of the mentor providers did not include input from site social workers, whānau or rangatahi who could contribute to finding the right match for their rangatahi.

The appointment of the mentors was not as well considered as it needed to be. The mentor organisations were appointed, and then there was quite an arbitrary process of connecting a mentor with a young person. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- Site social workers and the residential clinical team thought their input in the selection of mentors could have helped ensure that the right mentors were selected for each rangatahi. Ideally, rangatahi and whānau would have choice in the selection as well.

The fact that our psychologist didn't have any involvement in selecting the mentors and matching them to the profiles, the young people, that's one. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Mentors were all experienced in working with rangatahi but their experience working with whānau varied depending on the organisations they came from.

5.4.2. The mentoring role had a higher level of intensity than other mentoring in youth justice

Many of the MSA rangatahi had been mentored before but MSA offered a much higher intensity of mentorship support. Thirty hours of contact time and 10 hours of non-contact time per week aimed to enable mentors to spend time with rangatahi every day to support their transitions to the community.

In normal orders, if it's a basic stuff, you get mentoring for two or three hours. (Site social worker)

Even with this higher level of intensity, some mentors exceeded their allocated hours, particularly in the period immediately after rangatahi transitioned. Work to plan and prepare was most intense at that point; this was also when rangatahi had the most need for support to get settled in their new living arrangements and to bridge the time from release to starting employment or courses. The need for contact time with mentors also shifted when rangatahi had main activities during the day. They needed mentor support in the evenings and weekends, not during the day while they were at work, or at course.



One of the suggestions from stakeholders was to consider moving away from contracting individual mentors to contracting a package of care from providers that could include mentoring along with other forms of support tailored to the needs of rangatahi and whānau.

I'd move away from the idea of the of the 40 hours a week mentoring and go to a package, so each young person has a contracted package with our provider ... that would have a portion of mentoring, vocational, education, family support, pro-social. It would be more designing a 40 hour week package of care tailored to this young person, as opposed to what is a mentor going to do for 40 hours. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

5.4.3. Mentor roles needed clarity around supporting whānau, supporting rangatahi outside working hours and continuing support if rangatahi return to residence

Some stakeholders and mentors thought there could be greater clarity of expectations in some aspects of the mentor role. Although the service specifications set out many aspects of the mentor role, the role was new and still developing. It needed to respond to the needs of rangatahi and whānau meant it was not appropriate to be too prescriptive.

The mentor service specifications are also clear that mentors would be required to adjust their hours to fit rangatahi and whānau needs, including being available to support rangatahi in the evenings, weekends and on public holidays. These were the times rangatahi were least likely to be engaged with activities like work and training and most at risk of re-offending.

And so in terms of this MSA, they have to be able to readjust their hours to suit the rangatahi and when they do the most crime. (Mentor)

Some mentors were unclear about this requirement and did not make themselves available through the evenings and weekends. Some stakeholders thought too much contact time was used on being present while rangatahi worked or did activities.

It's fine on paper to say, you spend 30 hours a week with the young person, that's lovely. But what does that actually look like? What do we do if the young person doesn't want to get out of bed? What do we do if you're sick? (Oranga Tamariki mentor)

More clarity was needed about the extent of mentor support for whānau and how to align support for whānau needs and rangatahi needs. Stakeholders often raised the importance of connecting the mentors with whānau as well as rangatahi. One suggested that the mentor role should be clarified to be a whānau mentorship recognising the role whānau could play in change for their rangatahi. Others cautioned that relationships with rangatahi could be compromised if mentors were not clear they were there to focus on rangatahi and not report on them to their whānau.

Why give mentors to a young person? Give them to the whānau, and then they're working with the whānau, right? And they can be making recommendations. ... Social worker, you might want to bring in AOD intervention. ... It could be a supportive relationship for everyone in the whānau, not just the young person. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Mentors from organisations who supported whānau considered supporting the whānau to be a core part of their role. Some of the other mentors were unclear about the extent of the support they



should be offering to whānau. Some mentors considered the rangatahi to be their client and the one they were supporting so they did not have a focus on providing support for whānau.

We practice this way all the time, at [my organisation], this is how we are with all our whānau. We go over and above. We don't work nine to five because we're a whānau ora provider. Whānau need us when they need us. (Mentor)

Some mentors thought whānau wanted them to focus on rangatahi as the main person needing support.

I've let his [whānau member] know that if they needed anything, to let me know and then I'll pass it on to the right people. If they want me to follow things up as well, I do that as well but there's not been very much stuff. (Mentor)

Preparation of the mentor role for rangatahi that return to residence

It was realistic to expect that at least some of the MSA rangatahi would return to residence during the community phase. The 30 hours of contact time was not feasible when rangatahi were in residence. Stakeholders, mentors and social workers were all unclear about how the requirements of the mentor role were expected to change if a rangatahi returned to residence.

It would be good to have clearer specifications around what actually happens if different scenarios occur, for example, if they do something serious and they [are] sentenced to residence, what happens then with us, our involvement hasn't really been made clear. (Mentor)

Mentors maintained their contact with rangatahi in residence through regular visits and phone calls. Some also shifted the allocation of their resource to supporting rangatahi whānau, including siblings.

5.4.4. Changes in contact people and reporting requirements created administrative challenges for mentors and their organisations

Some of the mentors and their organisations highlighted challenges with the administrative aspects of the mentor role including:

- Frequent changes in their point of contact with Oranga Tamariki and direct contact with too many people in senior roles made it confusing for mentors to know who to go to with questions or requests for approval. This was an issue particularly in the early stages of transition when purchases needed to be made to execute rangatahi transition plans.

Lack of communication, lack of one person to speak to. There has been multiple rangatira after rangatira after. 'Who is it? Who is it? Who should I know?' (Mentor)

- Mentors had to complete regular reports on rangatahi status and progress as well as reporting on their hours of work. The reporting on time was linked to invoicing and mentors would have preferred a higher level of trust in the contract relationship.



5.5. The community multidisciplinary teams supported site social workers and mentors but varied in their effectiveness

MDTs were set up to provide cross-agency and timely responses to the needs of MSA rangatahi and their whānau. They provided site social workers with a direct connection to other agencies and helped social workers to prepare detailed progress reports for the Courts.

MDT initiation leveraged the existing Fast-Track MDTs in some regions. Fast-Track is another Oranga Tamariki initiative that initially targeted tamariki aged 8 to 13 apprehended for serious offences. It was expanded to include 14 to 17-year-olds but age criteria differed across Fast-Track sites dependent on the profile, agency representation and needs of each site, rangatahi and their whānau.

Fast-Track MDTs were a good starting point to set up MSA MDTs because they included government (Police, Ministry of Social Development, Kainga Ora and Ministry of Education, Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora and others), iwi, marae and community provider representatives. MSA added site social workers and mentors.

5.5.1. MDTs differed across the three regions rangatahi returned to after the residential phase

There were three regions with MDTs in the transition period. As young people dispersed to other regions through later parts of the community phase new groups were established in Whakatāne, Rotorua and Te Tai Tokerau. MDT set up in the initial three regions is summarised below.

Region One: MDT supporting one MSA rangatahi. The MDT included the local marae (who employed the mentor), a youth advocate, organisations involved with whānau members and a representative of the boxing club the rangatahi attended.

MDT meetings were generally held weekly, with adjustments made for scheduling conflicts. The meetings commenced with karakia followed by key successes focused on the MSA rangatahi engagement and wellbeing. The rangatahi was invited to provide updates on key successes. MDT representatives also updated on previous action items, discussed potential challenges, risks and collective mitigations.

If [rangatahi] is available, then he will come to the MDT via online...seeing all these professionals who are making plans with him... For the first time, [Rangatahi] has completed an alternative action plan with the Police. (Oranga Tamariki Stakeholder)

Region Two: The region supported six MSA rangatahi transitioning to the region and included representatives from Police, Waikato Youth Justice, Oranga Tamariki, the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Education. At the time of data collection, the MDT met fortnightly due to rangatahi returns to residence, but planned to meet weekly when more rangatahi were in the community. The meetings began with a karakia, followed by updates on progress against rangatahi transition plans and agency actions. The sessions also included discussions and identification of pressing needs highlighted by mentors and social workers.

The MDT focused on supporting social workers and mentors in their work with rangatahi and whānau and creating/supporting transition plans to prevent reoffending. However, one stakeholder said too much meeting time was used hearing updates, which limited the extent the group could work



proactively. Others noted that mentors were not always aware of rangatahi support needs, which may be explained by rangatahi still being in residence and/or a need to emphasise and clearly articulate the types of support the MDT can provide.

I saw social workers ... using those tables just for ... we'll let you know when we need something. We'll let you know when something's gone wrong or when something needs fixing ... I didn't see was social workers at those tables saying, 'here's what the goals are for the whānau. How can we work together to support their aspirations? Or here's what the young person wants to do. How can we think ahead, you know? (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Region 3: In region 3, the Fast-Track group determined they were not able to provide support to the MSA rangatahi in their region because he was older and his offending had been too serious and long-term to fit into the Fast-Track MDT group. The MDT continued to provide support to the sibling and whānau of the rangatahi through Fast-Track.

Well, the [region 3]one they didn't really manage to get any traction whatsoever with the Fast-Track table. They didn't want a bar of it. Yeah, so that never even took off. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

5.5.2. MDTs were most effective where they were tailored to rangatahi needs

MDTs in both Region 1 and 2 diverged from Fast-Track, but they maintained a strong working relationship with their Fast-Track counterparts which saved time and made collaboration easier.

It started at the Fast-Track table but clearly that was not the right group of people. So then those people identified who would be the right group of people, and a separate MDT, basically was established just for [rangatahi]. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Stakeholders saw the shift away from Fast-Track members as an important contributor to MDT success. Tailoring the group membership to the needs of each rangatahi made sure the right people and organisations to support their transition plans were around the table. For example, in Region 1 the MDT involved Fast-Track agencies but changed agency representation to focus on MSA rangatahi and whānau needs. Fast-Track representatives assisted in finding other suitable agency representatives.

I think it has to be tailored to the kids the way that [region 1] have done it for [rangatahi], it's his team. And I think that is actually the best way. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

This approach was more challenging in Region 2 because there were initially six rangatahi within the region and some of the site social workers were responsible for two rangatahi. Tailoring group membership to each rangatahi would mean six different groups, though membership could overlap.

In [region 2], this wouldn't necessarily have to be the same people that would sit around each of those kids their team ... If you were going to do that in [region 2] with that volume of kids, you would have to be way more specific. You would have to be actually, different people sitting around the table. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)



5.5.3. Stakeholders identified open communication, leadership and transparency as success factors

The MDTs played an important role in two of the three regions. They were working well because they had:

- **Consistent and open communication:** A close working relationship and regular communication between the site social worker and mentor, and MDT meeting enabled the regional representatives of various agencies involved to contribute to MSA. Social workers and mentors shared first-hand information with the MDT so the groups could collectively monitor progress, identify and mitigate any potential concerns and risks. In region 1, the site social worker and mentor both attended the weekly MDT meetings.

The social worker is the main person...needs to always be present in the MDT. [The social worker is] the one who's connecting with all these people. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- **Agency commitment, leadership and experience:** Stakeholders described high levels of commitment and engagement among MDT representatives. Members with extensive knowledge, connections, leadership and authority within their respective agencies enabled immediate decision-making and timely responses to rangatahi and whānau challenges that were identified and discussed at the MDT meetings.

Everyone's just so responsive. And you know, like, if there's anything urgent that needs to be discussed, people are so like, ready to drop other stuff to attend to the MDT. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

We have to make quick decisions... same day decisions...some people can make things happen really fast...It's like, let's discuss this, and let's make a decision right now. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- **Transparency and accountability:** Agencies and organisations were transparent and held each other accountable for following through on planned actions. This aspect of the MDTs was stronger where there was a role in the group for recording and following up on planned actions supported by strong leadership.

It just makes things easier and much more transparent as well, in terms of what is your agency doing. What can we do to make this happen for this whānau? (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

It's better if you've got somebody facilitating it and kind of keeping track of it...You've got to have somebody who's recording the kind of actions and chasing up...to make sure the actions [are] actually being done. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)



6. Support for rangatahi to transition to the community

Stakeholders described longstanding challenges in Oranga Tamariki linking youth justice residences and site social workers. Once rangatahi were placed in residence, site social workers knew they were safe, knew where they were and that they were being cared for so they could turn their attention to other rangatahi in crisis on their caseloads.

The intention of the MSA transition process was to bridge the residential and community phases for rangatahi. Bridging the phases required MSA to provide the physical environment rangatahi required (living situations), support relationships and address factors associated with reoffending.

For rangatahi, transition from the residential phase and into the community phase was not just a change in living environment. The key areas of transition for rangatahi also included change in:

- **Structure:** A shift from a highly structured environment in the residential phase with firmly scheduled bedtimes, wake up times, exercises and hour by hour daily plans to a more unstructured environment.
- **Kaimahi relationships:** Close relationships with residential phase kaimahi were not maintained in the community as kaimahi and rangatahi returned to their regions.
- **Therapeutic care:** Rangatahi had ongoing therapeutic care in the residential phase and while there was some follow-up from the residential phase clinical team, it largely stopped as they transitioned.
- **Connection or reconnection with whānau:** Rebuilding whānau relationships after being away in residential settings.
- **Access to other mates and social media:** Leaving the stable MSA cohort in residence and being in the community with access to friends and social media.

6.1. Rangatahi living situations needed more preparation for rangatahi arrivals in the community

Preparing an appropriate place for rangatahi to live in the community was an important part of the transition process that had to be completed, as much as possible, before the rangatahi exited the residential phase. Rangatahi preferences were important but availability of an appropriate place to stay with whānau and the views of the Courts and Oranga Tamariki kaimahi all influenced the outcome.

It's more often the case that the young person has got nowhere to naturally transition to, and you end up doing a massive amount of work to even just try and identify where might be an option for them to transition to. And that's the biggest failure of transition at the moment, is because that that is quite often young people are in residence in the week before they do leave, they still not sure where they're going, let alone what they're going to be doing (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

The transition plans included details about living arrangements and physical items for rangatahi. Some stakeholders thought they had too much focus on physical items for rangatahi and whānau



living arrangements and not enough focus on activities and supports to engage rangatahi and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

It was way too much focus in those transition plans on the purchase of things. I don't know how that got created, the conversations about transition plans became, what can you buy, or what can we purchase, or what are you going to get. Once that toothpaste is out of the tube, really hard to put it back in. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Transition plans specified that half of the rangatahi would return to whānau with the others moving into independent living arrangements or transitional housing (Table 7). For one rangatahi, Oranga Tamariki, the rangatahi and his whānau agreed to a return to the whānau home, but this did not happen due to Judge's orders.

Table 7. Oranga Tamariki community rangatahi profiles and interview information, living location at time of release to community.

| Initial community placement | Number of rangatahi |
|---|---------------------|
| 'Home', with parents or other whānau member | 5 |
| Transitional housing – independent living | 2 |
| Supported Oranga Tamariki house | 1 |
| Independent living | 1 |

Many stakeholders considered a shift to 'step down' accommodation or 'supported living' as an intermediate step between residence and the community would have been beneficial for the rangatahi. They considered this approach would allow rangatahi to adapt to maintaining a routine and structure in their lives in the community with some extra protection in place.

Those 'step-down' homes that had been proposed in the original design but did not materialise, where someone would have moved from that highly structured environment to a semi-structured environment with almost parental figures living there, guiding you, helping you make good decisions, etc. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Overall, I would have loved to have seen all of these boys go into a transitional living arrangement situation rather than going home. I don't think any of them was ready at 12 weeks to go into the community, let alone into some of the independent kind of living situations they've ended up in and because of their age and the bridges they've burnt and where they're at in terms of just independence. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

In the MSA pilot, the rangatahi moving into independent living found that when they arrived their accommodation was not prepared with the necessities such as food for the first days, furniture, plates and cutlery. Mentors and site social workers had to scramble with rangatahi to purchase the necessities at the last minute. Rushing this process created added stress for rangatahi and their key mentors right at the start of transitions.

The house, yeah but like, nothing that was in my plan was even ready. I had to wait around, wait for Oranga Tamariki and s**t. (Rangatahi)



Other examples of delays in setting-up transition plan elements affected gym memberships, club memberships and driving lessons. Internet connections and Work and Income support took notably longer to arrange. In some cases, they took as long as two months. Mentors and site social workers thought these arrangements could have been made earlier to provide stability for rangatahi as they moved out of residence.

But what it does do, is when we've got all these partners sitting around the table who are meant to be doing the housing area and meant to be getting the Wi Fi on, he's only just got it on last week. He's meant to be doing driving lessons. They're still waiting for the money to come through for driving lessons. That's MSA sending it through. It puts things on pause in terms of the plan that we've put out because we have to put a plan out. (Mentor)

One rangatahi also began their transition without a supply of an important medication, leading to a gap in treatment while appointments could be arranged for a new prescription.

He had a psychiatry appointment yesterday with [mental health provider] because he came up with no medication, which I think was an issue when he was released. So he's been off his meds for about a week now, which is a huge contributing factor to his wellbeing as well. (Site social worker)

Rangatahi transition plans also included significant purchases like televisions and gaming consoles. A number of these purchases were declined by Oranga Tamariki. When requests for funding to buy the items included in plans were declined, rangatahi saw that as a broken promise and a failure to deliver part of the MSA programme. Social workers and mentors were put in a difficult position explaining why things in rangatahi plans could not be delivered.

Another broken promise, and that's been the big kōrero from the rangatahi. Which seems to be never ending cycle that we hear with our whānau as well. Another broken promise. (Mentor)

Some mentors reported they had to make changes to their plans to support rangatahi outside of material purchases because they could not access funding.

We were told that we could ... come up with a gold star plan ... so we suggested, cool, we can do that, we can provide a gold star plan but we need a gold star bank account or a gold star support system. Now we've got the MDT team, the multi-disciplinary team and they've been amazing but as we got closer to having the boys back into the community, all our systems started getting shut down. Our funding, all of a sudden, we've got no money for this and no money for that. I had to, a week before [rangatahi] was released, readjust the plan so that it suited ... no costing at all. (Mentor)

Together with the national MDT oversight group, the MDTs helped overcome barriers to accessing support. For example:

- **Housing:** the Region 1 MDT responded to the accommodation needs for the whānau of their rangatahi through Kainga Ora. Without the MDT it would have taken longer to arrange.

His family got evicted from their home so it's just a lot of stress in terms of accommodation ... Education are also part of the MDT as well because of the [sibling's] needs ... We're not only



looking at MSA rangatahi but also his whānau.... When his whānau is good, then he's good.
(Oranga Tamariki MDT member)

- **Work and Income:** Access to Work and Income entitlements for rangatahi was a challenge and, for many, had been delayed after the transition to the community. Connecting directly with senior Ministry of Social Development staff through the MDT meant some of the delays were quickly sorted.

... When there's been different things that we've wanted to progress, they have been able to push things along, or at least connect people up, and they've definitely taken a really strong interest in the MSA programme and how it's going, which I think has been quite good ... they've definitely been able to connect people up with the with the right contacts, which has been really helpful. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Clear boundaries on what could be included and what resources were available needed to be set consistently from initial planning in the residential phase through the transition hui and transition to the community. It was important for rangatahi to understand where those boundaries sat as well as MSA programme kaimahi from residential phase to community phase and the wider group of stakeholders interacting with rangatahi.

6.2. Rangatahi and mentors formed strong relationships

Alongside the work done by social workers, mentors offered broad support for rangatahi through their transition to the community. Both site social workers and mentors had contact time with the rangatahi and to a lesser extent whānau, while staying in constant contact with each other.

Table 8. Examples of the support mentors provided to rangatahi to transition to the community.

| Type of support or activity | Examples from interviews |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Helping to access support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transporting rangatahi to activities and appointments and assisting them to access support including accompanying them on appointments. • Advocating on behalf of rangatahi to Oranga Tamariki and other services including Police. |
| Helping with living arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One mentor moved in to live with their rangatahi in independent living for the first two-weeks of the transition period so he would not be alone in the house. The mentor helped with cooking, daily routines, and a personal television when one could not be sourced through MSA. The most important aspect of the arrangement was that the mentor and rangatahi could spend extra time together, particularly in the evenings. This approach required many extra hours beyond the 30 hours of funded contact time. Some stakeholders expressed concern about maintaining professional boundaries but others saw the extra support as a success factor for the rangatahi. |
| Developing life skills | <p>Mentors added to the kete rangatahi developed in the residential phase through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooking lessons, shopping for ingredients for recipes chosen together and cooking shared meals • Hobbies like playing music • Negotiating day to day life. |



| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Education and employment support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to engage with Work and Income work brokers and preparation for job searching including CV development and interview practice. • Support to prepare for and obtain the next step in rangatahi driver licences. |
| Physical activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping rangatahi to get regular exercise by attending the gym alongside them, supporting them to join sport and martial arts clubs. |
| Other practical support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting rangatahi to get a bus card, shopping with them for things like clothes and supporting them with appointments like haircuts. • Touching base with whānau of rangatahi where appropriate. |

Though there were learnings in the residential phase about ways to further develop mentor relationships with rangatahi and whānau, almost all rangatahi – mentor relationships formed a stronger connection than rangatahi had experienced in other mentoring experiences. Relationship building was helped by doing ‘fun activities’ together.

The mentor he's got now is really good. He doesn't have that background but he's actually a really good role model for [rangatahi]. He's quite young, a Māori man that's connected with [rangatahi] quite well in those sort of key areas that we would want in a mentor. (Site social worker)

[Mentor] is the most solid mentor. Not like the other ones who just pick me up, drop me off. (Rangatahi)

[Is the mentor good for you?] Yeah, the bro has good intentions. (Rangatahi)

The relationship did not work for one mentor and rangatahi pair for a short period where the rangatahi and mentor clashed. The rangatahi refused to engage further so the mentoring role was taken up by the Oranga Tamariki site social worker. The mentor was later replaced by two new mentors with each focused on different areas of support for the rangatahi.

There were other mentor changes where the young person moved locations. One of the rangatahi who transitioned into independent living had to move back to region 2 following a return to residence. The mentor role was transferred to a new mentor based in region 2.

As for Oranga Tamariki kaimahi in the residential phase, site social workers and mentors demonstrated their commitment to supporting rangatahi. They worked intensively to support rangatahi in the weeks immediately following transitions.

6.3. Risk factors identified in transition plans were evident as rangatahi connected with mates and adjusted to living with less structure

Rangatahi Good Life plans included thinking about the things rangatahi found triggering and the things that might get in the way of achieving their goals. Mentors and site social workers worked to identify and address factors creating a risk of reoffending for rangatahi.

Moving into a less structured environment

In the residential phase, many MSA kaimahi were concerned about how the change from a highly structured environment to a much less structured environment in the community would be



managed. In the community, rangatahi needed to implement their own day to day routines. Though rangatahi had the support of their mentors and in some cases their whānau, stakeholders recognised that maintaining a structured routine would be challenging for any rangatahi.

But we know that there was a big risk factor for their offending, and coming from this high structure, where they've never had to think about what to do when they're bored. It's the biggest risk ever. (MSA residential kaimahi)

We took them from a highly structured programme environment, placed them in effectively independent living ... with mentor support and social work support and a job lined up. And, after work, you'll go to the gym and you'll do these things. And we failed to take into account the fact that they were 17 year old young men who'd effectively been locked up for three months, four months, and their focus was on partying. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

The risk was particularly acute immediately after release. Rangatahi had day to day plans laid out for the first twelve-weeks in the community as part of their transition plan but not all activities or elements of the plans were in place immediately. Weekends and evenings were also times without activities planned where boredom could set in and increase both the opportunity and risk of becoming involved in offending behaviour. Rangatahi had to resist the urge to chase the adrenaline of offending when they were bored.

- Two rangatahi transition plans identified boredom and free time as a risk factor for rangatahi. One rangatahi identified unsupervised time as a risk, noting that the rangatahi needed more routine and structure in his plan.
- Even with the hours of support for rangatahi from mentors, the evening and weekend hours when rangatahi were not involved in an activity or working with a support person were higher risk times because rangatahi were less likely to have their mentor present or be participating in an activity.
Particularly on weekends, because the problems we had with our rangatahi when they first came out of residence. These were all at nighttime and were all on the weekend, right?
(Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)
- Some of the purchases, for example televisions and gaming consoles, that were declined in the transition planning process had been included in plans as a coping mechanism for times where rangatahi might get bored.

The Christmas holidays caused similar issues. Activities like courses were on breaks. Many of the mentors went away on holiday and/or were spending time with their whānau. Rangatahi were spending time with whānau who in some cases were a trigger for their offending.

That just added a whole new layer of frustration because courses were closing, we were all going on break for Christmas. The consistency that we needed with courses and social workers being at work, that wasn't a thing. They came out the week that Labour Weekend happened as well. So we went straight into a three-day weekend with no support. (Site social worker)

Mentors and social workers developed plans with rangatahi for the Christmas period that included when they would be available and would visit rangatahi. Mentors provided rangatahi with ways of getting in touch and put back-ups in place to cover time away. Two rangatahi attended Christmas programmes run by the mentors' organisations. Some other rangatahi had courses provided by one of the mentor organisations arranged and paid for but did not attend.



I took him home, where we sat down at the table, me, him, his parents and we talked about the plan over the Christmas, New Year's period, where they're most vulnerable and they get a bit bored. He hadn't had Christmas at home for about three to four years, I think, since he was like 10 or something. (Mentor)

I have to give it up for the mentor, travelling up to [rangatahi location] all the time and during Christmas when he was away, they had backups coming up but *he* wouldn't really engage with them. (Site social worker)

Mentors were in the best position to help rangatahi shift into a new day-to-day structure in the community. Part of their role was helping rangatahi adhere to the planned structure, which included picking rangatahi up, travelling with them to appointments and activities and spending time with them. But even with the mentoring resource that exceeded what was available for transitions from other youth justice residences, it was not possible for mentors to be present all the time. The extent mentors were available after hours varied. Rangatahi could also choose not to adhere to the agreed plans and structure, though this was a significant issue for only one of the rangatahi where there was a breakdown in the rangatahi – mentor relationship.

Reconnecting with mates

Aside from their connection through MSA, many of the rangatahi had longstanding friendships from prior time together in residence and/or growing up together. Risk factors included:

- Saying no to offending with mates who they do not want to let down.
- Resisting the urge to offend when their peers have material possessions and money that they do not have.

Rangatahi stayed in touch with the rest of the MSA cohort through a group chat. Site social workers and mentors were unsure whether staying connected was overall positive or negative but it could not be prevented.

- Rangatahi most commonly identified their social connections when asked what might lead them to reoffending. Rangatahi reconnected with their friends in the community and many talked about the pressure of being asked to go out and do things outside their plans including offending behaviour, drugs and alcohol.

[Do they influence you?] Nah. Not my close mates, my close mates don't. Just the ones that I meet in here. I just didn't wanna leave them hanging. (Rangatahi)
- Five rangatahi identified friends as a trigger for offending in their transition plans. Rangatahi strategies to reduce the risk from mates included:
 - Showing maturity in distancing themselves from mates who might influence them to offend
 - Being a good role model for mates who might influence them.
 - Exiting the residential phase away from their home communities to be away from the mates they offended with.
- One whānau moved their rangatahi to a town away from the main whānau home. Both of the rangatahi moving into independent living were moving away from their hometown in part to stay away from trouble.

Returning to the community increased rangatahi access to substances that were not available in the residential phase



In the residential phase rangatahi did not have access to any alcohol or drugs. For many, use of substances was a part of their daily life in the community before entering supervision with residence. Five of the rangatahi profiles included drug and alcohol use as a trigger for their offending behaviour.

I using any substances and s**t? Nah, I used to but not anymore. (Rangatahi)

Yeah a bit but I'm not addicted, I don't get angry. But it was just weed. It's not that bad. (Rangatahi)

Though AOD use was addressed in the therapeutic care provided in the residence, it had not been possible to arrange for a specialist drug and alcohol counsellor. Returning to the community meant rangatahi were able to access alcohol and drugs, which increased the risk of re-offending and destabilised living situations.

- Two rangatahi engaged in excessive alcohol consumption which destabilised their independent living arrangements.
- One whānau saw 'weed' use as a way of self-medicating and approved.

It's not often you get a mum going 'I need him to be on marijuana.' But that's a conclusion she's come to from past stuff. So judging from what [mum] is saying, when he's high on weed, he's fun, he's engaging with his siblings and when he's not, he's a bit more oppositional and not really wanting to engage, wanting to do his own thing. (Rangatahi)

It was difficult to connect rangatahi with AOD support in the community because service offerings were limited and rangatahi did not want to engage. Four rangatahi had AOD counselling in their plans and three had been referred. One refused to engage.

We have the drug and alcohol people in Auckland but [rangatahi] hasn't engaged with them, so I've been engaging with them but we've got to the point now where he's just going to have to be a walk-in until they can see he's dedicated, then they'll allocate him a solid counsellor. (Site social worker)

6.4. Transitions to the community broke the continuity of the therapeutic support offered in the residential phase

The transition to the community was also a transition from an environment with therapeutic support on hand to one where it was much more limited. Stakeholders observed that the MSA cohort and all rangatahi fitting the MSA target group needed specialist therapeutic support informed by experience transitioning young men from youth justice or prison into the community.

It was difficult to connect rangatahi with appropriate sources of support. The existing relationships with the residential phase clinical kaimahi meant they were able to provide some ongoing therapeutic support mostly by video call, but it was irregular because they had returned to their other roles.

We started that in residence, and we did not carry those golden threads through into community effectively enough because the transition hui were rushed. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)



Site social workers and mentors were not well placed to continue the work started by the clinical team. They could have therapeutic conversations during their interactions with rangatahi but they did not have the depth of expertise for the specialist support rangatahi needed.

I think there's been a lot of efforts put in, in that sort of space [psychological support] but that ongoing, actual support has not been there ... he's had a lot of trauma in his life and it's been compounded ever since he was little and I think he hasn't had the opportunity fully to engage in ongoing psychology support. (Site social worker)

Rangatahi willingness was also a barrier to bringing other services in for support. Site social workers and mentors reported that rangatahi often did not want to participate in counselling.

Oh nah, that's bulls**t. That therapy thing is bulls**t. It doesn't even work. It's boring. I don't know, because it just wasted our time. (Rangatahi)

And we'd offered them, like some kind of therapy, whether it be family therapy or individual therapy. [Rangatahi] obviously wasn't keen for that at all, wouldn't even entertain the idea of just meeting someone. (Site social worker)

Beginning with a new person or service in the community for that therapeutic support would require rangatahi to build trust in a new relationship. This was an issue for rangatahi receiving support inside other youth justice residences as well. One site social worker described the challenge.

So if he starts engaging with psychology in residence and they develop a great rapport, let's say, if they had a psychologist and he was able to do that in there. He comes out and then that rapport stops and then we get another person on board and then that starts that therapeutic relationship again. And that's very re-traumatising. It's a very uncomfortable, vulnerable space to be in. I think most adults don't feel comfortable doing that, let alone the youth of today. (Site social worker)

Despite these challenges, some rangatahi were successfully connected with mental health support services in the community including alcohol and drug treatment and a psychiatric assessment. One site social worker was requesting psychological assessments through the Courts.

6.5. Engaging rangatahi in employment, education and training provided structure and gave rangatahi a focus, which supported success

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of addressing the criminogenic factors for the rangatahi to reduce the risk of reoffending.

I don't hear people analysing the offsetting of criminogenic factors or the offsetting or criminal pathways, and I think this academy has shown that that's possible and it's right. If you don't do that, what are we doing? Just holding kids and then fingers crossed they won't offend. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Reducing risk of offending in part relied on the reduction of risk factors and increase in prosocial connections and activities. Examples of prosocial activities put in place for rangatahi included:



- **Engaging rangatahi with a main positive activity in the form of education, training and employment.** Engagement in pro-social activities, including courses, was a marker of success to stakeholders.

... Engagement in some pro-social behaviour... I'm not talking about saying manners or anything, clearly, but it's involving the sport, maybe some work skills, you know, and keeping involved in that. Engaging and staying on with the skills, life skills and work programme.
(Stakeholder)

Not all rangatahi transitioned to the community knowing what their main activity would be. For example, some wanted to begin a course or find a job but had not yet been accepted on one. Three rangatahi had employment arranged to start as soon as they were back in the community. Transition plans for other rangatahi focused on working with mentors, site social workers and other supports like Work and Income to find the right opportunity.

Because what we weren't able to do, from a residence point of view, is kind of test exactly what these boys wanted to do. They had ideas of the kind of jobs they might want but of course, in a residence, you're limited in how you can kind of test that. So you think you're interested in plumbing but actually... (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- **Education and training.** All of the rangatahi had achieved well in the tutoring they received inside the residence but stakeholders described challenges in continuing education and training in the community. The timing of graduation from the residential phase made it difficult because there were few courses available for an immediate start. Some courses also had an entry age of 16 which meant some rangatahi could not take part.

Because of the way education is structured, the option provided to them was online Te Kura, and it just wasn't what these boys need. ... There's gotta be something better. Had a couple of these boys been able to go to a classroom environment, we could have very different outcomes today, because Te Kura was not, it wasn't the right tool. ... If we're trying to change the trajectory of someone's life, we need to either do it through ... education or employment.
(Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- **Employment.** Most rangatahi were more interested in employment and beginning to earn their own money than in education. They thought finding a job would be a key thing to keep them from reoffending and had employment, predominantly labour or trades jobs, as part of their transition plan. For some, obtaining money had been a motivator in their offending.

These are all young men that kind of want to work, they want to earn money, they want to live independently, and even if we know they're not going to be fully ready for that. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

6.6. Activities to support rangatahi cultural connections took time and some were disrupted by returns to residence

All of the MSA participants were rangatahi Māori and participated in cultural activities in the residential phase. Strengthening rangatahi connections with their culture and whakapapa was part of the intention of MSA. In the community phase, the design included two points of connection:



- **Iwi involvement:** On a case-by-case basis there was the potential for rangatahi to have their iwi involved in MDTs and support rangatahi as part of their plans.
- **Activities with mentors:** Mentors could work with rangatahi and their whānau to put in place activities to support rangatahi and whānau to connect with their iwi and whakapapa.

Many also included activities to continue to connect with their whakapapa and their culture following their transitions to the community but progress for many was disrupted by returns to residence. Connecting with whakapapa required joint planning with whānau and whānau involvement so took time to plan.

I definitely think that there could have been more resource to make [rangatahi and whānau connection] to cultural side happen because there was a really cool cultural component ... of how they could reconnect our rangatahi but then funding was an issue, even though, at the start, we were told funding wasn't an issue. Like, we went and made this amazing programme and then we couldn't even run it. (Site social worker)

Mentors and site social workers could be sources of support for rangatahi connections with their culture and their whakapapa. One mentor from a kaupapa Māori provider supported his rangatahi to participate in a noho marae and in mau rakau in the community.

Rangitāne was one of the sources of connection to culture for rangatahi in the residential phase. Later in the transition period, Oranga Tamariki provided funding for Rangitāne to visit and connect with rangatahi to carry that connection through into the community phase. This included visiting rangatahi who had returned to supervision in residence.

6.7. The death of one participant had a deep impact on the rangatahi

One of MSA participants passed away early in the transition to the community, during the period covered by this part of the evaluation. The experiences of that rangatahi and the circumstances of their passing are confidential and therefore not included in this report.

However, this unexpected event had a significant impact on the other rangatahi. They were close to the rangatahi who passed and most had known him before MSA, including longstanding friendships from the community for some. Oranga Tamariki recognised the impact the rangatahi passing would have for other rangatahi so national office staff communicated the event to site social workers and mentors so they could inform rangatahi they were supporting as soon as possible.

6.7.1. The initial response from Oranga Tamariki was intensive

Oranga Tamariki and MSA leadership came together to plan the response, which included:

- **Contacting the mentors:** Oranga Tamariki contacted the mentors to make sure they would be available to support rangatahi through the weekend following news of the death.
- **Supporting all rangatahi to attend the tangi:** Oranga Tamariki covered the costs of travel for rangatahi and their mentors to attend the tangi. This included arranging for compassionate bail for one of the rangatahi who was in a youth justice residence at the time. Oranga



Tamariki also paid for appropriate clothing for the tangi, though one paid for his own clothing out of money he had earned working since his return to the community.

We ensured that all of the boys were able to be at the tangi for as much time as they wanted.
(Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

- **Bringing Oranga Tamariki kaimahi to Region 2:** The response also included bringing members of the MSA residential phase kaimahi, social workers and other staff to region 2 to create a hub to support rangatahi. The aim was to be available to provide therapeutic support to any of the rangatahi who wanted to take it up.

The one thing that I think no one could have probably foreseen is just the level of intensity required for these young people. Particularly sort of December, with the tragic death of one of them. And just then what that meant for the others and the grief and all those other things. It was intense. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

It is important to note that the rangatahi death had an impact on the Oranga Tamariki kaimahi as well. Residential phase kaimahi, those from other youth justice residences and members of the Oranga Tamariki national office team had all spent time with him and were also grieving.

I actually would have liked to have just gone to show my respects because I've known him really for a long time. (Oranga Tamariki kaimahi)

Part of the response was to manage the risk of bringing the MSA rangatahi together in the community at a time of heightened emotion. There was a concern that this could be a trigger for rangatahi absconding so additional staff were present to manage these risks. The intensity of the Oranga Tamariki response felt overwhelming for some of the rangatahi and mentors. One mentor said he wanted to give his rangatahi space to pay respect to the whānau and to grieve in his own way and refused to pressure his rangatahi to engage or to stay with him all the time.

We're letting him grieve in his own way. I ain't going. He already knows where to go if he needs support. He already knows. And the thing that was picked up on, was the relationship that was built, the bonds that were built between the mentor and rangatahi was clearly picked up. (Mentor)

Some of the rangatahi did not follow the plans laid out for where they should be through the visit to region 2 for the tangi. Interviewed whānau and Oranga Tamariki kaimahi considered the behaviour was part of rangatahi wanting to grieve in their own way.

Apparently, when he did run away, he was sleeping at the cemetery, by [rangatahi who passed away]. Him and his mates, all his mates, they were all at the cemetery. He said, 'I went to go and sleep at the cemetery because I wanted to sit next to [rangatahi who passed away].
(Whānau)

6.7.2. Support for rangatahi continued after the initial response but could have been strengthened with additional support earlier

Whānau, mentors and site social workers all commented on the impact of the death on rangatahi.



Grief is hard. Grief is hard at our ages, let alone the young ones. (Whānau)

And I definitely know it impacted him because they had quite a close relationship and he was on the phone with him every day, like video calling him and stuff. And he had just caught up with him recently. (Mentor)

The other MSA kid, having that really affected him. ... He's just not mature enough to deal with these feelings, you know grief. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Site social workers and mentors did what they could to support rangatahi to manage their grief. They also offered to arrange counselling for rangatahi but none took up the offer.

He was offered it, yeah. Nah, I think he's had some conversations with the social worker. I think she's got something planned in place to sort of touch on that sort of stuff as well. And I've let him know as well that if he did need to talk to anyone, even if not me, just to let me know and I can point him in the right direction and I think if he did want to, he'd say so. (Mentor)

He was supported by [mentor] but he refused the rest. He was definitely offered it. We definitely checked in with him daily and we were lucky that he had 24-hour support by the really good staff at [remand home]. So they were really hands-on and good at supporting him and having those discussions with him around grief and loss. (Site social worker)

Whānau felt that additional support, such as grief counselling with the group, would have supported the rangatahi to deal with their grief, and reduce their urge to reoffend. One whānau felt their rangatahi had reoffended after the tangi as a tribute to their friend. In hindsight, they felt that if support was wrapped around the rangatahi at that time, offering strategies for coping with their grief, and considering alternative ways to honour their friend, would have prevented the reoffending.

I would like [rangatahi] to do a little bit more work with a counsellor, someone like that, because I know that [rangatahi], he spoke a little bit about how he felt and what it made him feel like losing his friend but I think that he really needs to go a bit more deeper into that, just to help himself to release all that hurt. (Whānau)

I realised all of this was coming from was his feelings of losing his friend. So I looked at [rangatahi] and the first thing that came to my mind was [rangatahi] has gone back into careless mode because he's stuck. He's stuck in these emotions. (Whānau)

Oranga Tamariki stakeholders thought they could have put in place grief counselling through Rangitāne earlier. The rangatahi already had connections with Rangitāne and they were able to provide culturally appropriate support. This was put in place later in the community phase.



7. Supporting whānau through MSA

A focus on support for whānau was a point of difference for MSA compared to previous experiences with transitions from youth justice residence. Some of the MSA whānau had asked for and not received support in the past. Interviews provided good examples of whānau engaging with and benefiting from the whānau support. This part of the programme could be strengthened by beginning support for whānau earlier, strengthening the whānau role in transition planning, and offering a broader range of support.

Oranga Tamariki kaimahi recognised the importance of supporting whānau through MSA and saw it as a movement towards good practice in youth justice. Support for whānau was also one of the main motivations for rangatahi choosing to take part in MSA.

If this had not been the MSA programme, maybe I wouldn't be doing too much work with the whānau, because that sits sort of outside of my role in terms of a youth justice social worker, but because of how many eyes and all the pressure we have to work intensively. (Site social worker)

The point of difference this time was the promotion and the rights of whānau to be involved throughout and the rights of whānau to have social work provision. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Some whānau had not had full custody of their rangatahi for some time, and there was a need to strengthen the relationships between rangatahi and the whānau who would support them during the community phase.

Because it's like, I haven't had the chance to even nurture him because he left here when he was about 11 or 12. He hasn't been in my care full-time ever since. And that's one of the things I think I grieve for, is that I want my baby home but I want him to stay the baby too, I think. You know, just wanting to make up for that lost time. Whereas [rangatahi], you know, he's a teenager now, he's not a baby and he wants to do teenage things. (Whānau)

7.1. Whānau support could have started through the residential phase

The importance of beginning transition planning early also applied to working with whānau. Understanding whānau needs before or early in the residential phase would mean whānau support could be provided before rangatahi returned to the community, preparing whānau to support rangatahi transition plans. Some stakeholders suggested that intensive engagement with whānau should begin before the residential phase.

We should absolutely relentlessly focus on bringing those people together before [rangatahi] goes into the academy. Then we've got a starting position of understanding, then we've got a starting position of engagement, of rationale ... understanding whānau need and rangatahi need should absolutely be much more parallel. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Some whānau said they did not experience adequate connection or support during the residential phase. Oranga Tamariki stakeholders reported some site social workers were less familiar with whānau needs in the early stages of MSA than they would have expected given the amount of time



they had worked with their rangatahi. For site social workers, it reflected their focus on the rangatahi and they wanted more opportunity to bring their knowledge into planning processes.

The social workers just didn't seem to know who these boys were, didn't know anything about their whānau, aspirations or their whānau situations. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Whānau who did receive support while their rangatahi was in the residential phase felt more confident and able to support their rangatahi to achieve their transition plan when they returned to the community. All whānau felt that having a transition plan was a good idea, however it required the supports and resources to be in place for the rangatahi to be able to stick to their plan.

The times that [rangatahi] has come out before... I was going through things myself so I wasn't really focusing on trying to support [rangatahi], just trying to get myself through my days. But this time around, it's like I've had enough time to really think about how I need to support [rangatahi] as well as manage my own home life and I feel like it's working. (Whānau)

7.2. Examples of whānau support included access to a life coach and practical support like furniture and housing

Many mentors formed positive relationships with whānau. While their focus was primarily on the rangatahi rather than their whānau, some had played a significant role in connecting rangatahi and whānau.

I think some of the mentors have actually been the ones that have developed quite positive working relationships with the families and provided a level of support. Certainly not therapeutic but they have provided another layer of support that the families wouldn't normally have had. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

Most of the mentors worked intensively with whānau but some thought working with whānau was not their role or doing so would compromise their relationship with their rangatahi. They were concerned rangatahi would not be comfortable being open with mentors if they thought mentors were reporting back to whānau. Some site social workers also provided some support for whānau but most had very limited capacity while managing their wider caseloads.

Most whānau were happy with the level of support they received. Before MSA one whānau described making multiple requests through their social worker to access relationship counselling to support mum and rangatahi to strengthen their relationship. Whilst initially placed in independent living, the rangatahi needed to return to home but the relationship and home environment was strained. The requested counselling or other support may have helped the home environment to be better equipped to support that rangatahi. They received support immediately once their rangatahi was part of MSA.

I'm walking on eggshells in my own home lately, since he's been home, because I don't want to upset him because he gets very angry. (Whānau)

Whānau of the MSA rangatahi often had other tamariki and rangatahi who needed support. Many of the rangatahi wanted support for their younger siblings as well as their parents. Some site social



workers and mentors connecting with whānau through MSA created opportunities to offer support to siblings to help siblings avoid following a pathway into youth justice.

Some of these whānau have younger children who need a welfare lens as well as a justice accountability lens. So that's also really exciting. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

7.2.1. Life coach parenting support was highlighted as a success

In one case, both local whānau and those located in another region were funded to access a parenting and life coach. Whānau had received individual and group support and were very positive about how it had benefited them. It had helped them to prioritise their needs, identify strategies for improving the relationship between rangatahi and their whānau, and work through other issues that affected them in their daily lives.

Just with [life coach], I'm just in a much better place now with myself and my family and my children. Like, everything is slowly working out for us and we're all being more involved as a family. So yeah, it's going really good. (Whānau)

She just kind of helps me learn a whole lot more about just myself really, like my feelings, like identifying where these feelings and thoughts are coming from and past childhood trauma and how to live with it today and not be stuck on them. (Whānau)

I love the work that she does. I'm very comfortable with her. She's helped me to explore a whole lot more within myself and open myself up to being more confident just in myself as a person and a mother. (Whānau)

Although support from the life coach had been successful, some stakeholders suggested the support could be tailored more to each whānau member. One had experienced difficulties accessing the life coach due to their whānau schedule and often struggled to access and engage with the support offered. Another stakeholder suggested whānau might have appreciated the opportunity to connect with support from their own local and/or iwi providers.

Oranga Tamariki stakeholders saw this whānau support as one of MSA's most significant successes.

... The parenting support for those parents has been, you know, amazing for [rangatahi] parents in particular. They've really embraced it and have made some huge changes, and I think for the other kids in that family. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

One of the greatest successes of this programme has been the parenting course that was put in place for the whānau [x]. (Oranga Tamariki stakeholder)

7.2.2. Whānau received practical support through housing and furniture

Rangatahi transition plans often included an element of practical support for their whānau including new furniture and support to access new housing. Seeing these changes happen for whānau because of their involvement with MSA was meaningful for rangatahi and a source of pride.



His mum getting stable housing has been probably a bigger factor to [his non-reoffending] than any of the other interventions. Well, the mentoring and that. (Site social worker)

One rangatahi requested a rubbish skip in his transition plan to enable his whānau to do a clean-up of their house. This was arranged in the transition period and the rangatahi helped to clean the property, which was a source of pride for the rangatahi.

He, in fact, [offered] to clean his mum and dad's property, you know, getting a garbage bin, things like that. He asked us and we were talking to MSD, to support that. (Site social worker)

7.2.3. Whānau wanted more clarity about roles

Whānau were unclear about where the boundaries sat for the site social worker and mentor roles. One whānau shared a challenging experience where both they and the mentor were present and unsure of each of their roles in addressing rangatahi behaviour. Some whānau said they wanted to know more about the boundaries of the mentor role in supporting rangatahi and whānau.



8. Examples of rangatahi experiences

Composite case study: Rawiri

This rangatahi case study is a combination of the real backgrounds and experiences of several of the participating rangatahi.

Rawiri is a 17-year-old rangatahi Māori who is passionate about sports, learning, and spending time with his mum and siblings.

After his father left the family Rawiri fell in with the wrong crowd, including anti-social groups and those older than him. He was not well supervised and spent a lot of time hanging with these crowds who he felt the need to impress because he was younger. Rawiri enjoyed school, and his mum said he was a diligent kid, but he disengaged at the start of high school when he was told he could no longer attend due to poor attendance. He fell out of contact with friends that would be considered 'pro-social', and hadn't engaged with his positive interests in a long time.

He first got into trouble at age 9 for stealing minor items and first came to the attention of Youth Justice at age 13.

Clinical experts reported his offending was connected to the adrenalin rush. He struggled to manage his emotions and felt let down in his relationships. Rawiri said he wanted to belong and was easily influenced by those around him. He tended to feel bad after offending, and was always thinking about the people he may have hurt later.



History with Oranga Tamariki

Rawiri first came to the attention of Oranga Tamariki shortly after he was born. Members of the community completed reports of concern regarding family violence and emotional and physical abuse. His history included:

- Prior remands in custody: 12
- Prior Youth Justice Family Group Conferences: 15
- Prior Reports of Concern: 10
- Substantiated findings of abuse or neglect: 5

Previous plans included: FGC plans, supervision order, supervision with activity order, supervision with residence order.

Involvement with the justice system

Rawiri first came to the attention of police at age 13. Since then, Rawiri has accumulated a number of active charges including:

- Unlawfully gets into motor vehicle
- Attempted unlawful taking of motor vehicle
- Burglary
- Aggravated robbery
- Unlawfully takes motor vehicle
- Escapes lawful custody
- Intentional damage.

Entering MSA

Rawiri took part in MSA because he felt it was a fast option to get out sooner than if he went to residence. He didn't know much about the programme except that it would involve a lot of exercise, which he was excited for.

Residential phase

Rawiri enjoyed the physical training parts of the programme and wished there had been more. The off-sites were his favourite part of the programme, particularly the overnight trip to the bush. He liked spending time with the boys he knew from the community and previous times in Youth Justice.

He wasn't sure about the therapeutic component, but said he learnt a breathing exercise to help him calm down.

Preparation to transition

Rawiri spent time meeting his mentor in the residential phase. They connected well and Rawiri was looking forward to spending time with his mentor on the outside. His whānau were able to visit and contribute to his transition plan. His mentor and social worker also attended. He felt that he was able to say everything he wanted to say, and that the staff wanted him to have a plan that truly reflected his aspirations.

His plan included:

- Transitioning to living independently
- Gaining employment in a trades job
- Exercising regularly, including signing up for kickboxing.

"It was going to be a little military style, like, not as much, it'd be military style but not hard on military style and that it's an opportunity to get out."

"I learnt how to make a hut, like with sticks and tarpaulin. I learnt how to march."

"[The difference with other Youth Justice Residences] Offsite, small, like group offsites. Like the marching and stuff and the classes are different. Like, we've got different classes, clinical stuff. We have those people that come in and talk to us like about their life, like how they grew up and stuff."

"They want us to plan our own plan because they don't want to make us do something we don't want to do. They want us to plan something that we want to do."

Good life plan

Rawiri's good life goals related to:

- Being part of a community (specifically related to gangs)
- Life: being safe and healthy
- Relationships.



Community phase

Rawiri has managed to mostly stay out of trouble. Post-residence, he stole from a shop, which he noted was a bit of a habit for him. He also breached some of his bail conditions. He has managed to stay in the community and out of residence.

His relationship with his mentor is strong, especially because they have common interests. His mentor supported him to settle in to independent living. He said his housing situation is 'big enough for me'.

He has some whānau support who he can lean on, but none he can stay with long-term. Being in independent living has helped strengthen the relationship he has with his family, as there are less people under the same roof and his mum is less stressed.

Outcomes

Prosocial engagement

- **Using positive communication tools:** Clinical data show Rawiri transitioned from using anger as a means to meet his goal to not intimidating others by the end of MSA.
- **Used coping mechanisms to regulate emotions:** Rawiri mentioned using the breathing tool provided through the therapeutic support to help him calm down.
- **Responds well to using routine/structure:** Rawiri is used to the structure of Youth Justice residence, so responded well to the structure of MSA. He struggled with the transition from a structured environment of residence to independent living. His mentor has supported to establish a schedule for him, but it is hard for him to stick to.
- **Taking ownership of actions and decisions:** The clinical data indicates Rawiri takes some ownership over his offending, where he previously didn't. Despite this, he is still somewhat influenced by his peers.

Treatment readiness, responsivity and gain

Readiness: Rawiri has shown positive changes in some of the domains from pre- to the end of residence. These include problem recognition, benefits of treatment, treatment of interest, treatment behaviours and treatment support domains. There were no negative changes.

Responsivity: Rawiri had no changes for most of the responsivity domains, but three positive increases in procrastination (2 points), intimidation (2 points), and rigidity (1 point) domains.

Gain: Rawiri rated highly for all of the treatment gain domains, rating the highest (3) on disclosure in programme, depth of emotional understanding of content, participation and therapeutic alliance

Reduction in risk factors

- **Engaging with health and wellbeing supports in place:** Rawiri has been prioritising physical wellbeing. Despite dropping kickboxing, he has recently joined a gym.
- **Contributing to team-based activities or situations:** Unknown
- **Engaged in positive activities:** Unknown
- **Engaged in education, training, or employment:** Rawiri has been keeping an eye out for roles, but isn't sure what career to pursue.



Composite case study: Teone

This rangatahi case study is made up of a combination of real backgrounds and experiences from several of the participating rangatahi.

Teone is a 15-year-old rangatahi Māori who is passionate about hunting and fishing, the gym, and spending time in nature.

He didn't have any issues at school, and was attending kura kaupapa Māori, but he stopped attending before he reached high school age. For the last two years, he has been attending education within the Youth Justice facilities

The first time he got into trouble was age 11 and he first came to the attention of Oranga Tamariki at a similar time.

Clinical experts believed his offending began as a means to meet basic needs around food and clothing as well as wanting things like a phone. This is consistent with historical offending by family members. Teone believed his offending can be related to anger from conflicts with whānau.

It was also noted that Teone was loyal to his peer group and lacked engagement in prosocial activities. He was a regular user of cannabis and may have undiagnosed ADHD.



History with Oranga Tamariki

Teone first came to the attention of Oranga Tamariki at age 11.

- Prior remands in custody: 4
- Prior Youth Justice Family Group Conferences: 11
- Prior Reports of Concern: 7
- Prior findings of behavioural and relationship difficulties: 4

Involvement with the justice system

Teone first came to the attention of police at age 11. Since then, Teone has accumulated a number of active charges including:

- Burglary x 18
- Unlawfully takes motor vehicle x 12
- Aggravated robbery x 3
- Rioting x 1
- Intentional damage x 1
- Escape lawful custody x 1

Entering MSA

Though initially reluctant, he decided to take part in MSA. He wanted to get out of residence early and said he would have had to stay in significantly longer if he did not take part.

“At the start of the MSA I was like f***in done. I just wanted to leave the MSA... Then when I got in like the finish, then I was all good...”

Residential phase

He liked that he knew the other boys in MSA. His whānau noted he had quite a close relationship with one of the boys.

Whānau thought the residence was challenging for him because he is quite mature for his age.

He was not a fan of the therapeutic interventions and said they were a waste of time.

“Cultural identity, that was a good thing I learned there. The Māori things, my pepeha, stories and s***. It was good to learn about that ...”

Preparation to transition

All of the whānau that needed to be there attended his transition hui. His whānau liked the plan, and it was his first ever transition plan for coming out of residence.

His plan included:

- Going to the gym
- Spending more time with his whānau
- Gaining NCEA credits through correspondence school.

“I’m not sure how being involved in the MSA will change things for him but that it will give more support and he will give it his best shot.” (Whānau)

Good life plan

He stated that his most important good life goals were relationships, excellence at play, knowledge and learning, happiness and agency. He noted that seeking out happiness can continue to his offending as his offending is often linked to getting money and money makes him happy.



Community phase

He got along really well with the mentor, who he described as having 'good intentions' and felt they had common interests. The whānau agreed he was a good fit and liked that he was also Māori. Despite this, Teone disengaged with his mentor for the most part as he thought mentoring was boring.

His plan was working well, and he was participating in everything he wanted to. He was getting fitter, lifting heavier weights.

He was doing well in terms of not offending, and was engaged in correspondence school until the holidays came around and he had more free time. He said it is hard in the community because he gets bored with staying at home. The passing away of one of the other MSA rangatahi affected him.

He began increasing his cannabis use, and was referred to AoD services. Soon after he reoffended and was taken in close to Christmas. He and his whānau were upset not to spend that time together. Now that he is in residence, his mentor is still going to come and visit him.

"Because that would've been my first Christmas out with them, like, together even."

"Most of the boys don't want to change, it's too late because they're too old and they're already in here. People only want to change when they're in here and they can't handle it."

Outcomes

He felt the MSA programme made a difference and changed everyone for the good, including himself. 'I know it changed me a little bit'. Teone noted that he stayed out for longer than he had before, around two months compared to his usual one month out of Youth Justice. He thinks the activities and learning through MSA helped him stay out for longer. He would recommend the programme to the right boys who want to change.

Prosocial engagement

- **Responding positively to challenging or stressful situations:** Unknown
- **Using positive communication tools:** Clinical data shows Teone improved from his intimidation behaviour to being more aware of the impact of his anger on others. There is still progress to be made before he does not use intimidating behaviour at all.
- **Used coping mechanisms to regulate emotions:** His whānau think he is better at regulating his emotions and more patient than before MSA.
- **Responds well to using routine/structure:** Although he had a plan with a schedule, this derailed once he had more free time.
- **Taking ownership of actions and decisions:** Teone has taken some responsibility for his offending. There is still progress to be made.

Reduction in risk factors

- **Engaging with health and wellbeing supports in place:** Teone was regularly going to the gym and lifting weights.
- **Contributing to team-based activities or situations:** Before offending, Teone and some of the others from MSA were planning to go camping together.
- **Engaged in positive activities:** Teone was engaged in gym and Te Kura.
- **Engaged in education, training, or employment:** Teone was completing correspondence school to gain further NCEA credits. Now that he is back in residence, he will continue with his education.

Treatment readiness, responsiveness and gain

Readiness: Teone has shown positive changes in some of the readiness to change domains from pre- to the end of residence. These include benefits of treatment, treatment distress, treatment goals and treatment behaviours domains. There were no negative changes.

Responsivity: Teone had positive changes for many of the responsivity domains, improving one point on procrastination, intimidation, rigidity, victim stance and procriminal view domains.

Gain: Teone rated low for all of the treatment gain domains, rating the highest (2) on appropriateness of behaviour in group. Notes mentioned he had difficulty sharing in a group but that he was more receptive one-on-one.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

Taha Wairua



Teone rated his wairua as a 7/10 before MSA and with no change after the programme. His whānau have seen significant changes for him. They think he has become more mature, more patient and more open in communicating – with siblings, parents. They felt he seems more comfortable in his own skin, able to be himself.

Taha Tinana



He said his taha tinana improved from a 5/10 before MSA to an 8 after. When he was in the community it progressed onward to a 9. He was regularly going to the gym and lifting weights to stay busy.

Taha Hinengaro



Teone said before MSA he would have rated his taha hinengaro as a 7/10, and that it was a 10 once he got out. Now that he is back in Youth Justice, it is back to a 7 or 8.

Taha Whānau



He rated his taha whānau as strong, around a 7 or 8 out of 10 consistently. He has a good relationship with his mum, and described them as 'mates'. Now he is back in residence, he calls her every day.

Composite case study: Sam

This rangatahi case study is made up of a combination of real backgrounds and experiences from several of the participating rangatahi.

Sam is a 17-year-old rangatahi Māori who is passionate about music, working out, and rugby.

When he grew up he had never been in stable housing. His relationship with his parents was fragile and had deteriorated over the last few years. He was grateful to have his girlfriend who was a strong support for him.

Sam had difficulty attending school consistently and went to around 10 different schools. He had a learning disorder, difficulty regulating his emotions and interpersonal issues. He was frequently truant and at age 16 stopped going altogether.

He started using cannabis and alcohol when he was 13. He fell into a crowd with people using methamphetamine, and began to use too.

The first time he got into trouble was age 13 for unlawfully getting into a motor vehicle.

Oranga Tamariki data notes that he has a lack of respect for authority and a lack of remorse for offending. Each time he was kicked out of a school or a relationship in his life broke down, he ended up offending. It was also connected to desire for material possessions, influence from his friends and a need to fund his substance abuse.



History with Oranga Tamariki

Sam first came to the attention of Oranga Tamariki from a young age. He was subject to his first Family Group Conference as a child offender at age 13.

- Prior remands in custody: 8
- Prior Youth Justice Family Group Conferences: 17
- Prior Reports of Concern: 6
- Substantiated findings of abuse or neglect: 0
- Prior findings of behavioural and relationship difficulties: 2

Involvement with the justice system

Sam first came to the attention of police at age 13. Since then, Sam has accumulated a number of active charges including:

- Aggravated robbery x6
- Unlawfully takes motor vehicle x 4
- Burglary x 4
- Unlawfully gets into motor vehicle x 4
- Aggravated assault x 3
- Possessing an offensive weapon

Entering MSA

Sam chose to take part in MSA to get out earlier than if he was in Youth Justice residence. He did not have much faith it would make a difference.

[I've been] "locked up and nothing has changed, why would something for 3 months do different?"

"The expectation is not to do crime again when you get out."

Residential phase

Sam came to like the daily routine of MSA and got on well with other rangatahi. It mattered that he knew them beforehand from Youth Justice residence and felt comfortable with them. He built a bond with them through the residential phase. Sam thought MSA was better than normal residence.

He was proud that he accomplished some NCEA credits he needed and was reading well.

"I didn't want to do it at the start, but I just want to finish now. Getting out and going off sites, it's boring but there's the physical stuff. MSA will help me get support when I leave, hoping to see my mentor when I get out of this s**t."

Preparation to transition

Sam spent some time identifying goals as part of his transition plan. He met his mentor and things appeared to be well set up for his transition to community. One big goal for him was to gain employment. From his perspective, this would keep him busy and allow him to be independent as he could spend money on whatever he wanted.

His plan included:

- Gaining employment
- Signing up to music lessons
- Joining his friends rugby team.

Good life plan

Sam identified that his good life would look like:

- Being a leader
- Being famous for rugby
- Feeling proud
- Being kind, caring and strong.



Community phase

When the community phase began, he was released to a transitional home. He was excited to leave MSA, and had created a list of things he would need for leaving, all of which he got. Experiencing a sense of freedom, he had a night where he and a friend were binge drinking on site. The housing provider found out and he was kicked out. He moved to a remand house.

Once he was back in the community, he started using cannabis, alcohol, and sometimes methamphetamine. He had been referred to AoD services but refused to participate.

He had achieved some aspects of his plan, including participating in team rugby. Oranga Tamariki supported him to buy clothes to exercise in. He was part of a gym, a rugby team, and had signed up for music lessons.

He had a job lined up and was about to start the week he was arrested for reoffending.

He thought his living situation had a lot to do with him reoffending. Because his offending is serious this time, and due to him nearing age 18, he will likely be transferred to adult prison.

'I don't have faith in me getting out this time.'

Outcomes

Sam didn't think MSA made any difference to him, saying 'everyone is all locked up' now. He said he didn't enjoy it, didn't learn anything and didn't think he got anything out of it. If he had the opportunity, he said he would do it again for the early release. In some ways he thinks it suits him being in Youth Justice, because there is a set structure *'[It's] better here, [I] know what it's like'*.

Prosocial engagement

- **Responding positively to challenging or stressful situations:** Sam improved on the power and control domain, progressing from feeling life is unfair and to take what you can, to trying to be fair in resolving disputes.
- **Using positive communication tools:** Clinical assessments show he progressed from being aware and concerned about the negative impact of his anger to eliminating intimidating behaviour. However this is inconsistent with his new charges.
- **Used coping mechanisms to regulate emotions:** Unknown.
- **Responds well to using routine/structure:** Sam has been in and out of Youth Justice much of his life, and prefers the structure in residence. He struggles to set structure when he returns to the community.
- **Taking ownership of actions and decisions:** Sam takes some responsibility for his decision making.

Reduction in risk factors

- **Engaging with health and wellbeing supports in place:** Sam was regularly exercising in the community, but was not engaging with AoD counselling that he had been referred to.
- **Contributing to team-based activities or situations:** Sam had joined a rugby team with some of his friends and had been regularly attending.
- **Engaged in positive activities:** He had signed up for music lessons.
- **Engaged in education, training, or employment:** Sam had a job lined up and was about to start a labour job when he reoffended.

Treatment readiness, responsivity and gain

Readiness: Sam has shown positive changes in all but three of the readiness to change domains from pre- to the end of residence. There were no negative changes.

Responsivity: Sam had positive changes for many of the responsivity domains, improving one point on denial, intimidation, victim stance and procriminal view domains, and two on power and control.

Gain: Sam rated mostly in the 2 (0-3 scale) for all of the treatment gain domains, with him rating low (1) for disclosure in programme.

Te Whare Tapa Whā

Taha Wairua



Sam thought his wairua was unchanged from MSA. He didn't think he had an increased understanding of himself, he didn't have a new sense of belonging or purpose, and had not improved relationships with his whānau, iwi or culture.

Taha Hinengaro



Although Sam didn't think he had changed, SAPROF assessments showed he improved across all four resilience domains; social competence, coping, self-control and perseverance. He also showed an improvement in the motivational domain of future orientation.

Taha Tinana



Sam was fitter than he had been before, and had been playing in a rugby team and going to the gym. He felt he was getting fitter. Now that he has returned to residence, he has lost some motivation, and said he is getting bloated.

Taha Whānau



Although some of his whānau relationships remain fragile, he has a supportive girlfriend who he is grateful for.



9. Key messages from this phase of the MSA evaluation

The table below provides a summary of what worked well in this phase of the MSA programme and the key learnings from the evaluation of the transition phase.

| What worked well | Key learnings |
|---|--|
| Early indications of outcomes | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for rangatahi through mentors and the effective MDTs connected with positive outcomes achieved in the community. Rangatahi spent longer in the community than in their previous transition from supervision with residence. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realistic expectations for rangatahi outcomes included reduction in the frequency and seriousness of offending, spending more time outside residence. Rangatahi could achieve positive outcomes in their broader wellbeing even where they had returned to residence. |
| Planning and design of the transition to the community | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design for transitions recognised the importance of supporting rangatahi in the community to achieving the programme outcomes. The community included intensive mentoring, support for whānau and community MDTs, which stakeholders saw as strengths compared to the support for transitions out of other youth justice residences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting detailed planning late in the residential phase impacted individual transition planning, bridging the residential and community phases and preparation of kaimahi for their roles in MSA. Beginning detailed planning for rangatahi transitions earlier would have created more opportunities to bring community kaimahi into rangatahi plans, potentially improving the quality and whānau involvement. Clear boundaries around what could be included in transition plans and what resources were available needed to be set and communicated consistently. |
| Implementation – roles and responsibilities | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site social workers had access to training through a community of practice to support their roles in MSA. Social workers wanted to apply their expertise to supporting whānau. Mentors had an intensive role that allowed them scope to respond to the needs of each rangatahi. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social workers needed capacity freed up to allow them to participate in training and development and to work in different ways. Stakeholders advocated for an approach that invested more in preparing social workers for the role and stepping back to let them work. Clarifying the roles of the mentors and site social workers in supporting rangatahi and whānau would help all kaimahi prepare for and fulfil their roles. MDTs tailored to individual rangatahi proactively supporting rangatahi and whānau were most effective. |
| Support for rangatahi to transition to the community | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The high intensity of support from the community mentors led to strong relationships and was a key point of difference from other youth justice residences. Site social workers and mentors demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting rangatahi, working intensively | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of rangatahi living situations including basic necessities, Work and Income arrangements and a main daily activity could smooth the transitions. Transitions from residence were changes in most aspects of the day to day lives of rangatahi. They moved out of the structure and access to therapeutic support in the residential phase and were exposed to |



| What worked well | Key learnings |
|--|--|
| <p>to support rangatahi in the weeks immediately following transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most mentors and rangatahi formed close relationships. • Connecting rangatahi with employment or courses right at the point of transition helped rangatahi move into a new structure. • Support addressed risk factors for re-offending and engaged rangatahi with positive activities. | <p>risk factors and triggers for offending in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including a ‘step-down’ living arrangement before full independent living or return to whānau could help rangatahi adjust more smoothly. • Rangatahi would likely have benefited from continuing the therapeutic care offered in the residential phase. Continuing the therapeutic care rangatahi received in residence required a high degree of expertise. Connecting rangatahi with new supports, including alcohol and drug counselling, in the community was difficult. |
| Support for whānau | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes for whānau could have positive effects for rangatahi even if they exited residence into independent living. • Offering support for whānau was a motivator for rangatahi to participate in MSA. • Support for whānau through the life coach, mentor support and access to housing made a positive impact. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whānau support happened at the same time as transitions to the community and after transitions, rather than before. • This part of the programme could be strengthened by beginning support for whānau earlier, strengthening the whānau role in transition planning offering a broader range of support. • Connecting with whānau was part of the mentor role but organisations who focused on whānau support appeared more able to extend their role from the rangatahi to the wider whānau. |

9.1. Evaluation next steps

The evaluation will conduct another round of data collection in May and June 2025 and produce a final report in late 2025.



Appendix One: Overview of the programme

THE HISTORY

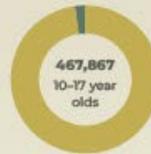
The backstory of how we got here

“We’re taking these young people out of the community so they don’t cause harm, and we’re making powerful, targeted interventions in their lives and giving them the very best shot to turn their lives around.”

Serious youth offending

We know that there is a small group who commit a significant proportion of the total offences by young people. For those who continue to offend, despite the efforts of those around them, current responses are not sufficient.

The Military-Style Academy Pilot (known as the MSA Pilot or the Academy) is designed to address that small proportion of serious and persistent young offenders, and help them turn their lives around.



Around 98% of 10-17 year olds in Aotearoa have no contact with the youth justice system.

And the majority of children and young people who offend are dealt with by the Police through alternative action on the frontline in our communities.

Causing harm to communities

As well as supporting the young people themselves and setting them up for future success, the MSA Pilot wants to achieve better outcomes for communities and victims. These include better public safety, reduced crime and rehabilitated teenagers, who make positive contributions to their communities.

Family Group Conferences are an important way for victims to be able to speak to young offenders and explain the harm their actions have caused. These are some of the things that our kaimahi have heard in the past:

- *I just want to know I can feel safe to walk down the street and not have to cross the road*
- *You don't understand that this is more than just the robbery. I have to claim insurance, I have to take time off work, it affects my income*
- *I want to see you do better for yourself because you have the potential to grow. You are not your past*

Government commitment

The Government has committed to addressing child and youth offending, with a target of reducing serious, repeat offending by 15%. In 2024, the Government has announced a range of initiatives to address this type serious, persistent youth offending. These include plans to introduce a new Young Serious Offender (YSO) declaration and Military-Style Academies (MSA).

Oranga Tamariki was directed to lead the establishment of a Military-Style Academy Pilot. We have worked closely with officials from NZ Defence Force, Ministry of Justice, NZ Police, other agencies and community groups to develop it. We looked at evidence from previous military-style programmes to understand what will give the teenagers taking part the best chance of success.

“There is a chance that we can help these young people, but we have to enable the courts, and we have to enable Oranga Tamariki to be able to deal with this in a different way, because the status quo doesn't work”.

KAREN CHHOUR,
MINISTER FOR CHILDREN

Learnings from the MAC (Military Academy Camps Programme 2010-2016)

Selection and referral process

Learning: The right young people were not always selected; serious or persistent offenders but not always both; escalated some young people to get them on the programme; low and reducing number of Supervision with Residence Orders being made.

MSA Pilot Remediation

Ensuring we have specialist assessment and expertise at the point at which decisions are being made about admission to the MSA. We have planned to have a wider range of professionals involved to enable the best decisions to be made about admission and to properly understand the young person, including the criminogenic factors that contribute to their offending.

Community phase of the programme

Learning: There was a strong need to ensure a better management of the transition into the community.

MSA Pilot Remediation

It has been recognised that the success of the MSA will be in large part dependent on the effectiveness of the programme once young people are transitioned into the community. There will be investment in services and supports to ensure the young person remains on track, their whānau is supported, and we have the right level of oversight and engagement occurring to ensure they succeed.

This includes engagement of mentors and supports for the young person; a focus on engaging whānau in the programme, including assistance and support to the whānau; provision of services to support plans.



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government



MILITARY-STYLE ACADEMY PILOT – OVERVIEW

Key information and fast facts

“The pilot is different from anything we’ve tried before. We’ve thought outside the box and been ambitious”.

What is the MSA Pilot?

The Military-Style Academy (MSA) pilot is a new programme. It lasts for 12 months and has three stages. It aims to help teenagers develop new skills and move into education, training or employment.

Top things to know

- This is a 12-month programme.
- There will be up to 10 teenagers on the programme.
- They will all be aged 15 to 18 years old.
- They could come from anywhere in the country.
- They will all have been sentenced to a supervision with residence order.
- They will all have had previous Youth Justice Plans and spent time at a YJ residence before.
- Each teenager will have a tailored plan for their return to the community.
- Whānau (family), will be involved and supported throughout.

Designing the programme



These are the 9 key components that we have embedded into the design of the MSA Pilot.

How does the MSA Pilot work?

The Academy consists of a 12-month programme, with three key stages:

- The first stage is assessment of the teenagers, including a clinical perspective and conversations with their whānau, who will be involved throughout the programme. Ahead of sentencing, the MSA pilot will have been explained to the teenagers, whānau, and youth justice professionals (e.g. youth advocates) through Family Group Conferences.
- The second is a residence stage, based at an existing youth justice residence in Palmerston North. Teenagers will follow a specially created curriculum and syllabus, with daily activities to support their health, learning and wellbeing. This will include military-style activities.
- The third is a community stage. It will last for 9 months and will focus on transition back to the community, making sure the teenagers are well set up for the future, including a pathway into education, training or employment.

The Academy is operating under existing legislation settings. Teenagers taking part have been sentenced to a Residence with Supervision Order and a Youth Court judge has made participation in the pilot part of their Youth Court plan.

High level timeline



OUR PRACTICE APPROACH

A glimpse into our practice framework

Our practice approach includes a focus on young people in the context of their whānau, hapū and iwi, with whakapapa and whanaungatanga enacted to enhance mana tamaiti. We partner with whānau and work in partnership with external agencies. Our social work is therefore relational, purposeful and restorative.

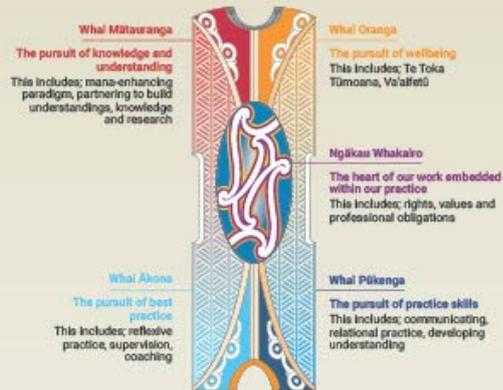
Strong values and rights-based position – we understand through Te Puna

Our Practice Framework

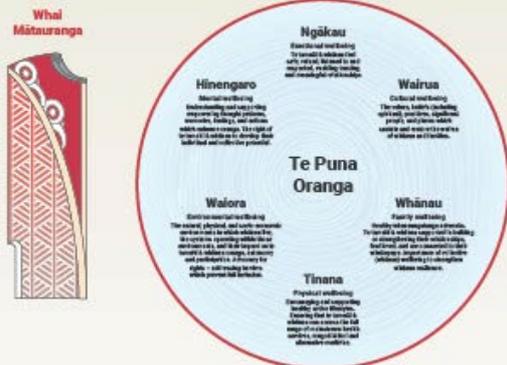
- The Oranga Tamariki Practice Framework is the practice scaffold that will support Academy staff and site based social work teams in collaborating on a shared understanding of both teenager and whānau needs.

Our Practice Framework guides our practice

- Our Practice Approach and Framework help practitioners see and make sense of rangatahi with offending behaviours within their wider familial/social/economic and cultural context.
- In the context of Youth Justice practice, it helps us explicitly understand the impact of offending on the rangatahi, their family, the victims of their offending and the wider community they are part of.



Understanding offending behaviours through an Oranga frame



- Our assessment understanding starts from Te Puna Oranga where we appreciate the ebbing and flowing of life, and we take a realistic view that rangatahi entering the Academy will have significant ebbs in their lives.
- An analysis of criminogenic risk factors is provided through Te Puna Oranga and further analysis then considers pathways to offending.
- This comprehensive understanding then informs the Good Lives Plan, that highlights what's already in place, while identifying pathways to focus on what will help reduce offending.



OUR REHABILITATIVE FRAMEWORK

Bringing a recognised model for success into focus

“Evidence shows that structure and predictability contribute to a therapeutic environment. We’re building on this using therapeutic interventions, a trauma-informed care model and a rehabilitative approach – based on the ‘good lives model’ of offender rehabilitation, this a strengths-based theory that considers risks, needs and responsivity.”

The Good Lives Model

Everyone wants a Good Life.

That is the basis of the Good Lives model.

Everyone’s idea of what makes a good life is different, but we all have similar goals in life.

This model assumes that people are seeking to obtain most, if not all, of the 11 ‘primary goods’, and need to maintain a healthy balance across them to lead a ‘good life’.

Some young people face barriers and or encounter problems. This can mean they struggle to obtain all of the primary goods, or to maintain a healthy balance, or something is causing conflicting feeling so they don’t feel happy or fulfilled by the primary goods. These barriers can be internal (lacking key skills or using inappropriate/harmful methods) or external (lacking opportunities or means).

This model suggests that most offending by young people can be understood as a response to one or more of these barriers/problems.

If we can understand the barriers or problems that the young person is facing in leading a good life, then we can work with them to develop the skills and abilities they need to lead more satisfying, meaningful, productive and pro-social lives.

We may also need to support them to change their situations or environments to give them the opportunity to overcome some of these barriers.

If we can work with the young people to improve their wellbeing in this way we should reduce the risk of further offending.

The Good Lives Model Approach

Work with the young person to...

- Identify the primary goods that are most important and those that are implicated in offending behaviour
- Identify the barriers or problems being faced
- Develop a tailored plan and work with them to address these, focussing on things such as:
 - Building their knowledge, skills and abilities
 - Improving their physical health and mental wellbeing
 - Providing access to opportunities to achieve their life goals through more pro-social avenues
 - Helping them develop an understanding of the impact that their life choices are having, and offering alternatives
 - Looking at their home environment, working with family and/or community to better support the young person

The young person should become invested in treatment as it assists them to lead a fulfilling life.



Primary Human Goods



ABOUT THE TEENAGERS AND THE KAIMAHI

Meet the people taking part

"We're looking for people who are enthusiastic about this opportunity to do something different for our young people with a focus on therapeutic care and a strong transition and support programme helping them to change behaviours and attitudes for the better, so that they can reintegrate into their whānau and communities."

Demographics



Kaimahi backgrounds

Qualifications and experience include:

- Bachelor of Social Science - Counselling
- Postgraduate diploma in psychology and human development
- Registered Clinical Psychologist
- Diploma in Adult Education / Diploma in Sports Psychology
- Level 4 Youthwork certificate
- NZ Professional Rugby Rep, Professional Rugby and League Coaching
- Outdoor education and leadership roles
- Creative arts and music skills
- Expertise in cultural programme delivery

Intensive mentors

The intensive mentor programme that ensures throughout the 12-month programme with one-to-one support provided to each of the teenagers, this is planned to be delivered as:

- One-to-one mentoring support for 20 hours over the 3-month period of in-residence stay,
- One-to-one mentoring support for 40 hours over the first 6 months of transition, and
- One-to-one mentoring support for 20 hours over the final 3-month period of transition

Teenager backgrounds

- Have all been sentenced to a supervision with residence order.
- Have all has previous Youth Justice Plans and spent time at a Youth Justice residence before.
- Each one has whānau and caregivers, who want them to thrive and have agreed for them to take part in this opportunity.

Whānau

Core services that wrap around whānau to prepare them to support the teenager when they return into community, delivered through understanding whānau needs, meeting these through multiple service channels and having access to discretionary funding to support identified needs, including specialist services.



IN THE RESIDENCE

Take a look into the 3 month residence stage

"The syllabus has been specially created. There are daily activities to support the young people with their health and wellbeing, their learning and life skills...The Academy will offer stability through military-style style activities and approach"

● Programme Overview by week

Focus Topics



Indicative Activities

Welcome/Pōwhiri
Syllabus briefings
Connection & whānau time

Meet Intensive mentors
Military-style drills
Wellness

Ko wai au
Core education
Physical education

Vocations
Life Skills
Community projects

Education plans
Medical assessments
Graduation celebration

● What will a typical day look like?

| Morning | Afternoon | Evening |
|--|--|--|
| 1 6.30 am Wake up & morning routine | 7 12.30 pm Whakapapa / Cultural Connection/ Whānau Period five and six | 13 18.15 pm Daily wellness activities |
| 2 7.30 am Breakfast | 8 14.30 pm Afternoon tea break | 14 18.45 pm Evening routine |
| 3 8.15 am Education/ Classroom / Employment Pathways Period one and two | 9 14.45 pm Mentoring/ Wellbeing/ Counselling / Life Skills Period seven and eight | 15 20.30 pm Stand easy (down time) |
| 4 9.45 am Morning tea break | 10 16.15 pm Admin session | 16 9.30 pm (from) Lights out |
| 5 10.00 am Physical Activity/ Drills Period three and four | 11 16.45 pm Guest Speaker/ Community Transition Night period | |
| 6 11.30 am Lunch | 12 17.30 pm Dinner | |

*This is not representative of all the activities across a day, but is to provide guidance to what types of activities the teenagers will be undertaking.



VISUALS

Photos of the specially designed unit

“Our goal was to create a safe space for the pilot, supported by appropriate infrastructure. There’s new equipment, outdoor activity spaces and imagery to provide a feeling of unity and teamwork.”

● **Military Style Unit**



● **Outdoor equipment and military-style programming**



PLANNING AHEAD

How we'll work with the young people to plan for the community stage

"Our goal is to be positive and future-thinking as we support each teenager to plan for their move back to the community. We want to set them up for success."

● The transition back to community plan

Evidence has shown it is critical that the teenagers have a structured and staged transition from residence to the community.

They need individual plans, linked to their assessed needs, along with strong and consistent support. The plans will cover both long-term ambitions and the steps needed to reach them, and practical matters like living situations.

Moving back to the community will look different for every teenager. For example, some may go quickly into education, training or employment, and some might take longer to reach this step.

Having a single, clear transition plan will make things simpler for the young person. However, the plan will consider various documents and reports and connect back to these, such as their Youth Court Plan, education and medical assessments.

At the end of the 3-month residence stage, each teenager and their whānau will have a transition hui. At this hui the team will talk through the transition back to community plan in detail and discuss next steps.

● Creating the plan

To create the transition back to community plans, the Academy team will use information from professionals such as the teenager's social worker, clinical psychologist and intensive mentor. We will also collate input from the teenagers themselves, and their whānau. Below are some examples of the prompt questions we might ask them to think about and details that might be included in their plans.



BUILDING ON PROGRESS

How the Academy will encourage sustainable change and achievable goals

“There will be chances for the young people to try new things and gain new life skills during the residence stage, gradually building over time. What they learn will have both immediate and long-term positive outcomes.”

The approach

From the start of the Academy, planning begins for what the transition back to community will look like for the teenagers. The aim is to reinforce strengths and address potential re-offending risks.

Whānau will be involved from the start, with clarity about how they can best encourage their teenager and what support they need to do this.

Oranga Tamariki will collaborate with community organisations that have existing, trusted relationships with the whānau and are able to help with

intensive case management. These organisations will be a key part of sustaining progress for the teenagers. They will also help reduce the risk of reoffending, through information sharing, continuous review and being part of a coordinated, immediate response if needs change.

During the community stage the teenagers will get opportunities to keep developing their life skills and working towards a goal of being in education, training or employment. At the end of the 12 months, they will have a clear path forward.

A closer look at the 9 months of the community stage

First 3 Months

Reinforcing what's been learned

During the first 3 months of the community stage, professionals such as social workers and the intensive mentor will work with the teenagers, to reinforce the skills and knowledge they have gained and support the application of these in a real-world setting.

Next 6 Months

Application and Reflection

As the teenagers integrate back into the community, they will have opportunities to apply their 'kitbag' tools.

Being able to reflect - individually, with whānau, with their social worker and intensive mentor - on how they handled a scenario and what they used from their kitbag is a key element to supporting enduring and lasting reintegration.

Creating a kitbag

Throughout the residence stage the teenagers will have opportunities to build a 'kitbag'. This is made up of both tangible tools and soft skills which will support their transition back to the community. Below are examples of what might be in the kitbags.

Contents of the Kitbag

Tangible

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Photo ID | IRD number | Birth Certificate |
| Real Me account | Electoral roll knowledge | Driver License |
| Bank Account and Eftpos Card | CV and interview skills | |
| Enrolment Process for Doctor/Dentist | | |

Soft Skills

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Emotional regulation skills | Communication skills |
| Working in, and as a team | Problem solving and coping mechanisms |
| Self care and attention to wellbeing | Budgeting knowledge |
| Life skills - cooking, gardening, basic DIY | |



MOVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Planning for the return to community, and beyond

"I hope that all our young people can make the most of this time, using what they've learned to shape their hopes and plans for the future. During the community stage there will be a team to support them, the whole way through. They will be there to help with any challenges and, very importantly, celebrate the wins."

Multi-disciplinary and Community Led Action



Community stage

Ongoing connection

The teenagers will get to meet and build relationships with key people who can support them, even after the Academy finishes. In the meantime, professionals like the intensive mentor and social workers will be consistent, familiar faces that know the teenagers and their whānau.

Individual plans

Each teenager will have a plan for their transition back to community - the 'community stage'. It will be individualised, sustainable, achievable and include details of the support that they need. During the community stage, the plan will be regularly reviewed and updated, based on any changes or needs.

Whānau and community involvement

A multi-disciplinary team will help the teenagers and their whānau in engaging with agencies, community organisations and any support services they need.

Iwi or hapū will be involved on a case-by-case basis.

As well as a shared focus on sustaining progress during the Academy, these groups will consider how lifelong needs can be met and support networks established.

A multi-disciplinary team, sometimes called a community table, is a group of professionals from different sectors, e.g. health, education and police.

Intensive mentors

During the community stage, the intensive mentors will be in contact with their teenagers multiple times a week, on whichever days they're needed.

The mentors will be a central point of contact for engagement with various teams. They'll help with practical things like transport to appointments or getting set up on courses.

Mentors will also hold the teenagers to account on their commitments, acting as a constant champion to help them stay on track.



Appendix Two: Logic model



Appendix Three: Evaluation framework

| Evaluation questions and sub-questions | Indicators | Main data sources |
|--|--|---|
| How well did the MSA design align with the objectives? | | |
| What were the objectives of the MSA Pilot? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The policy objectives specified for the MSA Pilot ● The outcomes rangatahi, whānau and other stakeholders wanted to achieve viewed through Te Whare Tapa Whā ● The intended short- and long-term outcomes of rangatahi, whānau and other stakeholders aligned with the MSA objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSA leadership interviews ● Review of documentation ● National level stakeholder interviews ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews |
| To what extent did the design of the MSA Pilot align with the objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The design incorporated available evidence ● The necessary people were involved in the design - input from the clinical advisory group and other experts, community and tangata whenua ● Key people involved in the design considered they were listened to and their needs included in the design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clinical advisory group interviews ● Tangata whenua interviews ● Review of documentation ● National level stakeholder interviews ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews |
| To what extent did the MSA design align with the needs of the participating rangatahi and whānau? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau descriptions of their needs ● The extent rangatahi and whānau considered the MSA Pilot culture met their existing and/or emerging needs ● The balance of cultural interventions and other interventions met rangatahi and whānau existing and/or emerging needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi interviews ● Whānau interviews ● Rangatahi and whānau plans ● Kaimahi and community mentor interviews ● Oranga Tamariki social worker assessments of whānau needs |
| How was the MSA Pilot implemented in each phase (assessment, residential and community)? What was learnt during implementation? | | |
| What were the key features of the MSA Pilot implementation in each | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau perspectives on the importance of te ao Māori in implementation and delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews ● National stakeholder interviews |



| Evaluation questions and sub-questions | Indicators | Main data sources |
|---|--|--|
| phase (assessment, residential and community)? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description of the key components of MSA delivery in each phase ● Description of the key supports enabling MSA Pilot delivery and the adequacy of the supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment and selection, preparation of rangatahi ○ Tangata whenua engagement ○ Community engagement ○ Rangatahi iwi and hapū ○ Clinical advisory group ○ Resourcing – kaimahi, infrastructure ○ External providers ○ Policy, tools and processes – assessments, transition hui | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MSA leadership interviews ● Kaimahi and community mentor interviews ● Community mentor interviews ● MDT interviews ● Clinical and case management assessments and rangatahi case studies |
| How did the practice approaches of kaimahi, community mentors and Oranga Tamariki social workers contribute to the MSA Pilot? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description of kaimahi practice approaches through the assessment, residential and community phases ● The extent kaimahi considered they had the training and support they required ● Enablers and barriers for differences in practice approaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National stakeholder interviews ● Kaimahi interviews ● MDT interviews ● Clinical and case management assessments and rangatahi case studies |
| How did the community mentors contribute to the MSA Pilot? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Description of mentor roles and approaches ● The extent mentors considered they had the training, support and resources to deliver the intended level of care for rangatahi ● Enablers and barriers for differences in mentor approaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National stakeholder interviews ● Mentor interviews ● MDT interviews ● Clinical and case management assessments and rangatahi case studies |
| What support and interventions were most | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Descriptions of the effectiveness of different components by rangatahi, whānau and kaimahi – what they liked, what helped them and what they found challenging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews ● Kaimahi interviews ● MDT interviews |



| Evaluation questions and sub-questions | Indicators | Main data sources |
|---|--|---|
| effective in engaging rangatahi and whānau? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi perceptions of the extent the assessment tools enabled them to express their needs and progress ● Rangatahi perceptions of the extent of whānau involvement – whānau support and whānau challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● External providers |
| What impact did any variations from the design have on the effectiveness of the of the assessment, residential and community phases of the MSA Pilot? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reasons for variation: e.g Timeline pressure, resourcing, unanticipated challenges or opportunities and others ● Impact of variations on the MSA Pilot for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rangatahi ○ Whānau ○ Kaimahi – residential kaimahi, community mentors, Oranga Tamariki social workers ○ MDT approach to delivery. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews ● National stakeholder interviews ● MSA leadership interviews ● Kaimahi interviews ● Interviews with Oranga Tamariki social workers ● MDT interviews ● External providers |
| To what degree did the MSA Pilot contribute to meaningful change? Including short-term outcomes? | | |
| To what extent did the MSA Pilot objectives need to be achieved to consider it effective? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Criteria for success defined by national stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National stakeholder interviews ● MSA leadership interviews |
| What short-term outcomes were achieved by rangatahi? By whānau? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau self-assessment of outcomes achieved ● Kaimahi views on outcomes achieved ● Outcomes measured through clinical and case management assessments with qualitative framing ● Rangatahi and whānau characteristics associated with short-term outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of MSA documentation – intervention logic ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews ● Clinical and case management assessments and case studies |
| Were there indications of progress towards longer-term outcomes? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Progress towards the longer-term outcomes reported by rangatahi, whānau and kaimahi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau plans ● Kaimahi interviews |



| Evaluation questions and sub-questions | Indicators | Main data sources |
|--|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interviews with community providers supporting whānau ● Interviews with Oranga Tamariki social workers ● Case studies |
| How did the different aspects of the MSA Pilot contribute to the outcomes achieved? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kaimahi, rangatahi and whānau perspectives about how the MSA components (assessment, residential, community) were effective in achieving progress towards outcomes ● The extent the different MSA components fitted together to provide a collective impact ● The importance of te ao Māori | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews ● Kaimahi interviews ● Academy kaimahi and leadership ● Clinical advisory group |
| What were barriers and challenges to achieving outcomes? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kaimahi, rangatahi and whānau perspectives about barriers and challenges to achieving progress towards outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rangatahi and whānau interviews ● Kaimahi interviews |
| What factors are key for a future MSA programme? | | |
| Does evidence from the evaluation show the MSA Pilot achieved its objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The extent national stakeholders considered the criteria for success were achieved for each of the MSA Pilot objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National stakeholder interviews ● All information sources |
| What aspects of the MSA Pilot are most important to bring through into future roll-outs? To change for future roll-outs? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learnings about each programme component – assessment, residential, community ● Rangatahi factors – cohort approach, profile of rangatahi, level of engagement ● Kaimahi and community mentor factors – kaimahi experience, profiles, resourcing, support for kaimahi, kaimahi training and professional development ● Other factors – infrastructure, tangata whenua engagement ● The importance of te ao Māori and implications for future cohorts that may include non-Māori rangatahi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All information sources |



| Evaluation questions and sub-questions | Indicators | Main data sources |
|--|---|---|
| What are the implications of MSA roll-out on other services and programmes e.g. Youth Justice? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Insights into considerations about rangatahi selection for MSA to inform future cohort selection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All information sources |
| What factors contributed to or were barriers to the sustainability of MSA? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Factors influencing sustainability for kaimahi in the assessment, residential and community phases ● Factors influencing sustainability for connection with tangata whenua ● Other factors influencing sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All information sources |
| What lessons learned in the implementation of MSA could strengthen future implementations? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barriers encountered in delivery and how they were overcome ● Opportunities identified to strengthen future implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All information sources |



Appendix Four: Mentor role specifications

The mentor service specifications include:

During the first six months of the community component, the mentor:

- Takes on the role of a trusted “go-to” and support person for the teenager
- Takes on the role of a trusted “go-to” and support person for the whānau
- Works with and supports the social worker to act as the face of the multi-disciplinary team responses
- Is accountable for any commitments made in the teenager’s plan that require the support of the mentor role to action/complete
- Works alongside and supports Oranga Tamariki to meet statutory obligations
- Intensively supports the teenager to comply with Court requirements and achieve their goals and commitments as expressed in their “My Good Life Plan”
- Holds the teenager accountable using strengths-based approaches to keep them engaged and working towards their goals. While each plan will be tailored and individualised, this may include supporting:
 - Essential life skills development, particularly those identified as skills to sustain or those identified as requiring support and/or practice
 - Links to education, training or employment
 - Maintenance of fitness, adventure, or hobby aspects learnt in the residential component such as attending the gym, martial arts, sports or other activities
 - Encouraging cultural, spiritual and other pro-social activities that foster a sense of self, Identity, belonging and connection
 - Fostering emotional and holistic wellbeing, including supporting mindfulness practices the teenager may have developed through the residential component
 - Encouraging building of social skills and development of positive/pro-social relationships with whānau and peers
 - Revisiting “kitbag” learnings captured in plans and discussing these with the teenager, including the teenager’s identified coping strategies.
- Encourages mutual teenager and whānau engagement
- Enables whānau to support the teenager to transition back to their community, and to take shared responsibility for transition components of plans
- Works with whānau to keep up their commitments in the plan to support their teenager to achieve their goals
- Supports the teenager and whānau if the teenager re-offends, aiming to get the teenager back on track
- Meets and/or communicates with the local multi-disciplinary team, Transition Lead and social worker, as required – this could be daily, because risk of re-offending is reduced through information sharing, review/update supports, and providing coordinated and immediate responses to emerging risks and needs

- Communicates very frequently, potentially daily, with the social worker and local multi-disciplinary team about the teenager's engagement and progress with their plan and goals.
- Appropriately responds to, and urgently notifies the social worker, about any reoffending or breaches of conditions.
- Keeps records of outcomes achieved and any barriers as required.

Appendix Five: Clinical assessment results pre- and post-residential phase

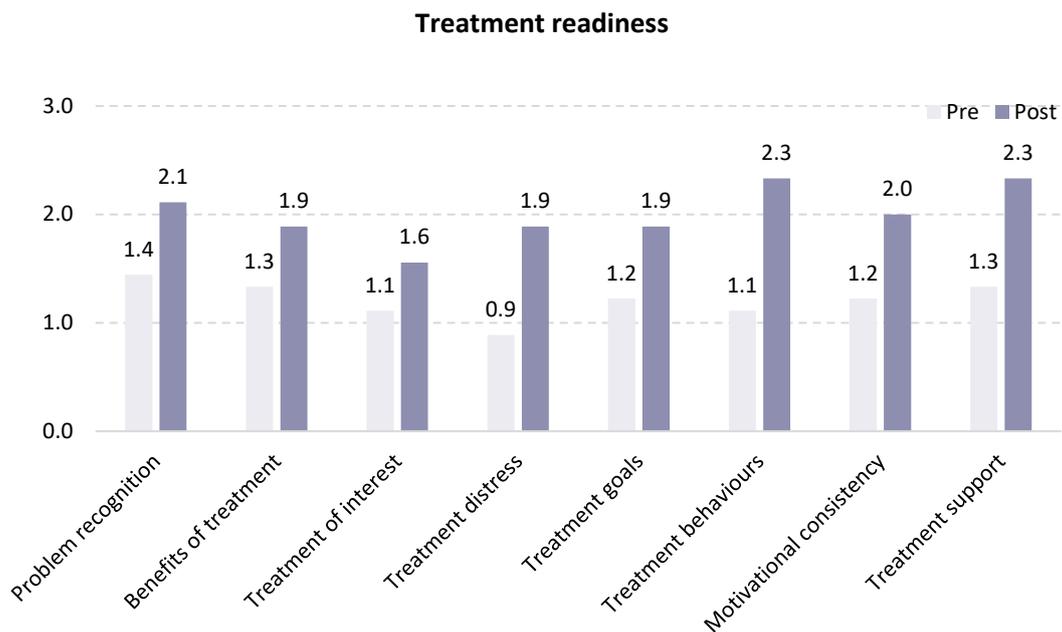
The Treatment Readiness, Responsivity, and Gain Scale: Short Version (TRRG:SV) was used to assess rangatahi before the residential phase and after the residential phase. The manual for the assessment tool describes its purpose as:

... To assist staff to systematically assess an offender's readiness and responsivity to treatment and to subsequently measure the degree to which gains have been made.

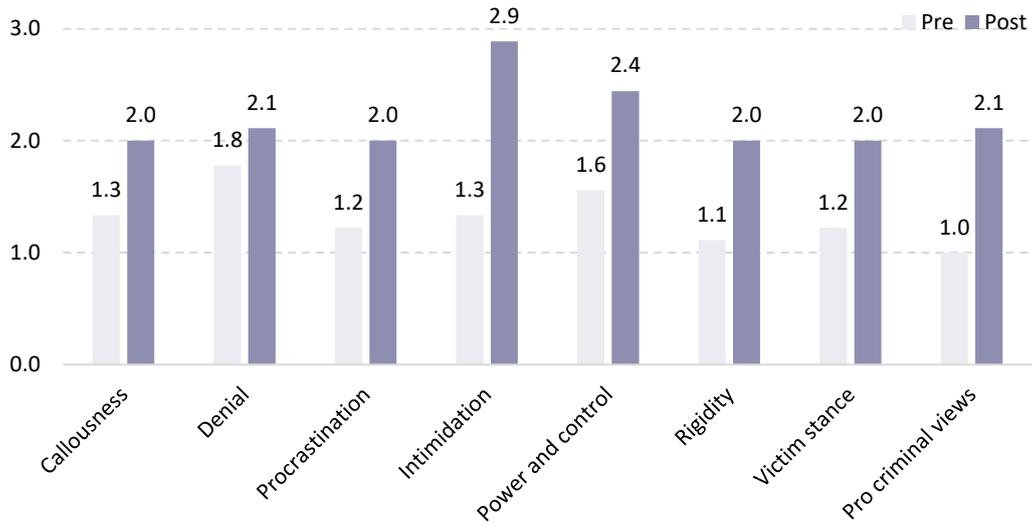
It contains three domains that each include eight questions scored from 0 to 3:

- Treatment readiness: An individual's willingness to engage in the treatment process
- Treatment responsivity: Potential responsivity factors in offender's compliance with, and response to, therapeutic intervention and treatment programs in general.
- Treatment gain: a combination of knowledge, participation and competencies to provide an overall estimate of an offender's performance in a correctional programme.

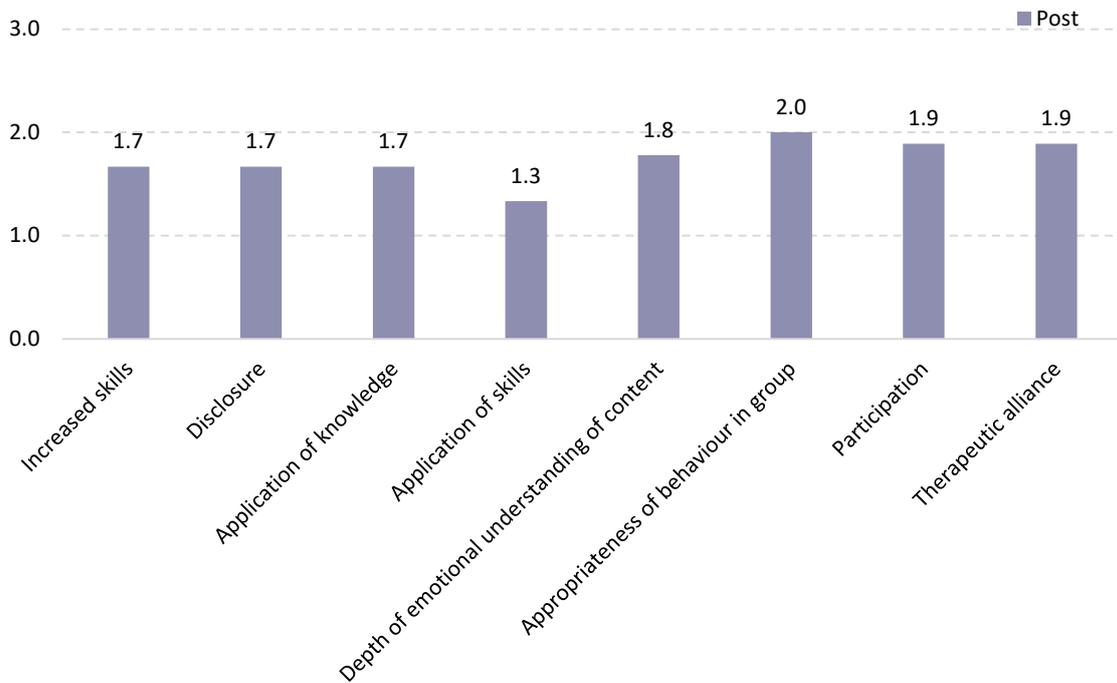
Results for each domain are presented in the charts below. The results show an improvement in the average across the cohort in all items within all three domains and consequently in the overall scores.



Treatment responsivity



Treatment gain (note: Post only)



Scores for each domain can be totalled to provide overall measures to compare pre- and post-residential phase results overall.

