

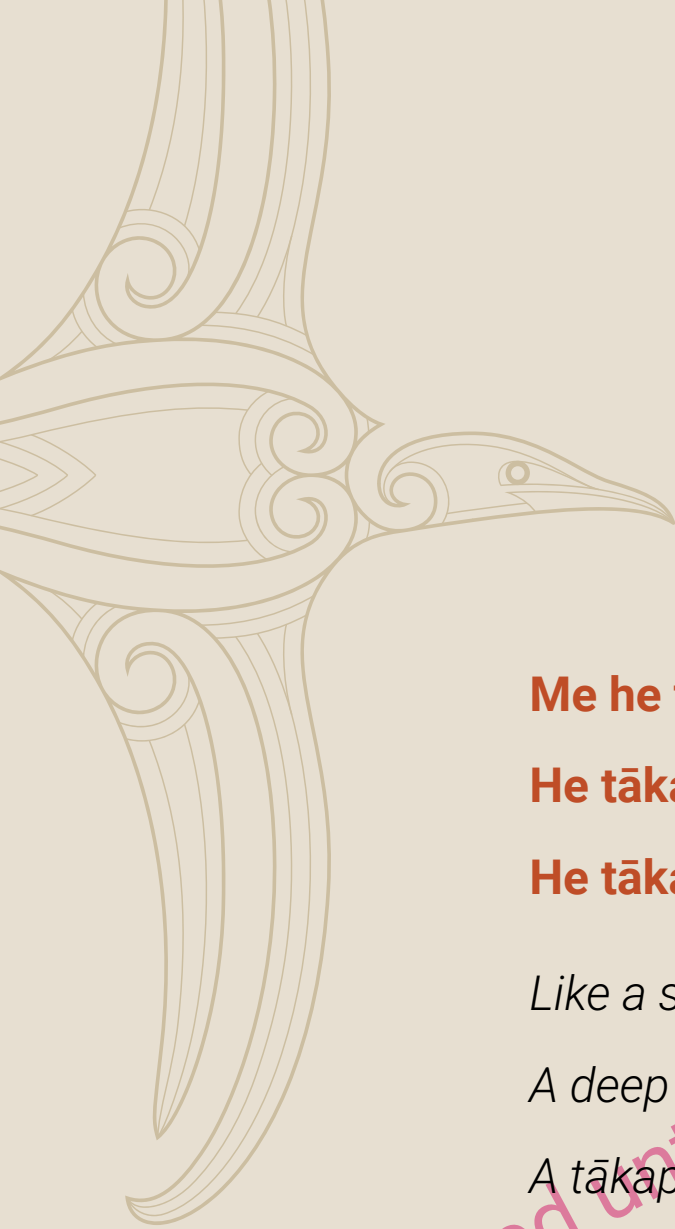


Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau

in the oranga tamariki system

Embargoed until official publication

A report on the performance of
the oranga tamariki system



Me he tākapu matakana

He tākapu ruku hōhonu

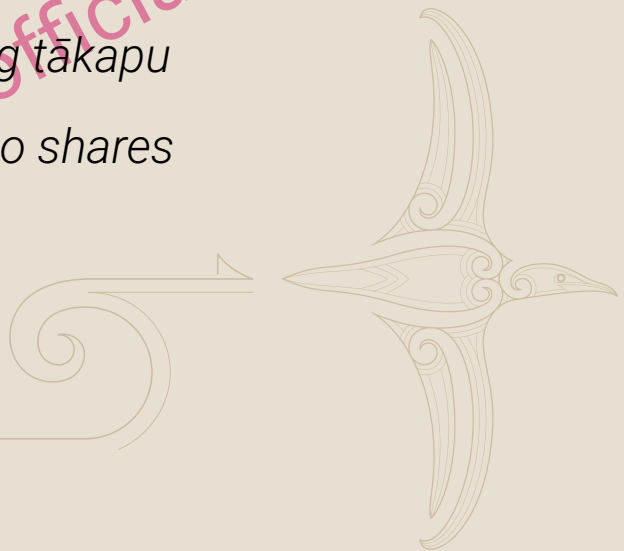
He tākapu tohatoha hua

Like a sharp eyed tākapu

A deep diving tākapu

A tākapu who shares

Embargoed until official publication



Crown copyright © 2026. Copyright material in this report is protected by copyright owned by the Independent Children's Monitor on behalf of the Crown. Unless indicated otherwise for specific items or collections of content (either below or within specific items or collections), this copyright material is licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 New Zealand licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>. In essence, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the material, as long as you attribute it to Aroturuki Tamariki, the Independent Children's Monitor, and abide by the other licence terms. Please note that this licence does not apply to any logos, emblems, trademarks, photography or imagery on the website or to the website's design elements. Those specific items may not be reused without express permission.

Published June 2026

Aroturuki Tamariki | Independent Children's Monitor
PO Box 202 Wellington 6140
New Zealand
Email: info@aroturuki.govt.nz
Web: aroturuki.govt.nz

ISSN 3021-3991 (Print)
ISSN 3021-4009 (Online)

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

He mihi |

Acknowledgements

Tēnei te mihi nui atu ki ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori katoa me ō rātou whānau i tuku kōrero mai ki a mātou i roto i ā mātou kōrerorero tahi i roto i ngā rohe.

Ka mihi hoki ki ngā tautoko me ngā whakaaro o ngā māngai o ngā hapū, ngā iwi, ngā hoa pātui rautaki, ngā whakahaere Māori me ngā kaimahi a ngā whakahaere kāwanatanga-kore me ngā tari kāwanatanga.

E whakanui ana mātou i te hunga nā rātou ngā raraunga me ngā mōhiohio i whakamahia i tēnei pūrongo. Kei muri i ia tatauranga ko ngā tāngata me ō rātou wheako.

Hei whakamutu ake, e mihi ana ki a koutou katoa kei roto i tēnei wā, i uru mai rānei i mua, ki te pūnaha oranga tamariki.

We express our appreciation for all the tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau who shared their experiences freely with us during our regional engagements.

We also acknowledge the contributions and perspectives of representatives from hapū, iwi, strategic partners and Māori organisations and from kaimahi of non-government organisations and government agencies.

We recognise all those whose data and information have been used in this report. Behind every statistic are people and their experiences.

Lastly, we acknowledge all those who are currently involved, or have ever been involved, in the oranga tamariki system.

Embargoed until official publication

Kupu whakataki

Koinei tā mātou pūrongo pūnaha whānui ā-tau tuarua mō te whānuitanga e whakarato hua ana te pūnaha oranga tamariki mō ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori me ō rātou whānau. I tua atu i ā mātou tohu whakaatu hua, e titiro ana tēnei pūrongo o te tau 2024/25 mēnā kei te tutuki ngā hiahia o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori i roto i te pūnaha oranga tamariki e ai ki ngā mea tauiwi.

E ōrite ana ngā kitenga o tēnei pūrongo ki tā mātou pūrongo onāiane, E koke ana ki tētahi whakaruruhau kia kore ai e tūkinotia ngā tamariki, ā, i kitea ina uru tau mai ngā tamariki ki te aroaro o te karauna, he arawātea hei āwhina – he arawātea hoki ka tāhapatia i ētahi wā. Mēnā i te mahi tika te kūaha o mua o te pūnaha whakamaru tamariki, ka wawe tonu te tuku i ngā tautoko tika. Kua kore e uru hōhonu atu ngā tamariki Māori ki te pūnaha nā te korenga e tutuki o ō rātou hiahia.

Mārama te kitea o te korenga e tutuki o ngā hiahia manaaki me te whakamaru i roto i ngā raraunga mō ngā rangatahi Māori kei roto i te ture taiohi. I kite mātou 95 ōrau o ngā rangatahi Māori i roto i te ture taiohi i puta he pūrongo māharahara mō tō rātou haumarua, oranga rānei i a rātou e tamariki ana. Mō te haurua o rātou 10 ngā pūrongo māharahara mō tō rātou haumarua, oranga rānei.

He nui ngā rawa – me te aro nui atu – ka whakapaua ki ngā mahi taihara. Mā te aro nui ake ki te whakarite i ngā hiahia manaaki me te whakamaru i te tuatahi ka whakaiti pea i te hiahia o ngā urupare ture taiohi ā muri ake.

Ko ngā mea whaitake e rongo ana mātou ko ngā rongoā e whai wāhi atu ngā tamariki me ō rātou whānau me te whakarite wawe i ngā hiahia. Ko ēnei ratonga he torowhānui mahi kua te aro nui ki ngā hiahia takitahi motuhake mai i ētahi atu e pātata atu ana. Kei roto i tēnei pūrongo ko ngā tauira o ētahi o ēnei ratonga. Ko te wero me pēhea e neke kē atu ai ēnei ki tua atu i ngā tauira me ngā whakamātau.

Kua kōrerohia ngā rongoā mō ngā tau maha. Pērā i te aronga haumitanga, ngā tauira whakahau e taea ai te ngāwari ake, me ngā rongoā ka puta i ngā iwi, i te Māori, i ngā haporī hoki e noho ai te kāwanatanga ki te tautoko kua ki te ārahi. Ko te pātai nui he auau te arohia, he aha e kore ai e taea e te kāwanatanga ngā huringa te koke ki te taumata e hiahia ana – me te tere e whaihua ai ngā ao o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi i tēnei rā.

Me tere ake ngā huringa kia heke ai ngā āhuatanga manarite-kore me te whakaiti i te whai wāhi tuku iho o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori me ō rātou whānau ki te pūnaha oranga tamariki.



Arran Jones
Tumu Whakarae

Foreword

This is our second annual system-wide report on the extent to which the oranga tamariki system is delivering outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau. In addition to our outcome indicators, this report for 2024/25 looks at whether the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system are being met compared to non-Māori.

The findings of this report are consistent with our recent report, *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*, which found that, when tamariki come to the attention of the state, it is an opportunity to help – and an opportunity that is sometimes missed. If the front door to the child protection system was working as needed, the right support would be provided at the earliest opportunity. Tamariki Māori would not unnecessarily escalate through the system because of unmet need.

The consequence of unmet care and protection needs is evident in the data about rangatahi Māori who are involved in youth justice. We found 95 percent of rangatahi Māori involved in youth justice had a report of concern made about their safety or wellbeing when they were younger. Half of them had more than 10 reports of concern made about their safety or wellbeing.

A lot of resource – and attention – goes into dealing with the offending behaviour. A greater focus on addressing care and protection needs earlier may reduce the need for youth justice responses in the future.

What we hear works are solutions that include tamariki and their whānau and address needs early. These are services that work in a holistic way rather than looking at individual needs in isolation from those around them. This report includes examples of some of these services. The challenge is how these can move beyond pilots and prototypes.

The solutions have been talked about for decades. These include an investment approach, commissioning models that allow for greater flexibility and iwi, Māori and community-led solutions where government takes a supporting rather than leading role. The question we keep coming back to is why the state is unable to progress change to the degree that is needed – and at a pace that will make a difference to the lives of tamariki and rangatahi today.

Faster change is needed if we are to see disparities reduce and a reduction in intergenerational involvement in the oranga tamariki system for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.



Arran Jones

Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive

Tauākī a Te Kāhui

E whakatakotohia ana e mātou te pūrongo ā-tau tuarua mō ngā hua mō ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori me ō rātou whānau kei roto i te pūnaha oranga tamariki.

Kua puta ētahi whanaketanga mai i te pūrongo ā-tau tuatahi o tērā tau, otirā ko te whakaae a te Kāwanatanga ki ngā tūtuhutanga o te pūrongo a Kahurangi Karen Poutasi. I ēnei tau kua pahure nei, he nui tonu ngā tamariki i mate i Aotearoa nā te tūkinu, te kōhuru, whara kino, mahi kino rānei a tētahi tangata ko tōna tikanga i te tiaki kē i a rātou.

He nui rawa te kitea o ngā tamariki i roto i ēnei. Koinei te hua tino o tētahi pūnaha kāore i manaaki pai i ngā tamariki me ngā whānau.

Koinei mātou e hiahia ana kia whakarerekēhia tēnei kia whakaitia ngā āhuatanga manarite-kore me te whakapai ake i ngā hua mō ngā tamariki, ngā rangatahi me ngā whānau Māori. Koinei te take he huhua ngā iwi me ngā kaiwhakarato Māori kua uru mai ki te tautoko i ngā whānau.

Ka aroha kē te pānui i tēnei pūrongo. E whakaatu ana he kino kē atu te āhua o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori kei roto i te pūrongo oranga tamariki i ngā tau iwi. He tino kē atu hoki i ngā Māori kāore i roto i te pūnaha.

He tino nui kē te kaha o ētahi o ēnei rerekētanga. Ahakoa ehara pea ko te pūnaha te pūtake o ngā hua kino nei, kei roto i a ia anō te kaha ki te hāpai i a rātou.

Ko Oranga Tamariki te matua i raro i te ture mō ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi i Aotearoa āhua 5,000, 70 ōrau he Māori. Ki te kore e tiakina e ētahi atu mātua i Aotearoa ā rātou ake tamariki, rangatahi hoki, he kore manaaki tērā.

Me mātua here a Oranga Tamariki mō āna whakatau. He whānui rawa te takahi a te pūnaha, ā, ko te mutunga atu ka nui rawa te uru mai o te Māori me te nui ake o ngā āhuatanga manarite-kore.

Kua tīmata te kite i ngā painga i roto i tēnei pūrongo – ngā tauira o ngā kaupapa Māori me te āhua pea o āpōpō. Kua ara ake ngā iwi me ngā kaiwhakarato Māori, ā, kei te aro ki te āpōpō. Ko ā rātou tamariki me ō rātou whānau ēnei, ā, e kore e taea e rātou te huri tuarā.

Me mātua māranga a Oranga Tamariki me pēhea e whaitake ai ngā kaiwhakarato me te whakarite kei te whiwhi rātou i ngā rawa, ngā utauta me ngā pūmanawa tōtika kia whaihua ai, ā, kia pai ake hoki. He mea hira tēnei mō te taha ki ngā whakatau pūtea me ngā huringa, me te neke o ētahi ratonga ki ngā tari rāngai tūmatanui. Ki te kore e tautokona ngā iwi me ngā kaiwhakarato Māori kia urupare ki ngā huringa, ka pā tērā ki tō rātou kaha ki te tautoko i ngā tamariki, ngā rangatahi me ō rātou whānau. Ko te utu o tēnei ko ngā ratonga me ngā tautoko i hangaia kia kore ai e pā mai te tūkinotanga me te kore e uru ki raro i te maru karauna. Koinei te mahi uaua ko te tikanga e mahia ana e ngā iwi me ngā kaiwhakarato Māori.

Kaua rawa ēnei mahi e tāhapa. Kaua rawa tātou e tuku kia ngaro ēnei kaiwhakarato pai.

Ko te Māori te hunga whai pānga nui rawa i roto i te pūnaha oranga tamariki, engari kāore tēnei i te kitea i roto i te tohanga o ngā rawa. Ko te pātai he aha e kore ai e hāngai te haumitanga o te pūnaha ki ngā wāhi he nui te hiahia.

Ko ngā arawātea kei roto i ngā rangapū mahitahi me ngā kaupapa kua kōrerohia i roto i tēnei pūrongo. He ōkawa, he whakaaetanga ā-ture ngā rangapū mahi tahi rautaki me tōtika te mahi.

Ka āwhina ēnei kia eke ai i a Oranga Tamariki
ōna herenga i raro i Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tae
atu ki tōna whakaū i te hononga o te tamaiti ki
tōna whakapapa. Me whāwhai i te mea koinēi
te mahi tika mō te oranga o ā tātou tamariki,
rangatahi hoki, nō reira ko te tūmanako ka ara
mai te anga rangapū mahi tahi hou ki whai i
tēnei wero.

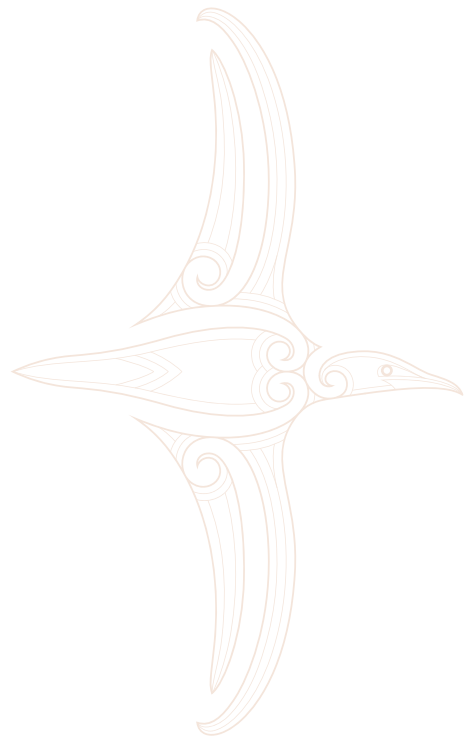
Ka whakahōnoretia rātou kua mene ki te pō.
Ka whakahōnoretia hoki rātou i uru atu ki te
pūnaha oranga tamariki, i pā ki ngā āhuatanga
kāore i eke ki tērā e tika ana. Mō te tokomaha,
ko te kahupō tōna mutunga atu.

E akiaki mātou me pai ake. Me nui ake ngā
painga me poipoi i roto i te pūnaha oranga
tamariki e tautoko ana i ō tātou whānau.
E whakaatu ana tēnei pūrongo he roa
ake te ara ki reira.



Wayne Blissett

Heamana, Te Kāhui | Te Rōpū Tohutohu Māori
mō Aroturuki Tamariki



Statement from Te Kāhui

We present the second annual report on outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau involved in the oranga tamariki system.

There have been some developments since last year's inaugural report, notably the Government's acceptance of Dame Karen Poutasi's report recommendations. In the last few years alone, Aotearoa has seen many more tamariki die because of confirmed or suspected abuse, homicide, non-accidental injury or maltreatment by a person who was supposed to be caring for them.

Tamariki Māori are among them at disproportionately high rates. This is the ultimate outcome of a system that does not serve tamariki and whānau well.

It is for this reason we want to see change that reduces disparities and improves outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori. It is for this reason that so many iwi and Māori providers have stepped up to support whānau.

This report makes for sobering reading. It shows tamariki and rangatahi Māori involved with the oranga tamariki system are generally worse off than non-Māori. They are also worse off than Māori who are not involved with the system.

Some of these differences are stark. While the system may not be the cause of poor outcomes, it has the opportunity to turn lives around.

Oranga Tamariki is the legal parent of some 5,000 tamariki and rangatahi in Aotearoa, 70 percent of whom are Māori. If other parents in Aotearoa failed to support their own tamariki and rangatahi in the same way, we would call it neglect.

Oranga Tamariki must be accountable for its decisions. The system continues to over-reach, which leads to Māori being over-represented and experiencing further disparities.

There is evidence of green shoots in this report – examples of Māori-centred approaches and what the future might look like. Iwi and Māori providers are mobilised and focused on the future. These are their tamariki and whānau and they simply cannot walk away from them.

Oranga Tamariki must understand how providers make a difference and ensure they have the resources, tools and capability to measure their impact and are ready for change. This is particularly important as funding decisions and changes are made and some services shift to other public sector agencies. If iwi and Māori providers are not supported to respond to change, their ability to support tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau will be affected. This will be at the cost of services and supports designed to prevent harm from occurring and prevent entry into care. This is the hard end of the work that iwi and Māori providers often do.

We can't let this work drop off. We can't lose good providers.

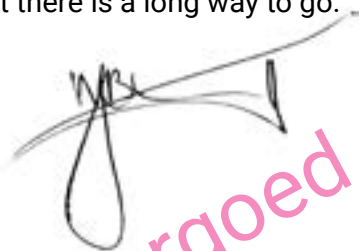
Māori are the biggest stakeholders in the oranga tamariki system, but resource allocation does not reflect this. We ask why the system's investment is not following and matching where there is the most need.

Opportunities exist through strategic partnerships and initiatives highlighted in this report. Strategic partnerships are formal, legislated agreements that need to be working as intended.

They help Oranga Tamariki meet its te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, including honouring a child's relationship to whakapapa. Urgency is needed because it's the right thing to do for the wellbeing of our tamariki and rangatahi, so we hope the new partnership framework meets this challenge.

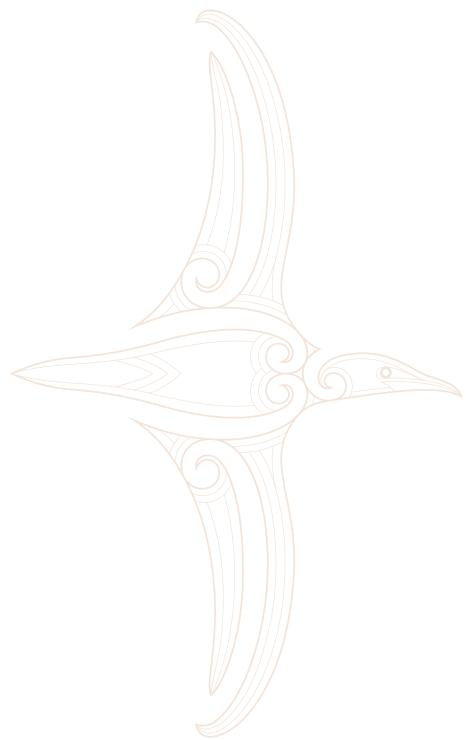
We honour the lives that have been lost. We honour all those who have been through the oranga tamariki system, experiencing a life that is not as good as it should have been. For many, this has led to a poverty of spirit.

We urge change. We want to see the oranga tamariki system nurture more green shoots that support our whānau. This report shows that there is a long way to go.



Wayne Blissett

Chairperson, Te Kāhui | Māori Advisory Group
to Aroturuki Tamariki



Contents

He mihi Acknowledgements	1
Kupu Whakataki	2
Foreword	3
Tauākī a Te Kāhui	4
Statement from Te Kāhui	6
Ngā kitenga matua	11
Key findings	14
Our approach to this report	17
Our pou	21
About tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system	24

Over-representation of Māori in the oranga tamariki system..... 32

Over-representation increases as tamariki and rangatahi Māori move deeper into the oranga tamariki system	34
Almost a quarter of tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had a report of concern in 2024/25 had 10 or more previous reports made	34
Critical and very urgent reports of concern for tamariki and rangatahi Māori have less timely responses	35
Māori are more likely to have reports of concern progress to care and protection family group conferences	36
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are more likely to be in state care or youth justice custody than non-Māori	36
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are proceeded against more by Police than non-Māori	36
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are proceeded against at a younger age	37
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are more likely to have a youth justice intervention	37
Over-representation compounds the impact on tamariki and rangatahi Māori in care	38
Compliance with the NCS Regulations in some key areas is poorer for Māori	38

Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system..... 40

Outcome indicators for tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 0–17	42
Outcome indicators for Māori aged 18–25	48
Outcome indicators for Māori aged 27–30	53
There are disparities in outcomes between Māori and non-Māori involved in the oranga tamariki system	59

How the system meets the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori..... 70

The Oranga Tamariki system is not always intervening early enough with the right services and support.....	72
Earlier care and protection intervention could prevent later youth justice involvement.....	72
Government's focus is on reducing serious and persistent offending	75
Some things are getting in the way of providing effective services and supports that prevent escalation	77
Care and protection FGCs are not always enabling services and support to be provided.....	77
Sometimes services and supports are promised but not delivered	80
There are barriers to successful delivery of youth justice intervention services	80
Some services and supports are making a difference	82
Some tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori had positive experiences accessing services and supports.....	82
Mentors and programmes help tamariki and rangatahi Māori in youth justice	83
How iwi and Māori providers are delivering for tamariki, rangatahi Māori and their whānau	85
Mahuru delivers youth justice intervention in a rangatahi-centred way	86
Hapori is led by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira in partnership with other providers and is reducing reports of concern	90
Te Pūkāea o te Waiora provides a local alternative to the National Contact Centre	92
How strategic partnerships are making a difference.....	95
Oranga Tamariki has 10 strategic partnerships in place	95
The Eastern Bay of Plenty Provider Alliance was in place before the strategic partnership.....	97
Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services wants to see a long-term plan from Oranga Tamariki	99
Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira remains committed to working collectively in the rohe to support whānau wellbeing.....	99

The impact of Oranga Tamariki changes to funding and contracts 100

Challenges with funding and contracting are longstanding	102
Oranga Tamariki was under pressure to reduce funding.....	102
Oranga Tamariki contract management was in disarray	103
Funding decisions and poor communication undermined relationships, trust and workforce stability.....	104
Funding cuts worsened service availability and increased waitlists for tamariki and rangatahi..	105
Oranga Tamariki started to address the funding and contracting situation in 2025	109
The true extent of loss after the Oranga Tamariki funding cuts is difficult to ascertain	109
Oranga Tamariki acknowledged deficiencies and reversed some decisions	109
Oranga Tamariki intends to have new contracts in place by early 2027	111

Data practices	112
Data practices prevent the full extent of disparities being known and effectiveness being measured	112
NZ Police collection and recording of ethnicity data does not meet Stats NZ guidelines.....	113
Oranga Tamariki is producing less analysis of disparities	113
Current data practices prevent a full view of system effectiveness	114
Data gaps are a lost opportunity	115
Future aspirations	116
Glossary	118
Appendix One: The oranga tamariki system	122
Appendix Two: Using data from the IDI and What About Me? survey	124
Appendix Three: Unknown ethnicity data	133

Embargoed until official publication

Ngā kitenga matua

Me mātua nui ake ngā mahi hei urupare ki ngā hiahia o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori hei whakatika i te nui rawa o te Māori kei roto i te pūnaha oranga tamariki

I tā mātou pūrongo whakamutunga, i whakaaturia he nui rawa te Māori i roto i te pūnaha, ka mutu kāore i te tiakina. Kāore i te rerekē ake tēnei.

I roto i tēnei pūrongo me tā mātou pūrongo o te 2023/24, me nui ake ngā mahi me oti. Ko te take he tino kino kē atu ngā hua wā poto, wā roa hoki mō te Māori kei roto i te pūnaha oranga tamariki tēnā i ērā kāore i raro i a Oranga Tamariki. He kino kē atu ngā hua mō te Māori i te nuinga o te wā tēnā i a tauwi. E whakaatu tonu ana ngā raraunga, ka roa atu ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori ki roto i te pūnaha, ka hē kē atu ngā hua pūmau mō rātou. Mārama ana te kitea o ngā āhuatanga manarite-kore i roto i te pūnaha, me te āhua o tana tuku tautoko.

He roa te pānga o te kore manaaki me te whakamaru ki ngā ao o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori. Heoi, ehara i te mea na te whakauru mai ki te pūnaha oranga tamariki te pūtake o ngā hua wā roa, ki te pai ake ērā me te whakaiti haere i ngā āhuatanga manarite-kore, me whai i ngā urupare e tino ū ake ki ngā hiahia o te Māori.

Ka whakatakoto mātou i ngā pou aroturuki i roto i te wā roa. E tohu ana tētahi o ēnei pou i whai wāhi ā-tuku iho mai o te whānau ki te pūnaha oranga tamariki. Tata ki te rua hautoru o ngā mātua Māori he 27–30 i uru ki te maru karauna, kei te mōhio anō hoki a Oranga

Tamariki ki ā rātou tamariki, rangatahi rānei. Kia koke ai te whakaiti i te whai wāhi ā-tuku iho mai o te whānau me wawe tonu te whai i ngā urupare tika.

Kei te kitea te hē o te kore e tika te urupare wawe i roto i te ture taiohi

I kite mātou e 95 ōrau o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori i roto i te ture taiohi kotahi te pūrongo māharahara i puta mō rātou i te wā e tamariki ana rātou. Haurua o rātou 10, neke atu rānei o rātou pūrongo māharahara. Mō ngā tauwi i roto i te ture taiohi e 82 ōrau kotahi, neke atu rānei ngā pūrongo māharahara mō rātou, ā, tata ki te hautoru 10, neke atu rānei o rātou pūrongo māharahara.

Kua roa e mōhio ana ki tēnei hono ki ngā hiahia tiaki me te whakamaru, engari kei te aro tonu ki te hara kaua ki te whakarite i ngā raru i pā mai ai tēnei whanonga. Kia oti ai tērā me aro kē ki te haumarua me ngā hiahia o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori i te wā e tamariki ana, ka mutu mā te āhuatanga torowhānui. Ko te whētuki ka puta i te tūkinu i ngā tamariki Māori mēnā kāore e wawe te tuku āwhina, kāore rānei i te whakatutukihia o rātou hiahia, ka mauroa ngā pānga ki te kore e whakaritea.

He nui ake ngā hiahia tiaki me te whakamaru o ngā tamariki Māori kāore i te whakatutukihia, me te kino kē atu o ngā hua tēnā i ngā tamariki tauwi

Mēnā i angitu te pūnaha oranga tamariki, ka noho haumarua ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi me te whakauru i ngā tautoko mā ngā tamariki, ngā rangatahi me ō rātou whānau kia kore e kake haere i roto i te pūnaha ināiane, ā, haere ake nei – hei tauira, ko te whakarite i ngā hiahia pērā i te wara pīroi me te waipiro o ngā tamariki, ngā uauatanga rānei kei runga i ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi pērā i ngā hiahia whanonga me te ako.

I tēnei tau i āta tiroiro mātou ki te taumata o ngā hiahia kāore i tutuki me ngā arawātea i tāhapa mō te Māori tēnā i a tauwi.

I kite mātou i tua atu i te auau haere ake o ngā pūrongo māharahara mō ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori, i pōturi ake te urupare ki ngā mea mōrea, tino kōhuki rānei. Ko te tikanga kāore e tino whakatutukihia Ngā Paerewa Manaaki ā-Motu, ka mutu kāore i te whakapakari i ngā rangatahi kia noho motuhake rātou.

- Tata ki te hauwhā o ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori i whakamōhiotia atu ki a Oranga Tamariki i te tau 2024/25 10, neke atu rānei ngā pūrongo māharahara mō tō rātou haumarua me tō rātou oranga. E tohu ana tēnei kāore pea i whaitake ngā urupare ki ngā pūrongo tuatahi. 13 ōrau anake o ngā tauwi i pērā te nui o ngā pūrongo māharahara.
- Ko ngā pūrongo māharahara he hira, he tino kōhuki rānei kāore e urupare i roto i te wā i te nuinga o te wā mō te Māori tēnā i ngā tauwi. I te 2024/25, tata ki te 480 ngā pūrongo māharahara hira, tino kōhuki rānei mō ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori
- kāore i wawe te urupare. E tohu ana tēnei i te 16 ōrau o ngā pūrongo māharahara hira, tino

kōhuki rānei mō te Māori tēnā i te 10 ōrau mō tauwi.

- He iti iho te toro a te tauwhiro hapori ki ngā Māori kei raro i te tauwhiro hapori. E 63 ōrau anake o ngā tamariki me ngā tamariki Māori i toroa e tō rātou tauwhiro hapori e ai ki te auau tika tēnā i te 73 ōrau o tauwi.
- He iti iho te taetae atu o ngā tamariki Māori ki te kura tuarua tēnā i ngā mea tauwi – ka kino kē atu mō rātou kei te tiakina, kei raro i te maru karauna. O rātou kei te tiakina, kei raro i te maru karauna rānei, 29 ōrau o ngā tamariki Māori i auau te taetae atu ki te kura tuarua i te tau 2023 tēnā i te 41 ōrau o ngā tamariki tauwi.
- He iti iho te whai raihana taraiwa a ngā rangatahi Māori 18–25 tau i te tiakina, i raro i te maru karauna rānei tēnā i a tauwi – 26 ōrau ngā Māori i whai raihana taraiwa i te tau 2023 tēnā i te 38 ōrau o ngā tauwi.
- O ngā Māori 18–25 tau i roto i te pūnaha oranga tamari he nui ake te whakamahi whare noho ohotata tēnā i a tauwi. Mō te hunga e tiakina ana, kei raro i te maru karauna, e 6 ōrau ngā Māori i whakamahi whare noho ohotata tēnā i te 4 ōrau o tauwi.

Me noho ko ngā kaupapa ā-iwi angitu me ngā rangapū mahi tahi rautaki te pūtake mō ngā huringa pūmau whānui, ā, me tere ake te whakatutuki i tēnei

Ka taea e te Ture Oranga Tamariki 1989 te whakamana kia nui ake te wāhanga ki ngā iwi, me ngā whakahaere Māori, hapori hoki. Ko te kī mai a Oranga Tamariki ko tōna hiahia kia nui ake te wāhanga ki ngā iwi, te Māori me ngā hapori ki te tuku me te whakahau i ngā ratonga me te mahi tahi me rātou. Kei roto pea i tēnei wāhanga nui ake ko te tuku mana e noho ana i roto i te Ture Oranga Tamariki. Kua rite kē ētahi iwi me ētahi whakahaere Māori ki te whai i tēnei mana.

Ko te tino uauatanga kē he tōmuri te whakatinana i ngā huringa.

E ai ki tā mātou pūrongo, kei reira ngā kaupapa e puta ai he hua ki ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi Māori me ō rātou whānau kei roto i a Oranga Tamariki.

- E whakaratoa ana a Mahuru i Te Tai Tokerau, e Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services, tētahi tauira manaaki kaupapa Māori mā ngā rangatahi kei roto i te ture taiohi.
- E whakaratoa ana a Te Pūkāea i Te Moana a Toi, e Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa, ngā tautoko i te wā tōmua. He whakaarotau i ngā pūrongo māharahara, e whakarite ana ka toroa ngā tamariki me ngā rangatahi katoa me te tuku ratonga me ngā tautoko ki ngā whānau. Ko te hunga kei te whiwhi hāpaiaora i raro i te ture ka tonoa ki a Oranga Tamariki.
- Ka whakarite te Hapori i Te Whanganui-a-Tara whānui, i raro i a Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira i te taha o ētahi atu kaiwhakarato, kei te whiwhi ngā whānau i ngā ratonga me ngā tautoko mai i ngā kaiwhakarato hapori pono whai muri i tētahi pūrongo māharahara. I te tau 2024/25, 157 ngā whānau Māori me ngā tamariki 353 i raro i tēnei āhuatanga. Ahakoa i waho o te wā tuku pūrongo, e whakaatu ana ngā raraunga o nā tata nei ko tēnei wāhi (Porirua) te wāhi iti rawa ngā rahinga tuku pūrongo anō i te rohe.

Engari, ka noho tonu ēnei kaupapa hei tauira whāiti, tauira whakamātau hoki me te kore whakaū a Oranga Tamariki ka haere tonu. Ina kitea te angitu, me noho tonu ēnei tauira hei tikanga mahi kua hei kaupapa rerekē. Me tere ake te tipu. E hiahia ana mātou kia nui ake ngā kaupapa pēnei, ā, me wawe tonu.

I pā mai ēnei uauatanga i te wā he nui ngā whakararu ki ngā pūtea me ngā kirimana a Oranga Tamariki. I rongo mātou mō ngā pānga wā roa o ngā whakatau mō ngā iwi, me ngā whakahaere Māori, hapori hoki.

Kua tīmata a Oranga Tamariki ki te whakarite i ēnei uauatanga, ā, kei te whai i tētahi kaupapa whakahau whānui ake. E tāria ana ka pēhea te urupare ki ngā kitenga a te Tumuaki o te Mana Arotake mō te hiahia kia whai whakaaro ki ngā pānga ki ngā tamariki, rangatahi me ō rātou whānau. Me pakari te tū a ngā kaiwhakarato kia pai ai te tuku ratonga tōtika mā ngā tamariki, rangatahi me ō rātou whānau. Ka tiroiro haere tonu mēnā ka whakaitia ngā pūtea, he pēhea te whakaiti, ā, mēnā kei te eke i ngā tari tuku pūtea me te kirimana i ō rātou herenga i roto i te pūnaha oranga tamariki.

Kāore i te kitea i roto i ngā raraunga onāiane i te whānuitanga o ngā rerekētanga, te ine rānei i te tōtika o te pūnaha

Me whai raraunga pai, tātaritanga hoki hei tātari haere tonu, mēnā kei te eke i ngā ratonga me ngā tautoko ngā hiahia o ngā tamariki, ngā rangatahi me ō rātou whānau.

I tēnei wā, kāore e taea e ngā tari te tiro he aha te mātāwaka i roto i ngā raraunga i ngā wā katoa. He raruraru tēnei mō Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa, ā, kāore i te ū tā rātou kohikohi me te hopu raraunga mātāwaka ki ngā aratohu a Tatauranga Aotearoa. Kāore te mātāwaka o ngā rangatahi āhua 30 ōrau i hara i te hopukia e Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa, ā, he whakararu tēnei i tōna kaha ki te whakatau i te whaitake o tōna urupare mō te Māori.

I tua atu i tērā, he iti iho te whakaputa a Oranga Tamariki i ngā tātaritanga mō ngā āhuatanga manarite-kore, ā, kāore hoki i tika tana hopu i ngā tonu ki ngā ratonga – te whaiwhai haere rānei i aua ratonga whaitake.

Nā te koretake o ngā raraunga me te kore tātaritanga kua kore e taea te whakapai ake ngā ratonga kia whaitake. Nā tēnei ka uaua ake te hiki i ngā hua wā-roa me te wāwāhi i te tuku ihotanga o ngā raruraru.

Key findings

More must be done to respond to the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori to address the impact of over-representation in the oranga tamariki system

In our last report, we showed how Māori are over-represented in the system and found it was letting them down. This has not changed.

In both this report and our 2023/24 report, we found that more must be done. This is because both short- and long-term outcomes for Māori involved in the system are much worse than for Māori not known to Oranga Tamariki | Ministry for Children. Outcomes for Māori are often also worse than for non-Māori. Data continues to show that, overall, the more involved tamariki and rangatahi Māori have been in the system, the worse their long-term outcomes. There are also clear disparities within the system and how it delivers support.

Unmet care and protection needs have a long tail of impact across the lives of tamariki and rangatahi Māori. While long-term outcomes are not necessarily caused by involvement in the oranga tamariki system, if they are to improve and inequities to reduce, responses that better meet the needs of Māori are required.

We set pou to monitor system performance over the long term. One of our pou marks intergenerational involvement in the oranga tamariki system. Almost two-thirds of Māori parents aged 27–30 who had been in care themselves have tamariki or rangatahi known to Oranga Tamariki. To achieve progress on reducing intergenerational involvement requires the right responses at the earliest opportunity.

Failure to provide the right response at the earliest opportunity is evident in youth justice

We found 95 percent of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in youth justice had at least one report of concern made about them when they were younger. Half had 10 or more reports of concern. This compares with 82 percent of non-Māori in youth justice with at least one report of concern and almost one-third with 10 or more reports of concern.

This link with unmet care and protection needs has long been recognised, but the focus continues to be on the offence rather than addressing the issues that led to this behaviour. To do that would require addressing the safety and needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori when they are younger and in a holistic way. The trauma that can result from harm that has occurred to tamariki Māori when help is not provided early enough, or their needs not being met, will have lifelong consequences if not addressed.

Tamariki Māori have higher unmet care and protection needs and worse outcomes than non-Māori

If the Oranga Tamariki system was successful, it would keep tamariki and rangatahi safe and put supports in place early for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau to avoid escalation through the system now and in the future – for example, addressing needs such as parental drug and alcohol addiction or challenges faced by tamariki and rangatahi such as behavioural and learning needs.

This year we have taken a closer look at the level of unmet needs and missed opportunities for Māori compared to non-Māori.

We found that not only were repeated reports of concern made more frequently for tamariki and rangatahi Māori but those considered critical or very urgent were responded to more slowly. Tamariki and rangatahi Māori in care are less likely to have the National Care Standards Regulations met and rangatahi are not being well set up to live independently:

- Almost a quarter of tamariki and rangatahi Māori notified to Oranga Tamariki in 2024/25 had already had 10 or more reports of concern about their safety and wellbeing. This suggests that responses to earlier reports may not have been effective. Only 13 percent of non-Māori had this level of repeated reports of concern.
- Reports of concern considered critical or very urgent are less likely to be responded to in required timeframes for Māori than non-Māori. In 2024/25, almost 480 critical or very urgent reports of concern about tamariki and rangatahi Māori were not responded to in time. This represents 16 percent of critical or very urgent reports of concern for Māori compared to 10 percent for non-Māori.

- Māori in care are less likely to be visited by their social worker. Only 63 percent of tamariki and rangatahi Māori were visited by their social worker at the required frequency compared to 73 percent of non-Māori.
- Regular attendance at secondary school is lower for Māori than non-Māori – and worse for those in care or custody. Of those in care or custody, 29 percent of Māori attended secondary school regularly in 2023 compared to 41 percent of non-Māori.
- Rangatahi Māori aged 18–25 who have been in care or custody are less likely to hold a driver licence than non-Māori – 26 percent of Māori had a driver licence in 2023 compared to 38 percent of non-Māori.
- Māori aged 18–25 who have been in the Oranga Tamariki system use emergency housing more than their non-Māori peers. For those who have been in care or custody, 6 percent of Māori used emergency housing in 2023 compared to 4 percent of non-Māori.

Successful iwi-led initiatives and strategic partnerships need to be the base for broader long-term change, and this should happen faster

The Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 enables a greater role for iwi, Māori and community organisations. Oranga Tamariki tells us it wants iwi, Māori and community to have a greater role in delivery and commissioning of services and to work in partnership with them. This greater role could include delegation of powers that sit within the Oranga Tamariki Act. Some iwi and Māori organisations are ready to step into this role.

The challenges, as always, are implementation and the slow pace of change.

As our report shows, there are initiatives that are delivering for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau involved with Oranga Tamariki.

- Mahuru in Te Tai Tokerau, delivered by Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services, is delivering a kaupapa Māori model of care for rangatahi involved in youth justice.
- Te Pūkāea in the Bay of Plenty, delivered by Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa, is providing support at the earliest opportunity. It triages reports of concern, ensuring all tamariki and rangatahi are visited and whānau are offered services and support. Those requiring statutory intervention are referred to Oranga Tamariki.
- Hapori in Greater Wellington, led by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira in partnership with other providers, ensures that whānau are offered services and supports from trusted community providers following a report of concern. In 2024/25, 157 whānau Māori with 353 tamariki were supported this way. Although outside the reporting period, recent data shows that this site (Porirua) had the lowest renotification rate in the region.

However, these initiatives continue to be limited pilots and prototypes without long-term certainty from Oranga Tamariki. Where there is evidence of success, these pilots and prototypes need to become business as usual and stop being the exception. Faster growth is needed. We want to see more initiatives like these, more quickly.

These challenges sit against a backdrop in which there was significant disruption to Oranga Tamariki funding and contracting. We heard about the long-term consequences of decisions for iwi, Māori and community organisations.

Oranga Tamariki has started to address these challenges and is working on a broader commissioning approach. We will be looking to see how it responds to the finding from

Tumuaki o te Mana Arotake | Office of the Auditor-General about the need to take account of impacts on tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. Providers need to be set up to deliver effective services for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. We will continue to monitor whether, and how, any funding is reduced and whether agencies with funding and contracting roles are meeting their responsibilities in the oranga tamariki system.

Current data does not show the full extent of disparity or enable system effectiveness to be measured

Good data and analysis are needed to assess, on an ongoing basis, whether services and supports are meeting the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau.

At present, agencies are not always able to see ethnicity in data. This is particularly a problem for Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa | New Zealand Police, whose collection and recording of ethnicity data does not meet Tatauranga Aotearoa | Stats NZ guidelines. The ethnicity of around 30 percent of rangatahi who offend is not recorded by NZ Police, which undermines its ability to determine the effectiveness of its response for Māori.

In addition, Oranga Tamariki is producing less analysis of disparities and has not been adequately recording referrals to services – or tracking whether those services are making a difference.

This poor data and lack of analysis mean the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of services is lost. This makes it harder to improve long-term outcomes and break intergenerational cycles.

Our approach to this report

This report looks at outcomes for Māori across the oranga tamariki system

The oranga tamariki system is the system responsible for providing services or support in connection with the Oranga Tamariki Act. A visual of the oranga tamariki system and the other systems it interfaces with is in Appendix One of this report.

This is our second annual report that looks at outcomes being achieved for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.¹

Our 2024/25 report focuses on how tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau experience the oranga tamariki system. It looks particularly at:

- whether the system is responding to their needs through the services and supports delivered by government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), and iwi and Māori providers under the Oranga Tamariki Act across all parts of the oranga tamariki system
- enablers and barriers to accessing services
- examples of iwi and community initiatives that are working well.

There are legislative requirements for this report

The Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022 (the Oversight Act) requires us to report annually on the performance of the oranga tamariki system in respect of outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.

The regulations accompanying the Oversight Act set out what this report must cover.

A difference from our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report is that we are not reporting on Oranga Tamariki performance in relation to section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act. Section 7AA was repealed on 7 April 2025, and references to section 7AA were removed from the Oversight Act regulations.

The Oversight Act requires us to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to give effect to Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi. This includes a priority to support improved outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori through our monitoring. It also requires us to work with hapū, iwi and Māori organisations to improve system oversight. Additionally, Te Kāhui, our Māori Advisory Group, plays a key role in advising us on our monitoring activities, including this report. Alongside these requirements, we recognise the significance of *Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū*, released in 1988.²

In fulfilling these requirements, we focus on what is led and delivered by iwi and Māori organisations in the oranga tamariki system. We also reflect on what over-representation and disparities mean for outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau within the system.

¹ Our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report, published in June 2025, can be found at aroturuki.govt.nz/reports/outcomes-23-24

² Ministerial Advisory Committee. (1988). *Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū*. Department of Social Welfare. msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/archive/1988-puaoteatatu.pdf

Our approach to assessing outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau

Both our legislation and our monitoring approach require us to assess outcomes being achieved for tamariki and rangatahi Māori who are known to Oranga Tamariki and are therefore in the oranga tamariki system.

Our approach to this report looks at those currently involved in the system and how well they are doing, as well as those who have been through the system and are now adults. We look at whether the agencies in the system have provided the services needed for tamariki and rangatahi to have productive lives and a standard of living like those who have not needed formal state intervention.

Our monitoring approach is based on a rigorous methodology with evidence at the centre. We use a mixed-methods approach – collecting qualitative information from the communities we visit and gathering quantitative data from agencies. Further information about how we collect and analyse information is available on our website.³

We use outcome indicators to measure how life is going for tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system

To measure outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori, we draw on data from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). There is more detail on the IDI in Appendix Two.⁴

The outcome indicators were developed for our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report and we continue to build on this work. The indicators help us to compare how life is going for disabled Māori compared to those with no identified disability. In this report, we focus on the areas where those differences are most relevant to understanding the performance of the oranga tamariki system.

Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2025

In our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report, we included data from the What About Me? survey undertaken in 2021.

The new Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey was undertaken in 2025 and merged questions from the What About Me? survey with another survey stream.⁵ Detailed results from the 2025 Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey were not available at the time of writing this report but will be used in our *2025/26 Outcomes for Māori* report.

³ aroturuki.govt.nz/what-we-do

⁴ The IDI holds de-identified data about people and households in Aotearoa. Results from IDI analysis are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the IDI, which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For a full disclaimer, see Appendix Two. For more information about the IDI, visit stats.govt.nz/integrated-data

⁵ What About Me? is the external branding of the 2021 Youth and Health Wellbeing Survey conducted by Malatest International. msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/consultations/youth-health-and-wellbeing-survey-results/index.html

Agency data

Under the Oversight Act, we can request data and information from government agencies and some NGOs. For this report, we requested data from Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police.⁶

Oranga Tamariki was unable to provide all the data we requested.⁷ Oranga Tamariki is continuing to work on making more data available and was able to provide more data this year than for the previous year. This includes additional data about ethnicity. We expect that more and better-quality data will be available to us in future years, enabling us to provide more detailed insights in future reports.

Ethnicity data for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau

In Oranga Tamariki data, all ethnicities that an individual identifies with are recorded.⁸

NZ Police has provided ethnicity data but records only one ethnicity per individual. In these cases, we are unable to say whether tamariki and rangatahi identify with more than one ethnicity. Ethnicity is not known for almost a third of the tamariki and rangatahi involved with NZ Police in 2024/25. This lack of reliable ethnicity data from government agencies means that the full extent of disparity is not known.

When ethnicity is recorded as 'unknown' in Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police data, we excluded these records when making comparisons between Māori and non-Māori in this report.

When the proportion of unknown ethnicity is above 10 percent and is therefore likely to affect the quality of data analysis, we have drawn attention to this in the report.

The voices of tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau

The voices of tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau are central to our report and are highlighted in quotes throughout the text. Their voices demonstrate their experience of the oranga tamariki system.

As shown by other independent oversight and investigative bodies, including the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse

in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions,⁹ quantitative data collected by agencies must be offset by hearing directly from tamariki, rangatahi, whānau, caregivers, NGO and iwi providers, and kaimahi working in the oranga tamariki system. The stories and experiences of tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau, caregivers and community are at the centre of our monitoring approach.

⁶ We also sent information requests for our 2024/25 reports to Te Tāhuhu o Te Mātauranga | Ministry of Education, Manatū Hauora | Ministry of Health, VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai, Office of the Ombudsman, Te Whare Kaupapa Āwhina | Open Home Foundation, Barnardos, Kōkiri Marae Keriana Olsen Trust and Mana Whanonga Pirihimana Motuhake | Independent Police Conduct Authority. Information from some of these organisations features in our 2024/25 Experiences of Care in Aotearoa report.

⁷ For example, Oranga Tamariki was not able to provide information about renotification of reports of concern at different intervention phases, where tamariki and rangatahi go and who cares for them after they leave the custody of Oranga Tamariki, or whether a referral for services and support has been made to a partner.

⁸ In the case of younger tamariki, ethnicity is usually identified by a parent or guardian on their behalf.

⁹ abuseincare.org.nz

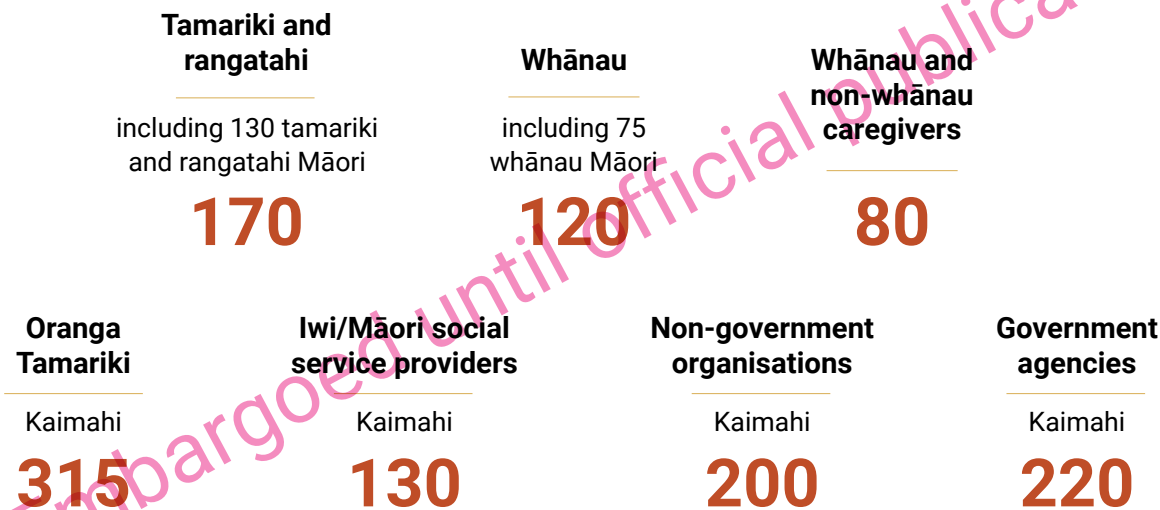
We follow a rigorous qualitative analysis process to identify the key themes and insights held in the information gathered from our community monitoring visits. Our quality assurance processes ensure that we are accurately reflecting what we heard and honouring the voices of those who have shared

their experiences with us. Quotes illustrate what we heard about a theme in the report. Sometimes we use a quote to highlight an example of good practice in an area where the experience is primarily negative. Learning from good practice helps drive improvement.

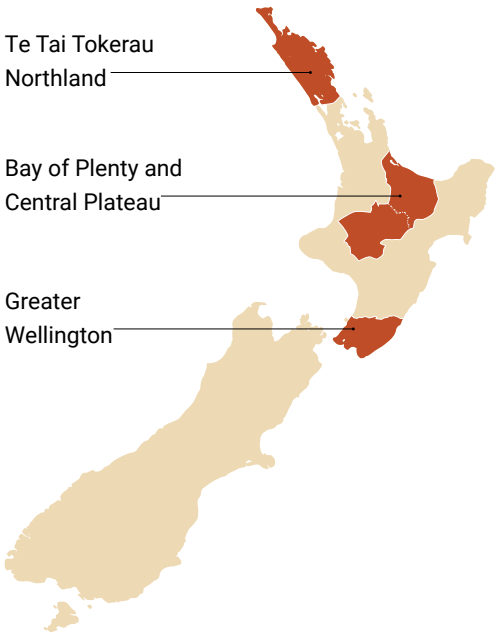
Who we heard from in 2024/25

We visit communities on a three-yearly cycle. This ensures we get a range of regional perspectives and cover the motu every three years.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2025, we spoke with around 1,230 people about their experiences.



For this 2024/25 reporting period, we visited communities in the Bay of Plenty and Central Plateau, Greater Wellington and Te Tai Tokerau. These regions varied in terms of Māori population. In Te Tai Tokerau, Māori make up more than half of the youth population. In the Bay of Plenty, Māori are just under half of the youth population. In Greater Wellington, Māori make up less than a quarter of the youth population.



Our pou

In our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report, published in June 2025, we identified two pou. We chose these two pou as key indicators of the long-term performance of the oranga tamariki system for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.

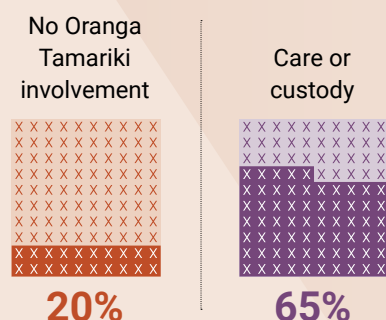
For this report, we include data for our pou that compares Māori who have had involvement with Oranga Tamariki with Māori who have not. We also include data where Māori have indicated a disability. We may identify more pou in future reports.

Intergenerational involvement in the oranga tamariki system will reduce

In our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report, we said that intergenerational involvement will reduce over time if the system is working well.

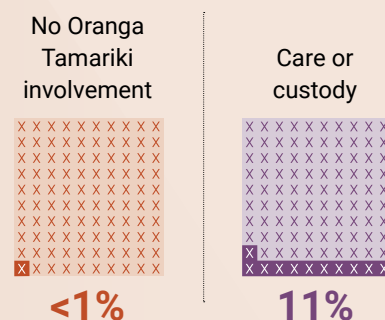
The data for this pou is an outcome indicator for Māori aged 27–30 in 2023. The first two measures compare Māori who have had no involvement with Oranga Tamariki with those who have had involvement.¹⁰ This year, we also include a third measure as a comparison for Māori aged 27–30 who are indicated as disabled.

65 percent of Māori parents who were in care or custody as children had a child known to Oranga Tamariki



The baseline measure for this in our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report was 68 percent.¹¹ Data for this report shows there has been a decrease of 3 percentage points. While this is heading in the right direction, we cannot yet tell if it is a trend.¹²

11 percent of Māori parents who were in care or custody as children had a child who was in state care



The baseline measure for this in our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report was 12 percent. Data for this report shows there has been a decrease of 1 percentage point.

This was higher for disabled Māori parents. 14 percent of disabled Māori parents who were in state care as children had a child who was in state care. This measure is new for this report.

¹⁰ Any involvement with Oranga Tamariki, including where a child may have had one report of concern with no further action.

¹¹ Outcome indicators in our 2023/24 report show IDI data from 2022. In this report, IDI data is from 2023.

¹² We may not see any significant shift in this pou for a number of years. It takes time for any changes implemented now to take effect and for today's tamariki and rangatahi to become young adults.

Our pou

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori remain hopeful about their futures

In our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report, we said that, if the system is working well, we will continue to see tamariki and rangatahi Māori remaining hopeful about their futures and will also hear about them realising their aspirations.

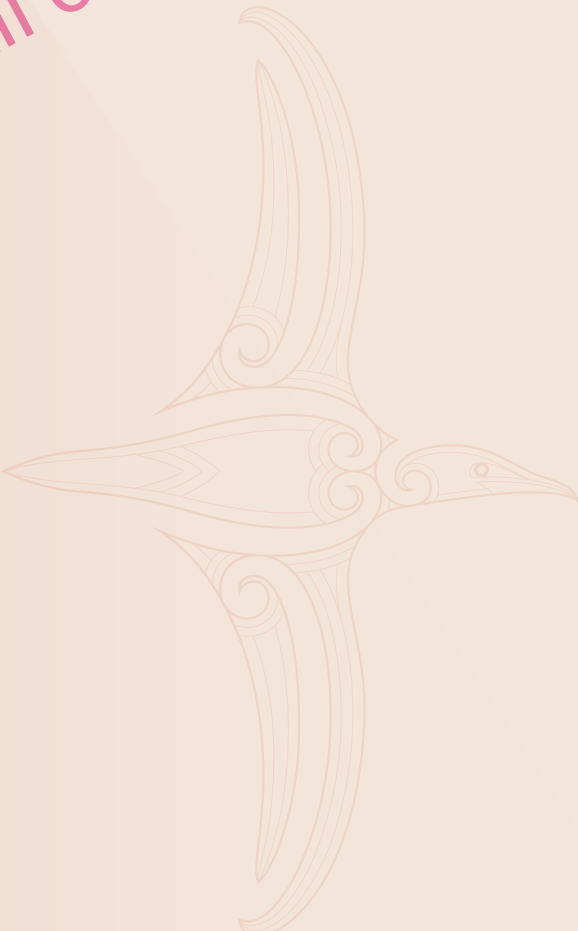
The baseline data for this pou was from the What About Me? survey for rangatahi aged 15–18. Specifically, we use data for tamariki and rangatahi Māori who were involved with Oranga Tamariki. This includes those who self-identify as disabled. New results were not available at the time of writing this report.¹³

Baseline measure from What About Me? survey for rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki being hopeful about their futures



Our 2024/25 regional engagements with tamariki and rangatahi Māori indicated that they remain hopeful about their futures. The quotes that follow are some of what we heard from tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau about their aspirations for the future.

Embargoed until official publication



¹³ The What About Me? survey was undertaken in 2021. As outlined earlier in the section Our approach to this report, the new Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey was undertaken in 2025 and merged questions from the What About Me? survey with another survey stream. Published results from the 2025 Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey were not available at the time of writing this report, but will be used in our 2025/26 Outcomes for Māori report.

“

"I want to be a social worker. I want to help kids like me. I would be really good [as a social worker] and I would work here [at residence]."

RANGATAHI

“

"If I was to have kids, I don't want them to go through this sort of stuff that I went through. One thing I want for my future is to stay out of trouble. I don't want to go to jail. Just work. Travel overseas. Move out of New Zealand, go to America."

RANGATAHI

“

"[I am going to] stay safe, got to get a job with my dad, get certified [forklift licence]."

RANGATAHI

“

"[My daughter] talks with her social worker about [aspiration], and now she wants to be a social worker too. She's got a mentor who helps her with her schooling. She got lots of support while [at residence]."

WHĀNAU MEMBER

“

"[In the future, I want to] live with our Mum."

RANGATAHI

“

"[She] wanted to start talking Māori, wants to know what to say. I would love for her to get into that. If she did get into her whole culture, she will know what she can do, needs to be pointing in the right direction. She is different from other kids."

WHĀNAU MEMBER

“

"My hopes for [my son] are to work hard on his routine and structure. To respect women and respect himself, to develop the tools that he needs to do that and choose different outcomes. Make good money. Travel. To get to leave this country."

WHĀNAU MEMBER

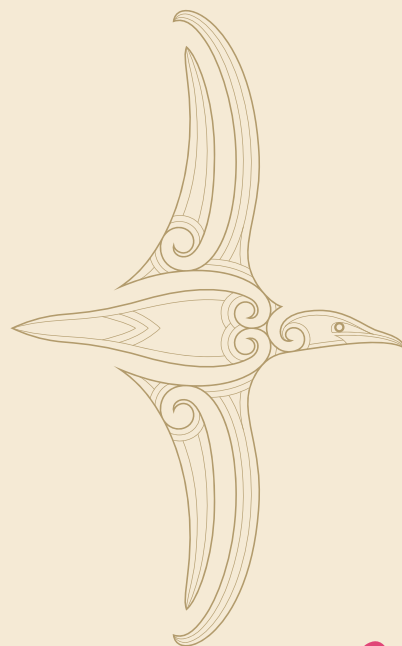


Embargoed until Official Publication

A white line-art illustration of a Māori decorative element, possibly a stylized bird or a koru, is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the slide. It features a long, curved beak and a body with intricate, swirling patterns. The background is a solid olive green with large, dark green geometric shapes (triangles and a parallelogram) overlaid.

About tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system

Embargoed until official publication



This part of the report includes data about tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system.

This report focuses on tamariki and rangatahi Māori. We define this group as anyone who identifies as Māori, including where they also identify as other ethnicities.¹⁴ Sometimes we compare this group to the non-Māori population, which we define as anyone who does not identify as Māori.

Ethnicity data collected by government agencies is used in this report and reflects the limitations and inconsistencies in how agencies collect it. Oranga Tamariki records each ethnicity that tamariki and rangatahi identify with. NZ Police records a single ethnicity per individual.

Around a third of tamariki and rangatahi interacting with NZ Police in 2024/25 did not have their ethnicity recorded.

¹⁴ In the case of younger tamariki, ethnicity is usually identified by a parent or guardian on their behalf.

**Over a quarter
of tamariki and
rangatahi in
Aotearoa are
Māori¹⁵**

The estimated population of
Aotearoa New Zealand aged 0–18 is

1.25 million

The estimated population of
Aotearoa New Zealand aged 0–18 is

1.25 million

338,000
of those are tamariki and rangatahi Māori.¹⁶
One-third of those identify as Māori only,
while two-thirds identify with other ethnic
groups as well.

338,000
of those are tamariki and rangatahi Māori.¹⁶
One-third of those identify as Māori only,
while two-thirds identify with other ethnic
groups as well.

338,000
of those are tamariki and rangatahi Māori.¹⁶
One-third of those identify as Māori only,
while two-thirds identify with other ethnic
groups as well.

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori will make up more of the youth population in the future¹⁷

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2025**¹⁸

The infographic consists of two 10x10 grids of 'X' marks, each representing 10% of the youth population. The left grid, for 2025, shows 27% of the grid filled with dark purple 'X' marks, representing Māori youth. The right grid, for 2045, shows 30% of the grid filled with dark purple 'X' marks. A dotted arrow points from the 2025 grid to the 2045 grid, indicating the projected increase.

27%

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2045**¹⁹

30%

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori will make up more of the youth population in the future¹⁷

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2025**¹⁸

The infographic consists of two 10x10 grids of 'X' marks, each representing 100% of the youth population. In the 2025 grid, 27% (27 'X' marks) are dark purple, representing Māori, and 73% (73 'X' marks) are light purple, representing non-Māori. In the 2045 grid, 30% (30 'X' marks) are dark purple, and 70% (70 'X' marks) are light purple. A dotted arrow points from the 2025 grid to the 2045 grid, indicating the projected increase.

Year	Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18
30 June 2025 ¹⁸	27%
30 June 2045 ¹⁹	30%

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2045**¹⁹

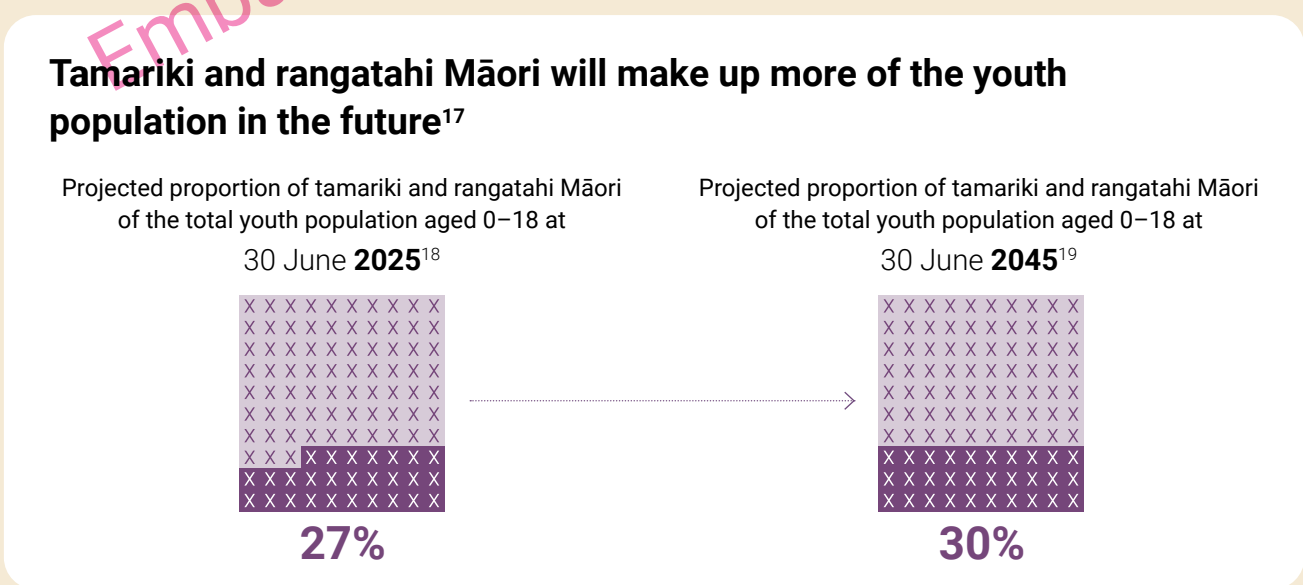
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori will make up more of the youth population in the future¹⁷

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2025**¹⁸

The infographic consists of two 10x10 grids of 'X' marks, each representing 100% of the youth population. In the 2025 grid, 27% of the 'X's are dark purple, representing Māori, while the remaining 73% are light purple. In the 2045 grid, 30% of the 'X's are dark purple, representing Māori, while the remaining 70% are light purple. A dotted arrow points from the 2025 grid to the 2045 grid, indicating the projected increase. Below each grid is its respective percentage: 27% and 30%.

Year	Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18
30 June 2025 ¹⁸	27%
30 June 2045 ¹⁹	30%

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2045**¹⁹



Tamariki and rangatahi Māori will make up more of the youth population in the future¹⁷

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2025**¹⁸

The infographic consists of two 10x10 grids of 'X' marks, each representing 100% of the youth population. In the 2025 grid, 27% (27 'X' marks) are dark purple, representing Māori, and 73% (73 'X' marks) are light purple, representing non-Māori. In the 2045 grid, 30% (30 'X' marks) are dark purple, and 70% (70 'X' marks) are light purple. A dotted arrow points from the 2025 grid to the 2045 grid, indicating the projected increase.

27%

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2045**¹⁹

30%

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori will make up more of the youth population in the future¹⁷

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2025**¹⁸

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2045**¹⁹

The infographic consists of two main parts, each showing a grid of 'X' marks representing the proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the youth population. The left part is for 2025 and the right part is for 2045. A dotted arrow points from the 2025 grid to the 2045 grid, indicating a projected increase. The 2025 grid is 10 columns wide and 10 rows high, with the bottom 3 rows (30%) filled with a darker purple color. The 2045 grid is also 10 columns wide and 10 rows high, but the bottom 4 rows (40%) are filled with the darker purple color, showing an increase from 27% to 30%.

Year	Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18
30 June 2025 ¹⁸	27%
30 June 2045 ¹⁹	30%

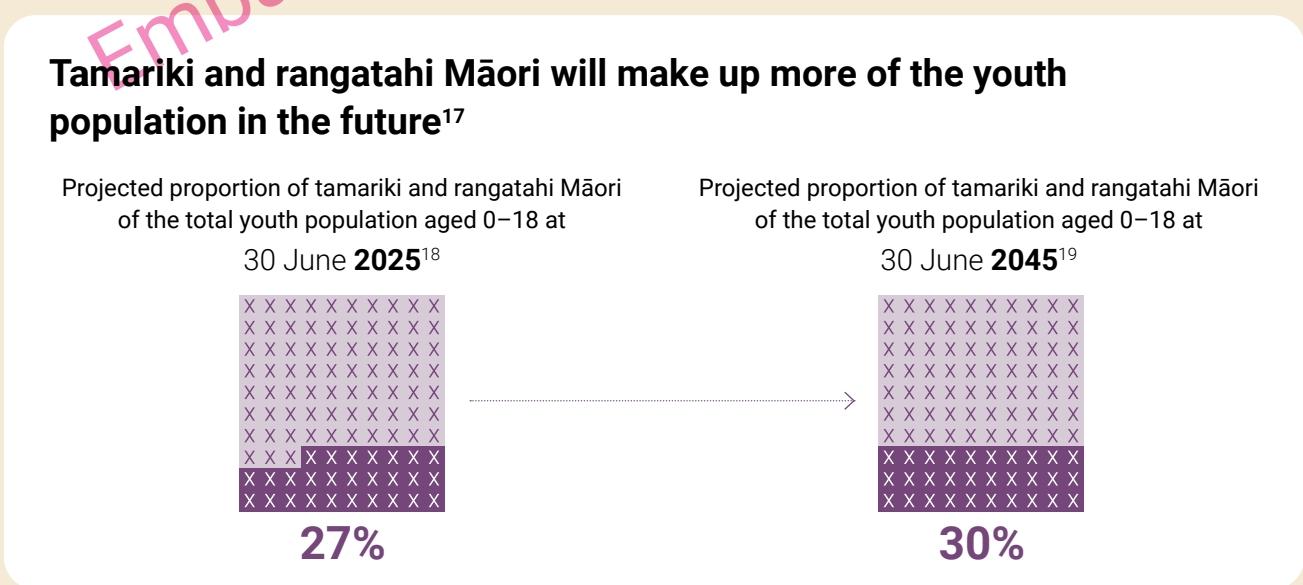
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori will make up more of the youth population in the future¹⁷

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2025**¹⁸

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2045**¹⁹

The infographic consists of two main parts. On the left, under the heading 'Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June 2025¹⁸', there is a grid of 100 small squares arranged in 10 rows and 10 columns. The bottom 27 squares of this grid are filled with a dark purple color, while the remaining 73 squares are light purple. Below this grid, the text '27%' is displayed in a large, bold, dark purple font. On the right, under the heading 'Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June 2045¹⁹', there is a similar grid of 100 small squares. In this grid, the bottom 30 squares are filled with dark purple, and the remaining 70 squares are light purple. Below this grid, the text '30%' is displayed in a large, bold, dark purple font. A horizontal dotted arrow points from the 2025 grid to the 2045 grid, indicating the progression of time and the increase in the proportion.

Year	Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18
30 June 2025 ¹⁸	27%
30 June 2045 ¹⁹	30%



Tamariki and rangatahi Māori will make up more of the youth population in the future¹⁷

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2025**¹⁸

The infographic consists of two 10x10 grids of 'X' marks, each representing 100% of the youth population. In the 2025 grid, 27% (27 'X' marks) are dark purple, representing Māori, and 73% (73 'X' marks) are light purple, representing non-Māori. In the 2045 grid, 30% (30 'X' marks) are dark purple, representing Māori, and 70% (70 'X' marks) are light purple, representing non-Māori. A dotted arrow points from the 2025 grid to the 2045 grid, indicating the projected increase.

27%

Projected proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori of the total youth population aged 0–18 at 30 June **2045**¹⁹

30%

15 These figures come from Stats NZ National Ethnic Population projection at June 2025 (2023 base).

16 Māori population is calculated based on the number of people who identify as Māori.

stats.govt.nz/news/one-in-three-children-projected-to-be-maori

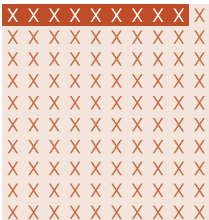
18 See footnote 15.

19 These figures come from Stats NZ National Ethnic Population projection at June 2045 (2023 base).



The majority of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in Aotearoa have never had any interaction with the oranga tamariki system

In 2024/25:



9 in 100 tamariki and rangatahi Māori have had a report of concern made to Oranga Tamariki about their safety or wellbeing



2 in 100 tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 10–18 have been subject to a police proceeding



1 in 100 tamariki and rangatahi Māori have spent time in the care²⁰ of Oranga Tamariki



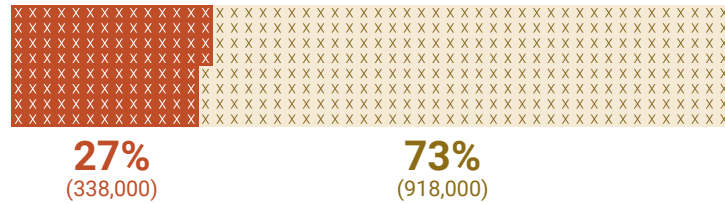
1 in 330 tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 10–18 have been in custody under youth justice orders.

²⁰ Where we refer to 'care' rather than 'care or custody', this is to indicate that we are only including care and protection and not youth justice custody.

However, tamariki and rangatahi Māori are more likely to be involved in the oraŋga tamariki system

■ Māori ■ Non-Māori

Tamariki and rangatahi in Aotearoa²¹



Had a report of concern about their safety or wellbeing



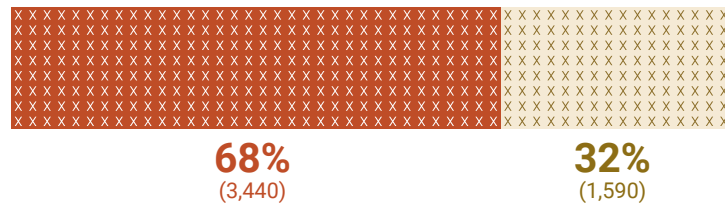
Had a report of concern that progressed to a core assessment²²



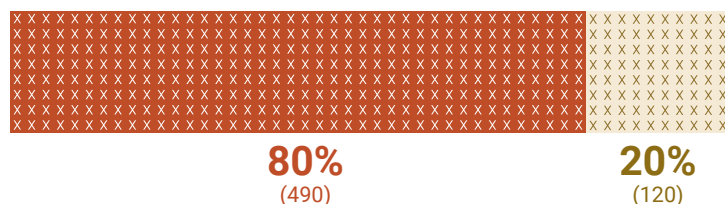
Had a police proceeding²³



Were in care²⁴



Were in youth justice custody²⁵



The proportions of non-Māori and Māori above are based on all tamariki and rangatahi with a recorded ethnicity.²⁶ Ethnicity is more likely to be recorded for tamariki and rangatahi who have had a higher level of involvement with the system. This differs to the approach taken in our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report, where those with unknown ethnicity were identified as a separate group. In Appendix Three, we provide data to show how many tamariki and rangatahi are recorded as having unknown ethnicity for each of the levels of system involvement.

²¹ These figures come from Stats NZ National Ethnic population projection as at 30 June 2025, aged 0–18, 2023 (base).

²² As the outcome of a report of concern was that further action was required.

²³ This measure only includes data for tamariki and rangatahi aged 10–18.

²⁴ See footnote 20.

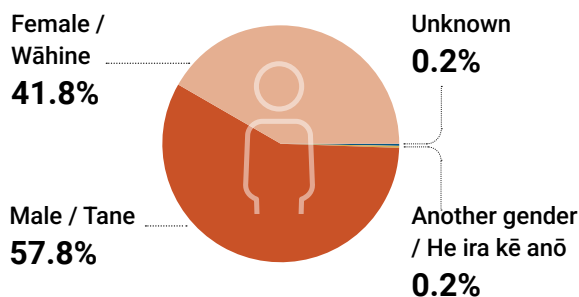
²⁵ See footnote 23.

²⁶ Ethnicity is recorded for 85 percent of those who had a report of concern about their safety or wellbeing, 92 percent of those who had a report of concern that progressed to a core assessment, 68 percent of those involved in police proceedings, 99.1 percent of those in care under care or protection orders and 100 percent of those in custody under youth justice orders.

Males are over-represented in care or custody

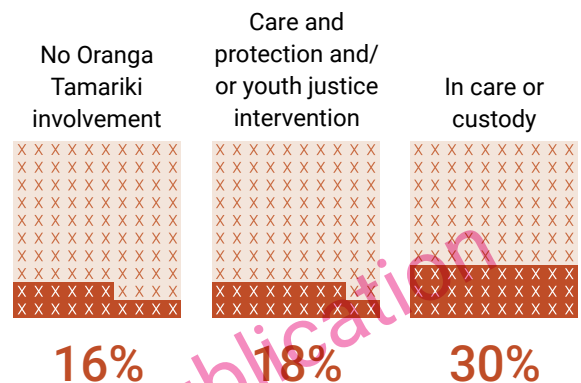
In the youth population there is a broadly even split of male and female tamariki and rangatahi Māori. However, in the care or custody population, there are more males than females.

Māori aged 0–18 in care or custody of Oranga Tamariki



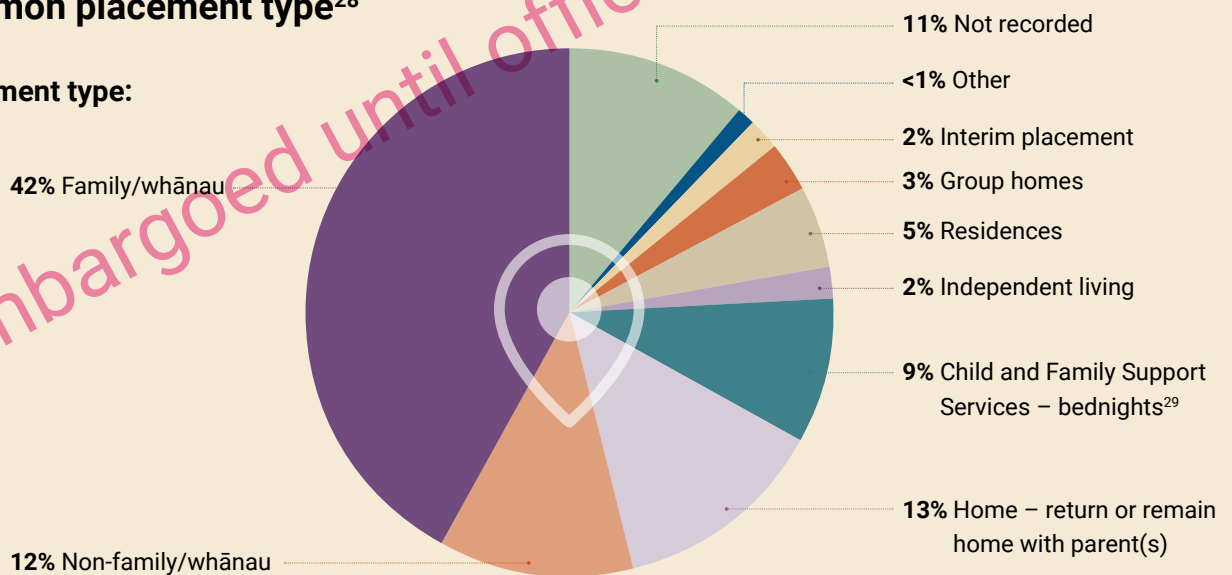
Māori in care or custody are more likely to be disabled than those with no involvement with Oranga Tamariki

Māori aged 0–17 who are disabled²⁷



For tamariki and rangatahi Māori in care, living with whānau is the most common placement type²⁸

Placement type:

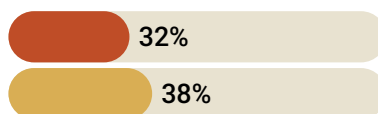


Tamariki and rangatahi Māori remain in care and protection custody longer than non-Māori

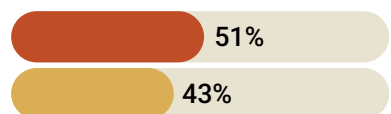
Less than 1 year



1–5 years



More than 5 years

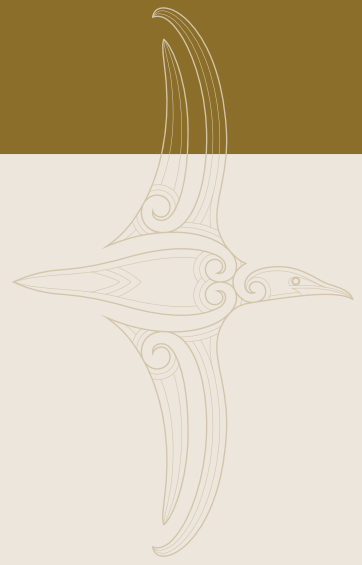


²⁷ Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure — IDI (2023). Results from IDI analysis are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the IDI, which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI, visit stats.govt.nz/integrated-data

²⁸ Among tamariki and rangatahi in care and protection custody on 30 June 2025.

²⁹ This was called 'NGO / Iwi social services' in our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report.





This part of the report begins with the extent to which tamariki and rangatahi Māori are over-represented in the oranga tamariki system and the extent to which disparities exist between Māori and non-Māori.

We go on to look at data on outcome indicators for tamariki and rangatahi Māori currently involved with Oranga Tamariki.

This is followed by data on outcome indicators for rangatahi Māori aged 18–25 and for Māori adults aged 27–30 who were involved in the oranga tamariki system as children.

We then focus on how services and supports are delivered to tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau in the oranga tamariki system.

We also look at how these services and supports were disrupted by funding and contract changes in 2024/25.

We finish with discussion on data issues.

Embargoed until official publication





Over-representation of Māori in the oranga tamariki system

Embargoed until official publication

For most tamariki and rangatahi who become involved in the oranga tamariki system, it starts with a report of concern about their safety and wellbeing. Further involvement covers a broad range of actions such as a family group conference and state care.

Some tamariki and rangatahi come to the attention of Oranga Tamariki when NZ Police refers them for a family group conference related to offending. In some cases, they may require care in a youth justice community home or secure residence.

State care and custody, for either care and protection or youth justice reasons, is the most involved tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau can become in the oranga tamariki system.

This section of the report shows how tamariki and rangatahi Māori are over-represented in the oranga tamariki system. It then considers how this over-representation, along with ongoing disparities, means that tamariki and rangatahi Māori are less likely to have some of the minimum required care standards met.

As reported in *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*,³⁰ over-representation has a cumulative effect. Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are more likely to have contact with the oranga tamariki system and to experience different responses to non-Māori, which may reinforce the pattern of inequitable outcomes.

Over-representation and its impact on Māori is not new

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori have longstanding and continued over-representation in the oranga tamariki system.

There have been multiple reports, research studies and evaluations over the years about over-representation of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in state care and its impacts, including:

- the report *Pūao-Te-Ata-Tū* (1988)³¹
- the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions³²
- research published by the longitudinal study *Growing Up in New Zealand* in July 2023 about structural disadvantage and rangatahi Māori mental wellbeing.³³

In 2021, an independent study published by Ihi Research about Māori involvement in state care from 1950 to 1999 found “devastating, intergenerational harms that tamariki Māori and whānau have experienced through enduring, systemic and structural racism across the State Care system”.³⁴

Over-representation has persisted over time. This is despite multiple system reforms and policy commitments aimed at reducing over-representation, disparities and inequities for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau in the oranga tamariki system.

30 Aroturuki Tamariki. (2025). *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*. aroturuki.govt.nz/reports/safety-net

31 See footnote 2.

32 See footnote 9.

33 Growing Up in New Zealand. (2023, July 20). *Structural disadvantage and rangatahi Māori mental wellbeing* growingup.co.nz/growing-up-report/structural-disadvantage-and-rangatahi-maori-mental-wellbeing

34 Ihi Research. (2021). *Hāhā-uri, hāhā-tea: Māori involvement in state care 1950–1999*. abuseincare.org.nz/our-progress/library/v/306/haha-uri-haha-tea-maori-involvement-in-state-care-1950-1999

Over-representation increases as tamariki and rangatahi Māori move deeper into the oranga tamariki system

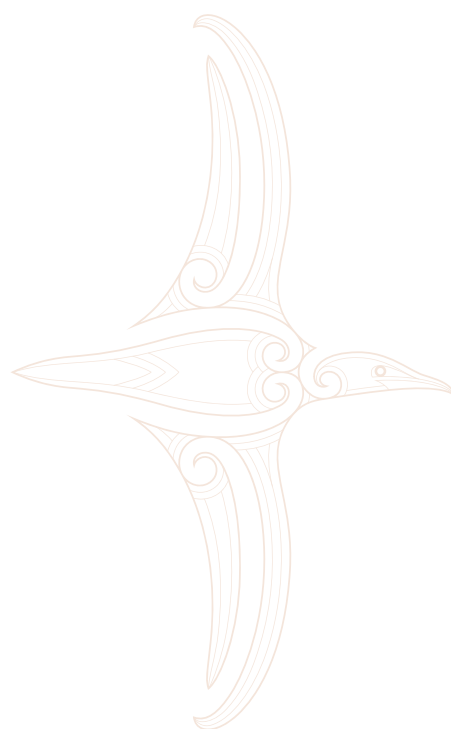
In this part of the report, we build on the data shown earlier in the section *About tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system*. This shows that, when Māori are involved in the system, they have more involvement than non-Māori and this increases the deeper in the system they go.

To show the over-representation of tamariki and rangatahi Māori at different points of the oranga tamariki system, we look at data on reports of concern, family group conferences, care or custody, police proceedings and youth justice intervention.

More than half of reports of concern with a recorded ethnicity are for tamariki and rangatahi Māori. In 2024/25, reports of concern were made about 30,600 individual tamariki and rangatahi Māori and 22,900 non-Māori.³⁵ This means 57 percent of reports of concern were for Māori and 43 percent were for non-Māori. Ethnicity is known for 85 percent of individual tamariki and rangatahi in this data.

Almost a quarter of tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had a report of concern in 2024/25 had 10 or more previous reports made

Tamariki and rangatahi who had a report of concern made about them during 2024/25 often had prior reports of concern. These other reports of concern could have occurred recently or many years earlier. The distribution of reports of concern over a lifetime for tamariki and rangatahi Māori is different to non-Māori.



³⁵ Reports of concern were made about 62,600 individual tamariki and rangatahi – ethnicity was known for 53,500 of them. Some were the subject of multiple reports of concern during the year.

Most tamariki Māori who had a report of concern in 2024/25 had previous reports made

Number of reports of concern

One report of concern

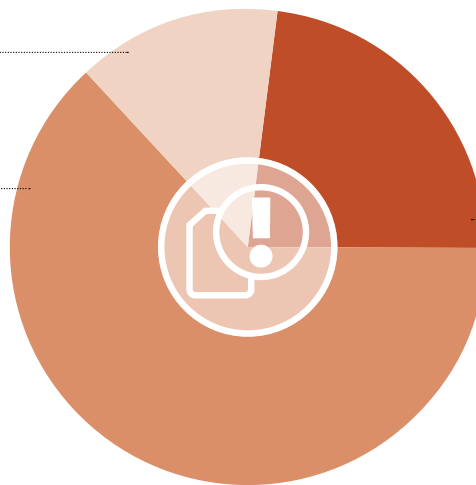
14%

Between two and nine reports of concern

63%

10 or more reports of concern

23%



Ethnicity is known for 62 percent of those who had one report of concern during their lifetime. Ethnicity is known for 94 percent of those who had had two or more reports of concern during their lifetime.

Nearly one quarter of tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had a report of concern made about them, had 10 or more previous reports of concern. In 2024/25, this was 7,180 tamariki and rangatahi Māori, compared to 2,960 non-Māori.

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori were also more likely than non-Māori to have had multiple reports of concern made about them during 2024/25.

In every region, reports of concern for tamariki and rangatahi Māori were less likely to be responded to within operational timeframes than reports of concern for non-Māori. Nationally, the rate at which critical or very urgent³⁶ reports of concern are responded to has got worse.

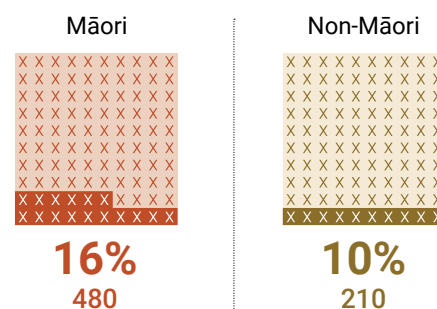
The response rate dropped from 90 percent in 2023/24 to 84 percent in 2024/25 for Māori. For non-Māori, the proportion dropped from 95 percent to 90 percent in 2024/25.

In 2024/25, 480 critical and very urgent reports of concern about tamariki and rangatahi Māori (out of a total of 3,070) were not responded to on time.

Critical and very urgent reports of concern for tamariki and rangatahi Māori have less timely responses

Reports of concern must be responded to in a timely way to address immediate safety or wellbeing concerns or so that needs for services and supports are identified early. Responses that do not meet timeframes may leave tamariki in unsafe situations for longer or delay the identification of needs and tamariki, rangatahi and whānau receiving supports.

A greater proportion of critical and very urgent reports of concern for Māori are not responded to on time

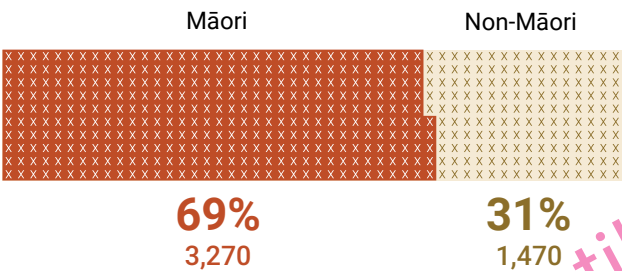


³⁶ A critical or very urgent report of concern indicates a child may have been seriously harmed or be at risk of serious harm.

Māori are more likely to have reports of concern progress to care and protection family group conferences

Our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report included data on the proportions dating back to 2019/20. Work previously completed by Oranga Tamariki shows that tamariki and rangatahi Māori are more likely than non-Māori to have reports of concern that progress to family group conference (FGC).³⁷ This has not changed in 2024/25.

Over two-thirds of care and protection FGCs are for Māori



The pattern of more reports of concern about Māori progressing to FGCs is longstanding. This may reflect greater need or complexity. FGCs can open the door to greater support for tamariki and rangatahi and whānau. However, it could also be driven by bias in decision making, meaning tamariki and rangatahi Māori become more deeply involved with the system than necessary.

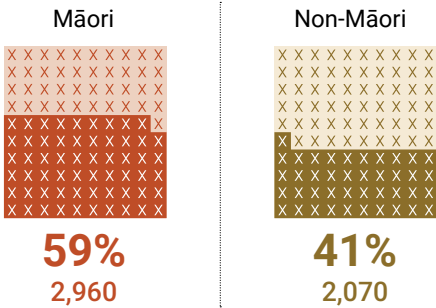
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are more likely to be in state care or youth justice custody than non-Māori

In 2024/25, 68 percent of tamariki and rangatahi in care and protection custody³⁸ were Māori (3,440 individuals) and 32 percent were non-Māori (1,590 individuals). Of those in youth justice custody,³⁹ 80 percent were Māori (490 individuals) and 20 percent were non-Māori (120 individuals).

Although the care and custody population has reduced over recent years, the level of over-representation of Māori has not changed.

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are proceeded against more by NZ Police than non-Māori

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are around 60 percent of those aged 10–18 proceeded against by NZ Police



Ethnicity is known for 68 percent of tamariki and rangatahi proceeded against by NZ Police in 2024/25.

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had proceedings in 2024/25 are also likely to have had more police proceedings in their lifetime than non-Māori.

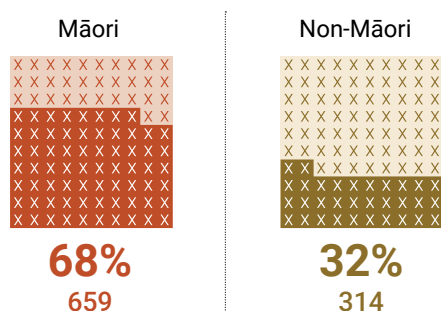
³⁷ Oranga Tamariki. (2025). Section 7AA report 2024: Ngā hua mō ngā tamariki Māori | Outcomes for tamariki Māori. govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Performance-and-monitoring/Section-7AA/Section-7AA-report-Improving-outcomes-for-tamariki-Maori-2024.pdf

³⁸ Under care and protection orders.

³⁹ Under youth justice orders.

Of tamariki and rangatahi Māori with police proceedings in 2024/25, 68 percent have had more than one police proceeding in their lifetime. For non-Māori, this is 55 percent.

Tamariki Māori are nearly 70 percent of those aged 10–13 proceeded against by NZ Police⁴⁰



Ethnicity is known for 73 percent of tamariki aged 10–13 proceeded against by NZ Police in 2024/25.

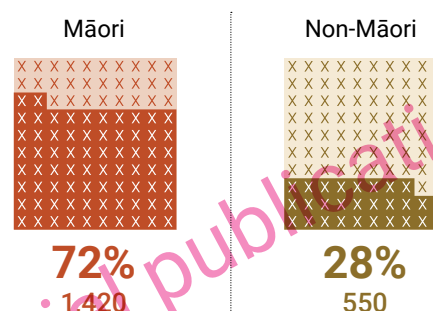
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are proceeded against at a younger age

The average age of tamariki and rangatahi Māori at their first proceeding is 14 whereas the average age for non-Māori is 15.⁴¹ This has remained consistent over the previous two years.

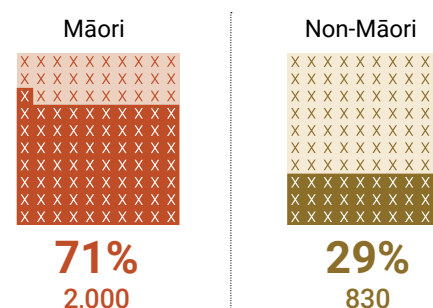
Tamariki and rangatahi Māori are more likely to have a youth justice intervention

When tamariki and rangatahi offend, NZ Police decides how to proceed against them. Tamariki and rangatahi have a youth justice FGC when referred by NZ Police or when NZ Police decide to prosecute.⁴²

Over 70 percent of youth justice FGCs are for tamariki and rangatahi Māori



Over 70 percent of those who had a youth justice intervention⁴³ are Māori aged 10–18



⁴⁰ In 2024/25, 17 percent of all youth police proceedings involved tamariki aged 10–13.

⁴¹ NZ Police data we received shows that ethnicity is only known for 55 percent of first proceedings in 2024/25.

⁴² Tamariki and rangatahi have a youth justice FGC where they have not been arrested but NZ Police is considering whether to charge the young person with committing an offence or where NZ Police considers a child aged 10–13 is in need of care or protection because of the number, nature or magnitude of their offending. Youth justice FGCs are also usually held where NZ Police chooses to prosecute tamariki and rangatahi through the Youth Court.

⁴³ These figures only represent those known to Oranga Tamariki and do not include all tamariki and rangatahi known to NZ Police. They include tamariki and rangatahi who had an open youth justice intervention phase in CYRAS. This means there are open actions still to be completed from the time the child or rangatahi was first referred to Oranga Tamariki for youth justice matters. These could be further court appearances for example. The intervention stays open until there is a resolution such as final orders made by the Youth Court. Some tamariki and rangatahi may have an open youth justice intervention for multiple years. They may have become known to Oranga Tamariki in a previous reporting period.

Over-representation compounds the impact on tamariki and rangatahi Māori in care

Our 2024/25 *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* report⁴⁴ found that there has been no real improvement in compliance with the National Care Standards Regulations (NCS Regulations) by Oranga Tamariki. Tamariki and rangatahi in care or custody were still not receiving the minimum standard of care required by the NCS Regulations.

Even by its own measures of compliance, which are lower than the NCS Regulations, Oranga Tamariki data shows that only 33 percent of tamariki and rangatahi Māori have its core lead indicators met. This is compared to 45 percent of non-Māori.⁴⁵

Oranga Tamariki has care or custody of nearly 99 percent of tamariki and rangatahi in state care, including both care and protection and youth justice.⁴⁶

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori make up 68 percent of those in care and protection custody⁴⁷ and 80 percent of those in youth justice custody.⁴⁸

Simply put, over-representation combined with low compliance means that more tamariki and rangatahi Māori than non-Māori miss out on what they have a right to while in state care.

This combination can create disadvantages – both immediate and long term. If tamariki and

rangatahi Māori in state care are less likely to have the required standards met, it makes it more challenging for them to achieve their full potential. It may also impact their long-term outcomes as adults. The disadvantages are also seen to flow on intergenerationally.

Compliance with the NCS Regulations in some key areas is poorer for Māori

Oranga Tamariki data for 2024/25 shows that compliance with the NCS Regulations is similar for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and non-Māori for the most part.⁴⁹

However, compliance is poorer⁵⁰ for tamariki and rangatahi Māori in some key areas. As an example, there is a 10 percent disparity for tamariki and rangatahi Māori with the NCS Regulation for social worker visits. Given there are twice as many tamariki and rangatahi Māori in care, this means that almost three times as many tamariki and rangatahi Māori as non-Māori are not visited at the required frequency.⁵¹ Social worker visits are vital opportunities to ensure tamariki and rangatahi in care are safe and their individual needs are identified and met.

44 Aroturuki Tamariki. (2026). *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa: Agency compliance with the National Care Standards and Related Matters Regulations. 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025*. aroturuki.govt.nz/reports/eoc-24-25

45 Oranga Tamariki reports on its compliance with the NCS Regulations' in its annual report. Oranga Tamariki. (2025). *Annual report 2024/25 | Pūrongo ā tau 2024/25*. orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Corporate-reports/Annual-Report/Annual-Report-2024-2025.pdf

46 In 2024/25, four agencies had the care or custody of almost 5,640 tamariki and rangatahi in Aotearoa – Oranga Tamariki, Open Home Foundation, Barnardos and Kōkiri Marae Keriana Olsen Trust.

47 3,500 tamariki and rangatahi Māori were in care or custody under care and protection orders in 2024/25 compared to 1,600 tamariki and rangatahi who are non-Māori.

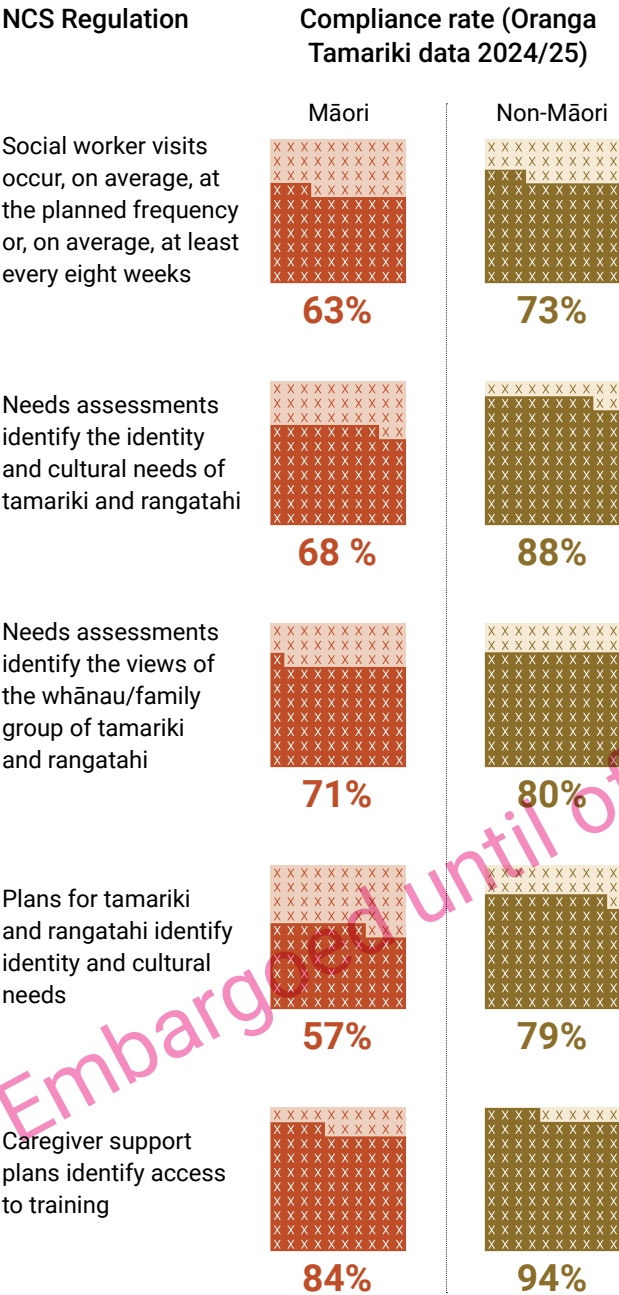
48 480 tamariki and rangatahi Māori were in custody under youth justice orders in 2024/25 compared to almost 130 tamariki and rangatahi who are non-Māori.

49 There was no NCS Regulation where (statistically significant) compliance was higher for Māori than non-Māori.

50 The NCS Regulations that were less likely to be met in 2024/25 have differences that are statistically significant, with a 95 percent confidence level.

51 This uses Oranga Tamariki NCS Regulations compliance data from case file analysis, using a sample of tamariki and rangatahi to measure compliance. The data is not for the entire care and custody population.

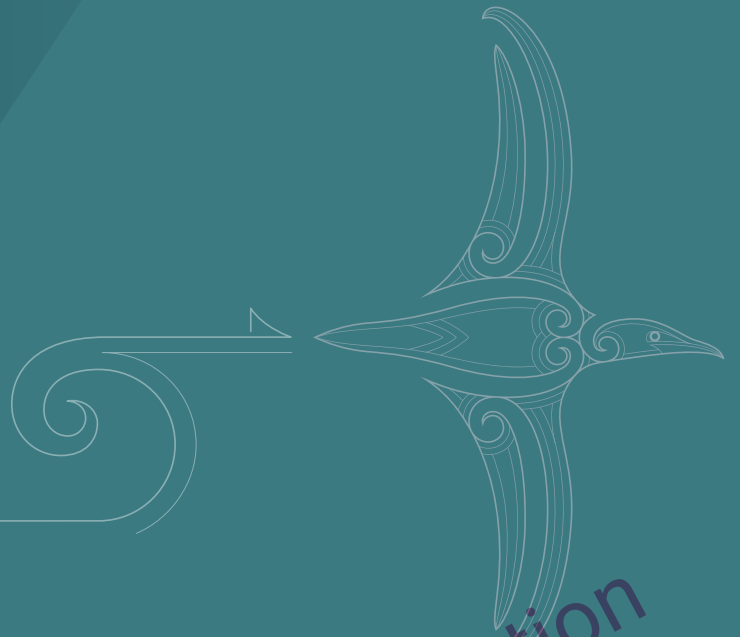
NCS Regulations with poorer compliance for Māori



In March 2025, Oranga Tamariki identified social worker visits as a priority to improve the agency’s compliance with the NCS Regulations.⁵² Oranga Tamariki has shared operational data indicating that, since 1 July 2025, there has been an increase in social worker visits to tamariki and rangatahi. However, the operational data uses a measure that does not align with the NCS Regulation for social worker visits at the required frequency.⁵³

52 Through the Oranga Tamariki National Care Standards Action Plan.

53 The NCS Regulations stipulate that tamariki and rangatahi must be visited at the frequency set out in their individual plans. Oranga Tamariki measures frequency as set out in plans or at a frequency of every eight weeks.



Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system

Embargoed until official publication

Many factors contribute to tamariki and rangatahi involvement in the oranga tamariki system. Outcomes are not necessarily caused by involvement in the oranga tamariki system, and it is not our intention to attribute outcomes to any one factor or to the actions of any one agency.

However, when tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau become known to the oranga tamariki system and the state becomes involved, it has an obligation to take actions to improve outcomes for them.

To help understand how life is going for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and adult Māori who are or have been involved in the oranga tamariki system, we look at a range of outcome indicators, including for those with a recognised disability.⁵⁴ These indicators were developed for our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report following consultation with Oranga Tamariki strategic partners, iwi and Māori organisations and guidance from Te Kāhui, our Māori Advisory Group.

The outcome indicators offer insights about tamariki, rangatahi and adults. The indicators also help identify potential gaps and opportunities in the oranga tamariki system where fit-for-purpose services and supports for tamariki and rangatahi Māori could lead to better outcomes and lives. This can also avoid later financial and social costs.

We use these indicators to compare outcomes for Māori who were not involved with Oranga Tamariki (or its predecessors) with Māori who have had involvement at varying levels.

Appendix Two has further information about the use of the IDI and the outcome indicators in this report, including definitions.

⁵⁴ It is widely accepted that disability is under-diagnosed among tamariki and rangatahi involved in the oranga tamariki system. "However, it is acknowledged that research has reported *vastly different* estimates of disability amongst the population of tamariki and rangatahi engaged with Oranga Tamariki." Oranga Tamariki. (2023). *Evidence brief: Primary healthcare needs of disabled children in care and protection* (p. 14). orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Primary-healthcare-needs-of-disabled-children-in-care/Evidence-Brief-Primary-care-needs-of-disabled-children-in-care.pdf

Outcome indicators for tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 0–17

These outcome indicators are for tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 0–17 in 2023⁵⁵ and include health and education indicators. These indicators help us understand how life is going for tamariki and rangatahi Māori who were recently involved in the orange tamariki system and may still be involved. We compare this with tamariki and rangatahi Māori who have not been involved in the system.

Our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report provided a baseline for our outcome indicators. There are some changes highlighted across the two years of data.⁵⁶

The outcome indicators are grouped by level of involvement in the system.⁵⁷

Embargoed until official publication



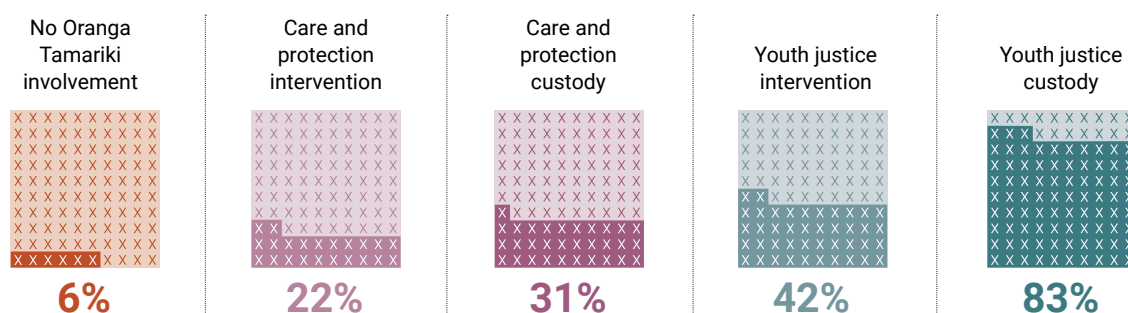
⁵⁵ Some outcome indicators use an age range within 0–17 such as 14–17. Where this is the case, it is noted.

⁵⁶ Outcome indicators for our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report looked at tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 0–17 in 2022. We have not included a time series comparison of data in this report. This will be something for our future Outcomes for Māori reports.

⁵⁷ Definitions and other technical notes are provided in Appendix Two.

Health outcome indicators

Rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki used mental health and addiction services at higher rates

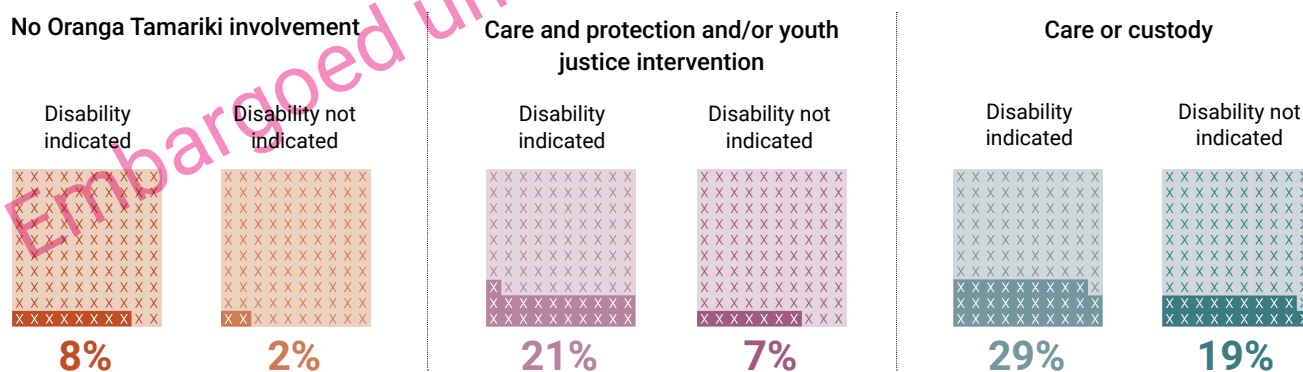


This outcome indicator shows rates of secondary public mental health and addiction service use for rangatahi Māori aged 14–17 in 2023. This data does not tell us about the demand for mental health and addiction services.

It shows that over 80 percent of rangatahi Māori in youth justice custody used mental health and addiction services.

Data from our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report and this report is not directly comparable.⁵⁸

Disabled rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki used mental health and addiction services at higher rates



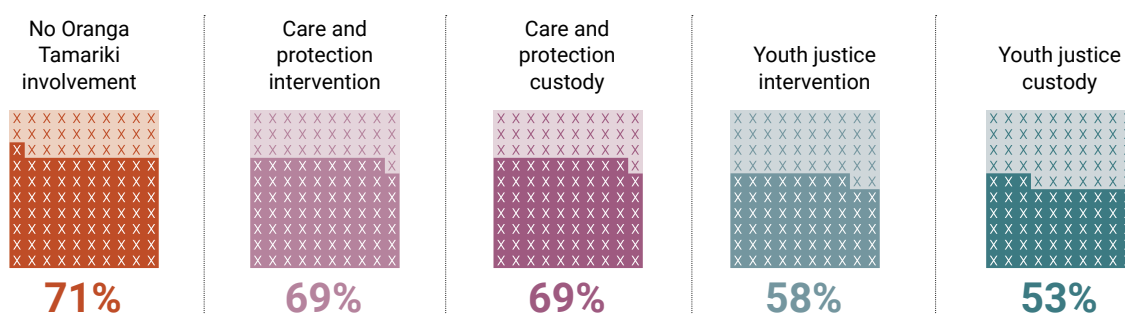
This outcome indicator shows rates of secondary public mental health and addiction service use by rangatahi Māori aged 14–17 with a disability indicated in 2023. This data does not tell us about the demand for mental health and addiction services.

It shows that:

- disabled rangatahi Māori aged 14–17 used secondary public mental health and addiction services at a higher rate than those without a disability indicated
- disabled rangatahi Māori in care or custody used mental health and addiction services over three times more than those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement
- the more involvement disabled rangatahi Māori have with Oranga Tamariki, the higher the rates of mental health and addiction services use.

⁵⁸ Due to an error, the data shown for mental health and addiction service use in our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report was incorrect. Last year's data was for the first half of 2022 only and therefore under-represented service use.

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori involved with youth justice saw their GP at lower rates



This outcome indicator shows rates at which tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 0–17 saw their GP in 2023. The data does not show demand or need for a GP visit.

It shows that:

- those involved in care and protection and those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement saw their GP at similar rates
- tamariki and rangatahi Māori involved with youth justice had lower rates of seeing their GP than those in care and protection.⁵⁹

This is similar to what we reported in 2023/24 with the exception of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in youth justice intervention. The percentage of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in youth justice intervention who saw their GP has decreased by 8 percentage points in a year.

⁵⁹ As noted in our in-depth review of enrolment and access to primary health services and dental care for rangatahi and tamariki in care, health and dental services provided in secure residences are delivered by contracted providers. As such, tamariki and rangatahi would not normally be seeing their own GP while in youth justice custody. Aroturuki Tamariki. (2023). *Access to primary health services and dental care*. aroturuki.govt.nz/assets/Reports/health-dental/Health-and-Dental-Review-Aroturuki-Tamariki.pdf

Rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki were hospitalised for self-harm at higher rates

Māori aged 15–17 hospitalised for self-harm

No Oranga Tamariki involvement



Receiving care and protection and/or youth justice intervention



In care or custody

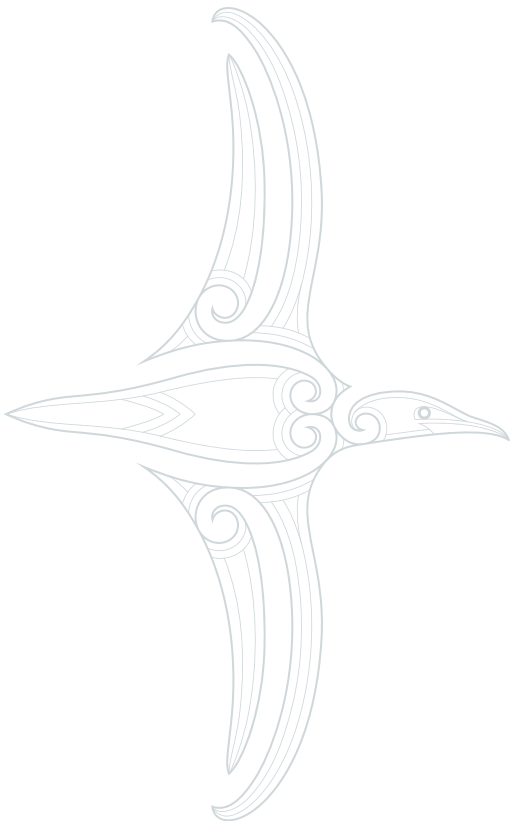


This outcome indicator shows the rates at which rangatahi Māori aged 15–17 were hospitalised for self-harm in 2023. The data does not show actual rates of self-harm.

It shows that rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki were hospitalised for self-harm at a rate eight times higher than those with no involvement.

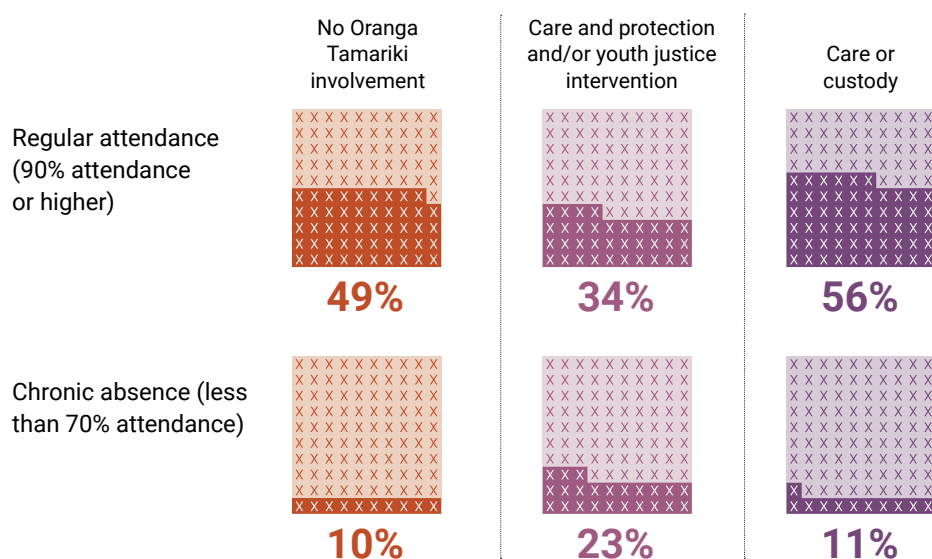
This data is similar to what we reported in our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report.

Embargoed until official publication



Education outcome indicators

Primary/intermediate school attendance for tamariki Māori receiving intervention was lower than for tamariki with no involvement or for those in care or custody



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which tamariki Māori regularly attended⁶⁰ primary and intermediate school as well as rates of chronic absence in 2023.⁶¹

It shows that:

- tamariki Māori receiving care and protection and/or youth justice intervention had lower rates of regular attendance and double the rate of chronic absence than those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement
- tamariki Māori in care or custody had higher regular primary and intermediate attendance than those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement.

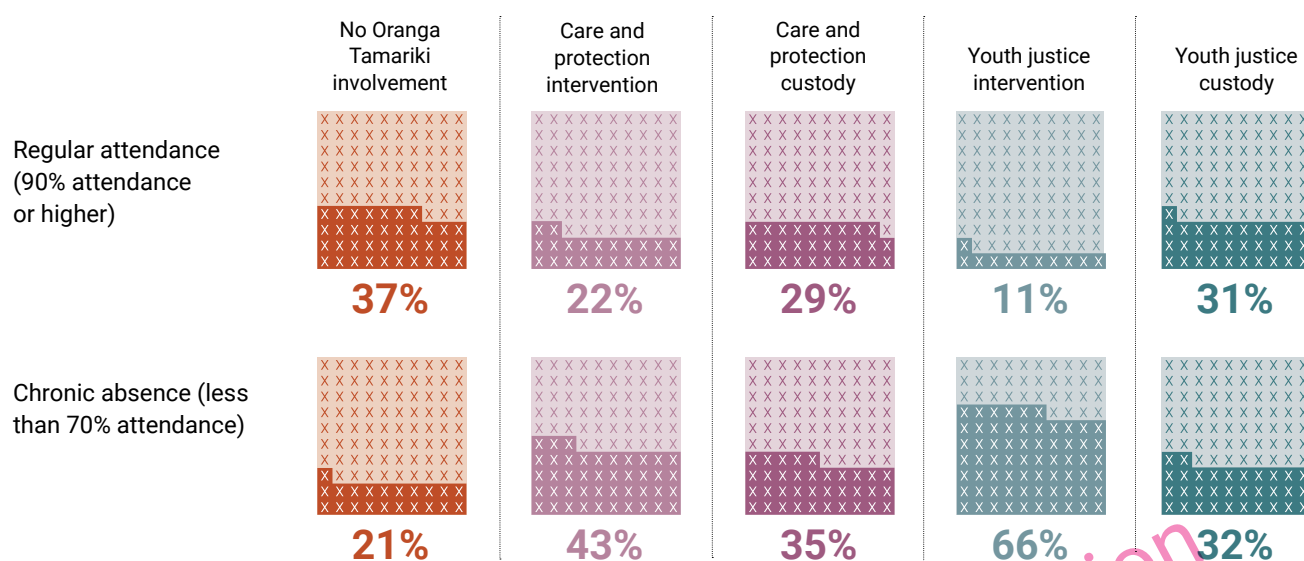
Regular attendance rates at primary and intermediate school increased for all groups shown above by at least 10 percentage points since our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report. The largest increase of attendance rate was for those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement.

Chronic absence rates for all groups decreased by at least 7 percentage points for the same period. The largest decrease in chronic absence was for those receiving an intervention.

⁶⁰ School attendance data is based on enrolments. As shown in our *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* reports, there are tamariki and rangatahi Māori who do not attend school at all because they are not enrolled. These tamariki and rangatahi are not included in attendance data. In our regional engagements, we hear reasons why tamariki and rangatahi don't and/or can't enrol or attend school.

⁶¹ Rates for irregular and moderate absence are not shown here. Irregular absence is classed as attending for 80–89 percent of the time, and moderate absence is classed as attending for 70–79 percent of the time.

Rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki had lower attendance at secondary school



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which rangatahi Māori regularly attended⁶² secondary school as well as rates for chronic absence in 2023.⁶³

This shows that rangatahi Māori in youth justice intervention attended secondary school much less frequently than those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement (regular attendance was three times lower).

It also shows that:

- regular attendance for rangatahi Māori who attended secondary school increased for most groups since our 2023/24 Outcomes for Māori report
- the rate stayed the same for those in care and protection custody
- the largest increase in attendance was for those in youth justice custody. Chronic absence for all groups decreased slightly for the same period. The largest decrease of chronic absence was for those in youth justice custody.

⁶² See footnote 60.

⁶³ See footnote 61.

Outcome indicators for Māori aged 18–25

These outcome indicators are for Māori aged 18–25 in 2023. These are new outcome indicators for the 2024/25 reporting period and include health, education and wider social and economic outcomes.

These indicators help us understand how life is going for those who may have recently exited the oranga tamariki system and may be receiving post-care support for their transition to adulthood. We use the indicators to compare data for Māori aged 18–25 who had no involvement in the system.

Some of the outcome indicators for Māori aged 18–25 show the difference between Māori who were in care or custody and eligible for Transition Support Services delivered by Oranga Tamariki⁶⁴ and those who were not eligible. Tamariki and rangatahi who were not eligible for Transition Support Services are likely to have been in care for a short period of time or left care before the age of 15.

Our 2024/25 *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* report has more information about Transition Support Services.⁶⁵

Health outcome indicators

Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody used mental health and addiction services four times more than those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement

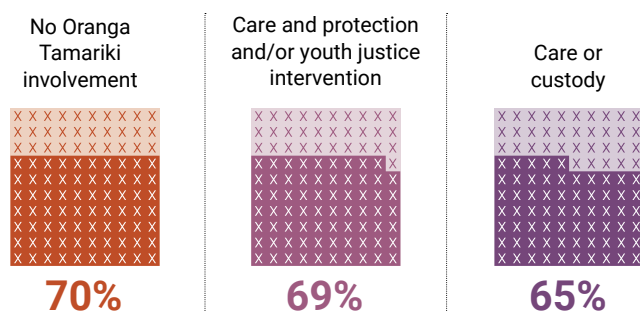


This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 18–25 used secondary public mental health and addiction services in 2023. This data does not tell us about the demand for mental health services.

⁶⁴ A range of services delivered by Oranga Tamariki to meet its transition to adulthood obligations by supporting rangatahi to prepare for leaving care or custody. Oranga Tamariki contracts transition workers through community providers to deliver parts of the service. Rangatahi are eligible for Transition Support Services if they have been in care or youth justice custody for over three continuous months from 14 years and 9 months up until they turn 18.

⁶⁵ See footnote 44.

Māori aged 18–25 involved with Oranga Tamariki saw their GP at similar rates to those with no involvement



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 18–25 saw their GP in 2023. The data does not show demand or need for a GP visit.

It shows that:

- those involved with care and protection and/or youth justice intervention and those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement saw their GP at similar rates
- the rate of seeing their GP for those who had been in care or custody was lower than those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement by 5 percentage points.

Disabled Māori aged 18–25 involved with Oranga Tamariki saw their GP at similar rates to those with no involvement



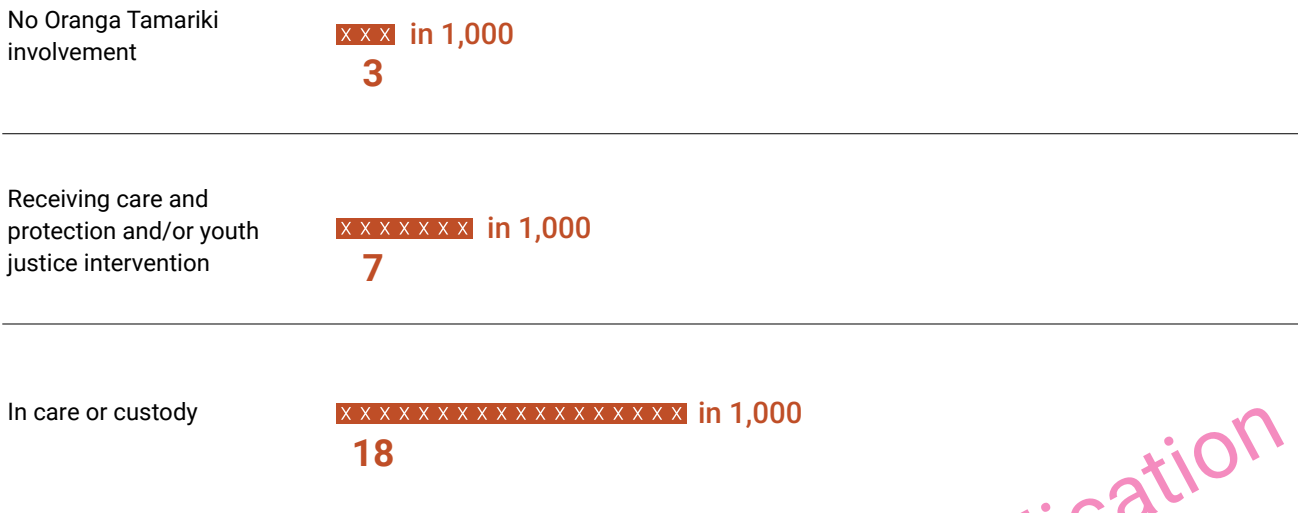
This outcome indicator shows the rates at which disabled Māori aged 18–25 saw their GP in 2023. The data does not show demand or need for a GP visit.

It shows that disabled Māori aged 18–25 saw their GP at higher rates than non-disabled Māori aged 18–25.

Data also shows that disabled Māori aged 18–25 involved with Oranga Tamariki saw their GP at similar rates to non-disabled Māori aged 18–25 with no Oranga Tamariki involvement

Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody were hospitalised for self-harm at higher rates

Māori aged 18–25 hospitalised for self-harm

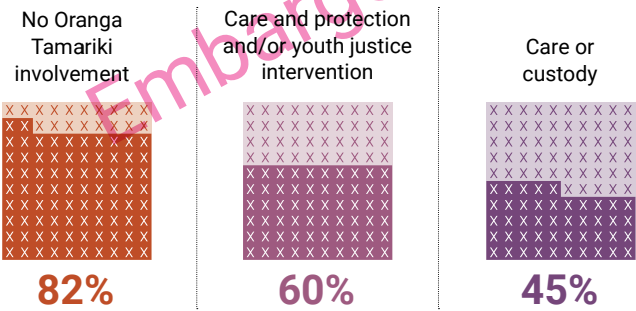


This outcome indicator shows the rates at which rangatahi Māori aged 18–25 were hospitalised for self-harm in 2023. The data does not show actual rates of self-harm.

It shows that Māori aged 18–25 with Oranga Tamariki involvement were hospitalised for self-harm at a rate three times higher than those with no involvement.

Education outcome indicators

Rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki had lower rates of qualification attainment

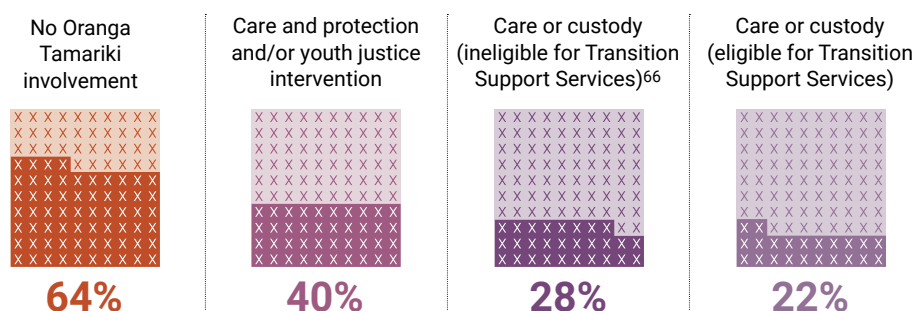


This outcome indicator shows the rates at which rangatahi Māori attained a NZQCF level 2 or higher qualification by age 18.

It shows that rangatahi Māori who had been in care or custody attained a NZQCF level 2 or higher qualification at almost half the rate of those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement.

Wider social and economic outcome indicators

Less than a third of Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody had a driver licence

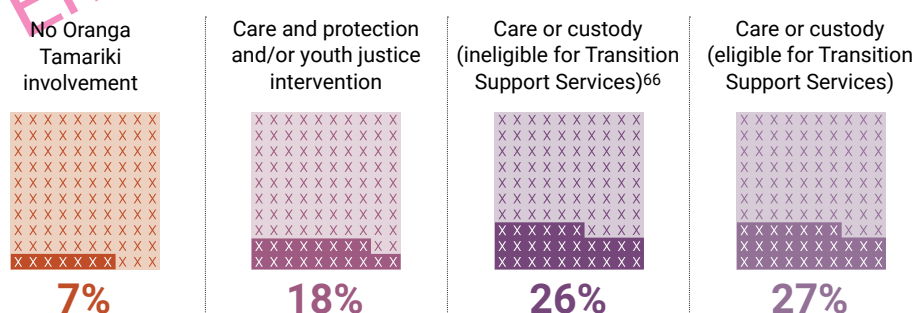


This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 18–25 had a driver licence. It also shows rates for Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody depending on whether they were or were not eligible for Transition Support Services delivered by Oranga Tamariki.

It shows that:

- Māori aged 18–25 who were involved with Oranga Tamariki had lower rates of having a driver licence than those with no involvement
- the more involvement Māori aged 18–25 had with Oranga Tamariki, the lower their rates of having a driver licence
- Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody and were eligible for Transition Support Services had a driver licence at a third of the rate of those with no involvement with Oranga Tamariki.

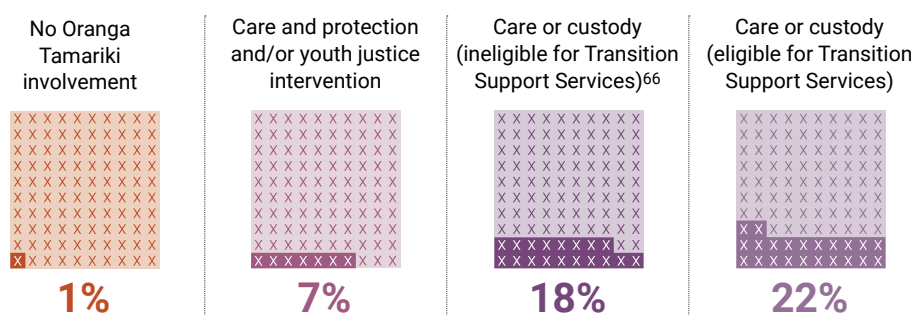
Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody received a main benefit at almost four times the rate of those with no Oranga Tamariki involvement



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 18–25 received a main benefit in 2023. It also shows rates for Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody depending on whether they were eligible for Transition Support Services delivered by Oranga Tamariki.

⁶⁶ Eligibility for Transition Support Services from Oranga Tamariki is based on how old tamariki and rangatahi were when they left custody or care and how long they were in care or custody. To be eligible for Transition Support Services, rangatahi must have been in care or custody for at least three months continuously after the age of 14 years and 9 months. For eligible rangatahi, Transition Support Services can support their transition into adult life between 15 and 25 years of age. orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/transition-support-service

Māori aged 18–25 involved with Oranga Tamariki had higher rates of emergency housing use



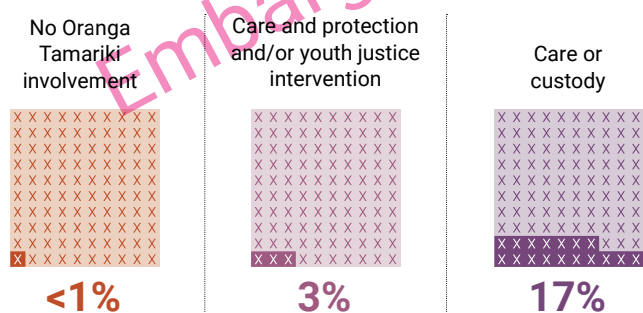
This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 18–25 had time in emergency housing since turning 18. It also shows rates for Māori aged 18–25 who were in care or custody depending on whether they were eligible for Transition Support Services delivered by Oranga Tamariki.

It shows that Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody and were eligible for Transition Support Services had the highest rate of emergency housing use, even though the role of Transition Support Services is to support rangatahi to transition to adulthood.

The data shows that:

- one in five of them had used emergency housing compared to one in 100 of those who had no Oranga Tamariki involvement
- their rate of emergency housing use was slightly higher than for those who had also been in care or custody but were ineligible for Transition Support Services.

Māori aged 18–25 involved with Oranga Tamariki had higher rates of imprisonment or home detention



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 18–25 were imprisoned or in home detention since turning 18.

It shows that:

- one in six Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody were imprisoned at some point since turning 18
- Māori aged 18–25 who had been in care or custody were imprisoned or in home detention at a rate almost 30 times more than those not involved with Oranga Tamariki.

Outcome indicators for Māori aged 27–30

These outcome indicators are for Māori adults aged 27–30 in 2023 and include health, education and wider social and economic outcomes. These indicators help us to understand how life is going for those who had some level of involvement in the oranga tamariki system⁶⁷ when they were children (aged 0–18). This also helps us to understand long-term outcomes.

For almost every outcome indicator, we found the higher the level of involvement adults had with the oranga tamariki system as children, the worse the outcomes were at age 27–30.

Most of the outcome indicators in this report for Māori aged 27–30 were also in our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report.⁶⁸ Some changes across the two years of data are highlighted.⁶⁹

Health outcome indicators

Māori who were in the oranga tamariki system as children used mental health and addiction services at higher rates



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 used secondary public mental health and addiction services in 2023. This data does not tell us about the demand for mental health services.

It shows that:

- a third of Māori aged 27–30 who were in youth justice custody as children used a mental health and addiction service
- Māori adults with higher levels of involvement with the oranga tamariki system as children had higher rates of accessing mental health and addiction services.

⁶⁷ Involved with the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services.

⁶⁸ See footnote 1.

⁶⁹ We have not included a time series comparison of data in this report. This will be something for our future annual Outcomes for Māori reports.

Māori who were in care or custody as children were hospitalised for self-harm at higher rates

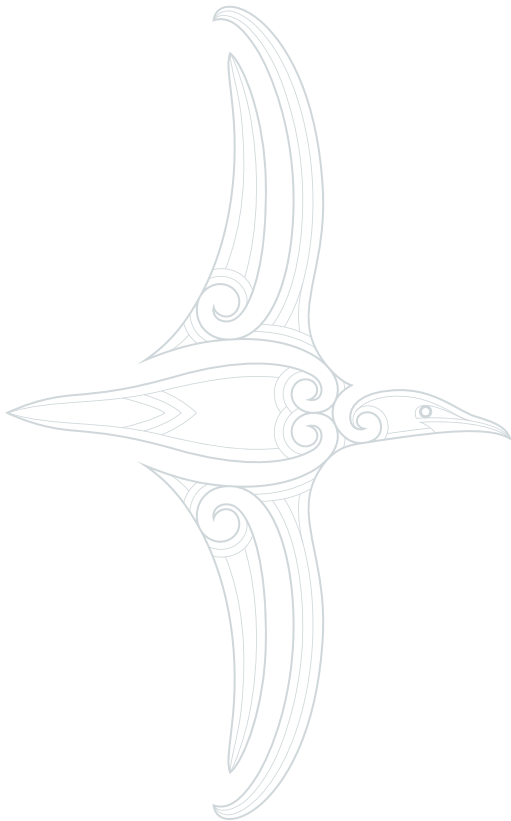
Māori aged 27–30 hospitalised for self-harm

No Oranga Tamariki involvement	xx in 1,000 2
Receiving care and protection and/or youth justice intervention	xxxxx in 1,000 5
In care or custody	xxxxxxxxxx in 1,000 10

This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 were hospitalised for self-harm in 2023. The data does not show actual rates of self-harm.

It shows that Māori adults who were in care or custody as children were hospitalised for self-harm at a rate five times higher than those with no involvement.

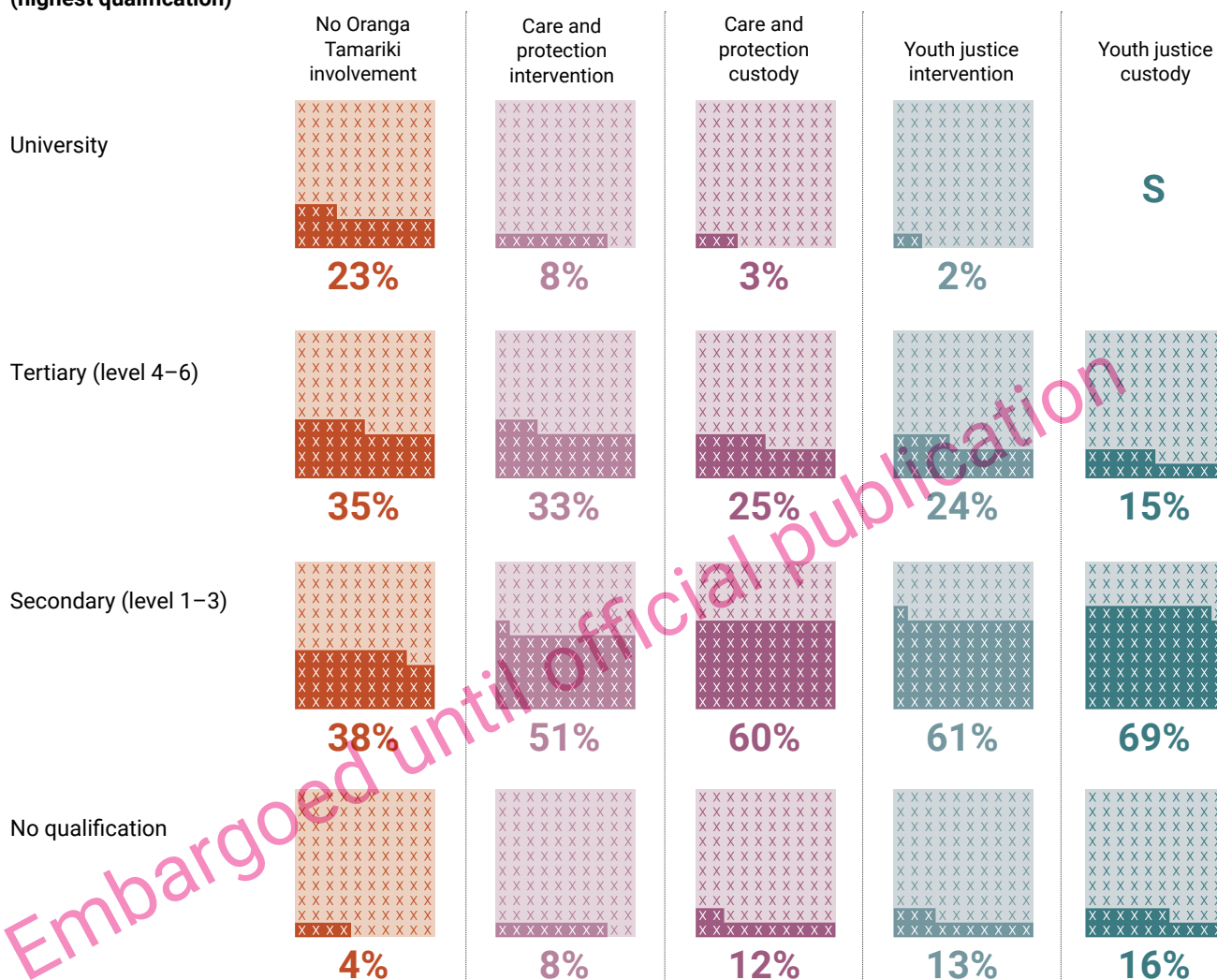
Embargoed until official publication



Education outcome indicators

Māori who were in the oranga tamariki system as children had fewer qualifications

Māori aged 27–30
(highest qualification)



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 had attained educational qualifications.

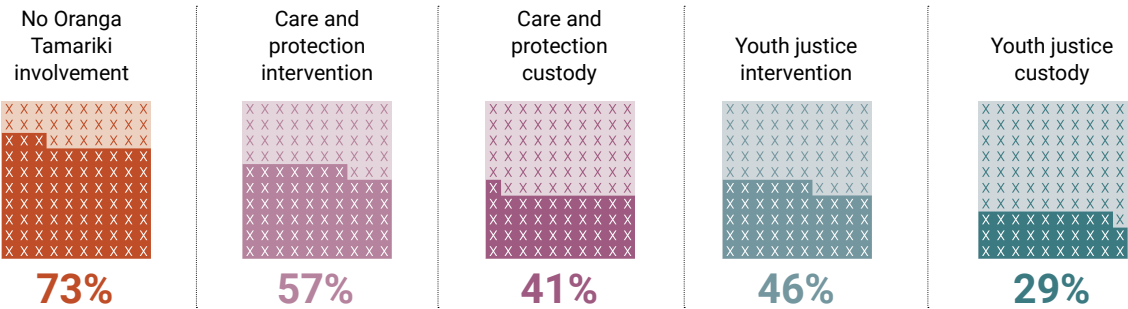
It shows that:

- Māori adults with higher levels of involvement with the oranga tamariki system as children had fewer qualifications beyond secondary school
- Māori who had been in youth justice custody had the lowest qualifications (with four times the rate of having no qualification than those with no system involvement)
- there were so few Māori who were in youth justice custody who went on to have a university qualification at age 27–30 that this figure is suppressed.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ The letter 's' shows we have suppressed the data. To protect the privacy of individuals, we follow Stats NZ guidelines and suppress (do not disclose) the exact number of individuals when that number is below 6. This is to reduce the risk that information could be used to identify individuals or learn private information about them.

Wider social and economic outcome indicators

Māori who were in the oranga tamariki system as children had lower rates of having a driver licence

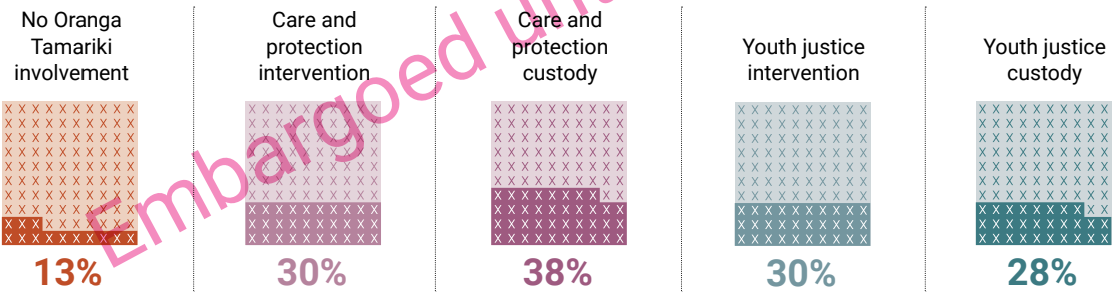


This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 had a driver licence.

It shows that:

- Māori adults with higher levels of involvement with the oranga tamariki system had lower rates of having a driver licence
- less than a third of Māori who were in youth justice custody as children had a driver licence.

Over a third of Māori who were in care and protection custody as children were supported by a main benefit

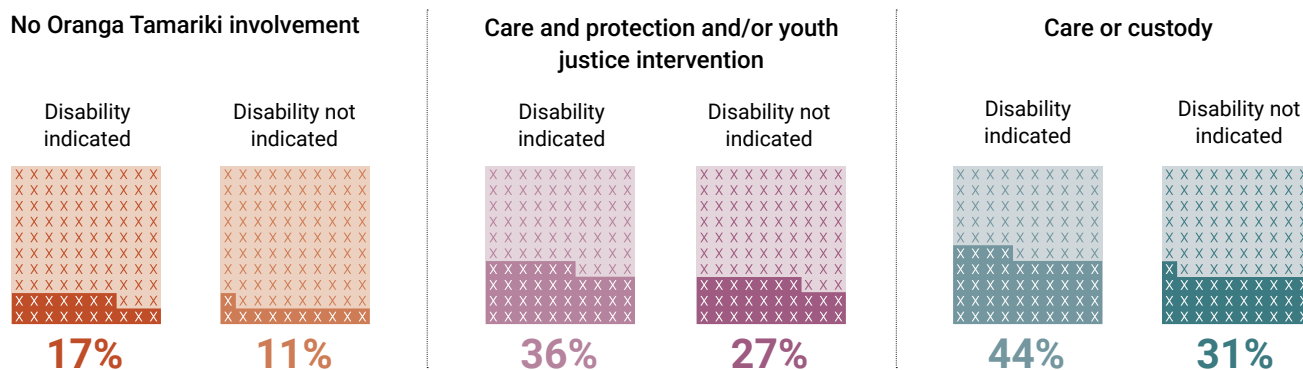


This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 had received a main benefit in 2023.⁷¹

It shows that Māori adults who were in care or custody as children had higher rates of receiving a main benefit than those with no oranga tamariki system involvement. Those who were in care and protection custody also had a higher rate of main benefit support than those who had been in youth justice custody.

⁷¹ The definition for this indicator means the person received a main benefit for the entirety of 2023.

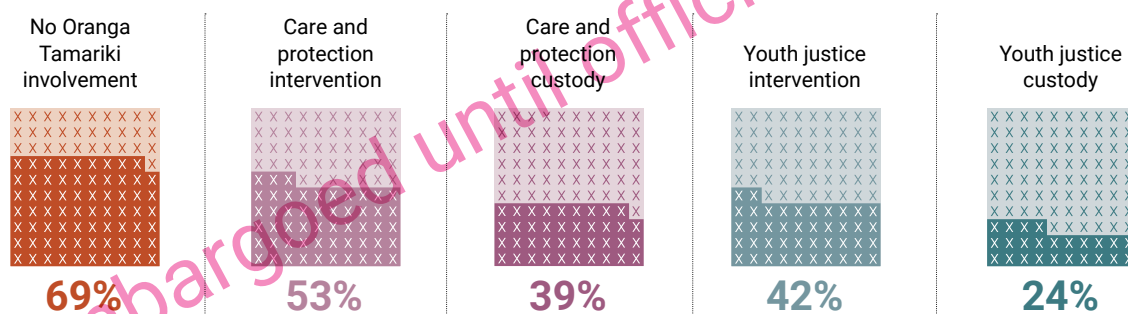
Almost half of disabled Māori adults who were in care or custody as children were supported by a main benefit



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 with and without a disability indicated had received a main benefit in 2023.

It shows that disabled Māori adults with higher levels of involvement with the oranga tamariki system had higher rates of being supported by a main benefit.

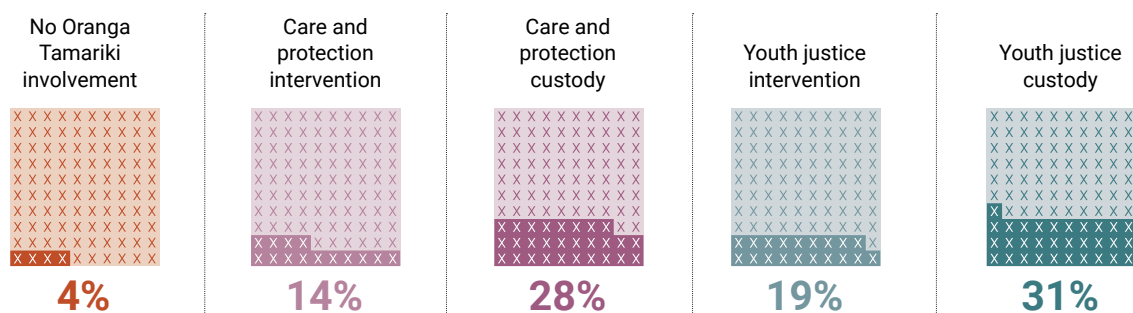
Only a quarter of Māori who were in youth justice custody as children were in employment



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 were in employment in 2023.

It shows that Māori adults with higher levels of involvement with the oranga tamariki system as children had lower rates of employment.

Māori who were involved in the oranga tamariki system as children had higher rates of emergency housing use



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 had used emergency housing.

It shows that almost a third of Māori adults who were in youth justice custody as children had used emergency housing.

Māori who were involved in the oranga tamariki system as children had higher rates of imprisonment or home detention



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which Māori aged 27–30 were imprisoned or in home detention at some point since turning 18.

It shows that:

- three-quarters of Māori who were in youth justice custody as children had been imprisoned or in home detention
- Māori adults with higher levels of involvement in the oranga tamariki system as children had higher rates of imprisonment.

There are disparities in outcomes between Māori and non-Māori involved in the oranga tamariki system

The outcome indicators in this section compare Māori with non-Māori who are or were involved in the oranga tamariki system. The section focuses on disparities in education (secondary school attendance and qualification attainment), driver licence attainment, employment and emergency housing. Outcomes are not necessarily caused by involvement in the oranga tamariki system, and it is not our intention to attribute outcomes to any one factor or to the actions of any one agency.

It looks at three groups who, in 2023, were:

- enrolled in secondary school and involved with Oranga Tamariki
- aged 18–25 and had been involved with Oranga Tamariki
- aged 27–30 and had been involved with the oranga tamariki system as children.

For those involved in the oranga tamariki system, most of the outcome indicators show poorer outcomes for Māori compared to non-Māori.⁷²

These outcome indicators offer insights into where services and supports could be focused for tamariki and rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki. They also offer insights into where services and supports could be focused for tamariki and rangatahi Māori to prevent deeper involvement in the system, including into the youth justice system.

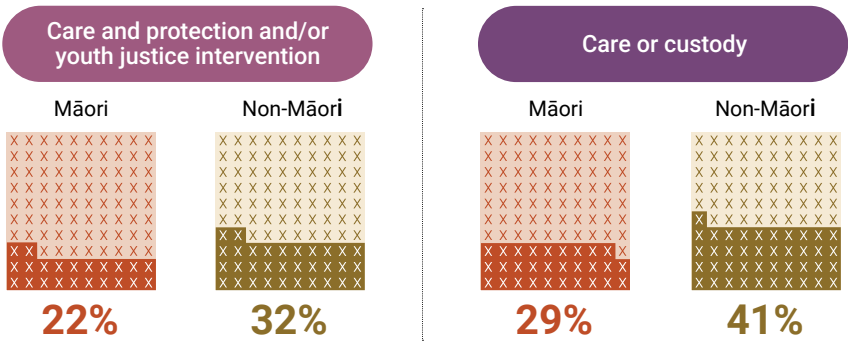
This information provides further context about the importance of being able to access services and supports designed around needs, which is explored further in this report.

There were disparities in secondary school attendance for rangatahi involved with Oranga Tamariki in 2023

School attendance data is based on enrolments. There will be tamariki and rangatahi Māori who do not attend school at all because they are not enrolled and who are therefore not included in this data. In our regional engagements, we hear about some of the reasons why tamariki and rangatahi don't and/or can't enrol or attend school. These are covered in our *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* reports.

⁷² Some outcome indicators also show disparities between Māori and non-Māori who were not involved in the oranga tamariki system. In some cases, this is larger than the disparities we see for those in the system.

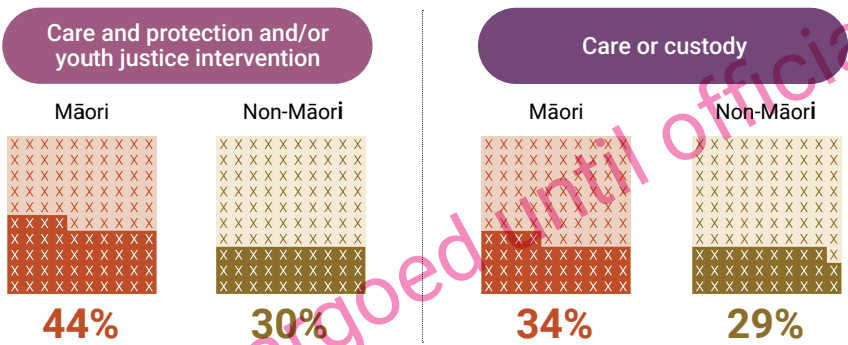
Regular attendance rates at secondary school were lower for Māori than non-Māori



This outcome indicator shows the rates at which rangatahi involved with Oranga Tamariki regularly attended secondary school.

It shows disparity in secondary school regular attendance rates (attending at least 90 percent of the time) between rangatahi Māori and non-Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki.

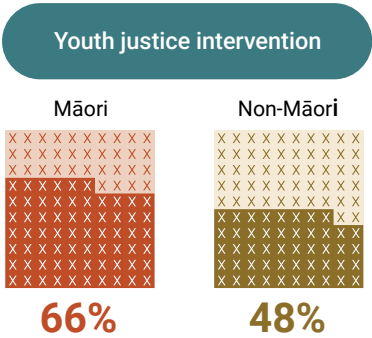
Chronic absence rates were higher for Māori than non-Māori



This outcome indicator shows the rates of chronic absence from secondary school for rangatahi involved with Oranga Tamariki.

It shows that rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki had higher rates of chronic absence (attending for less than 70 percent of the time) from secondary school.

Māori in youth justice intervention had the highest rates of chronic absence from secondary school



This outcome indicator shows the rates of chronic absence from secondary school for rangatahi receiving youth justice intervention.

It shows that:

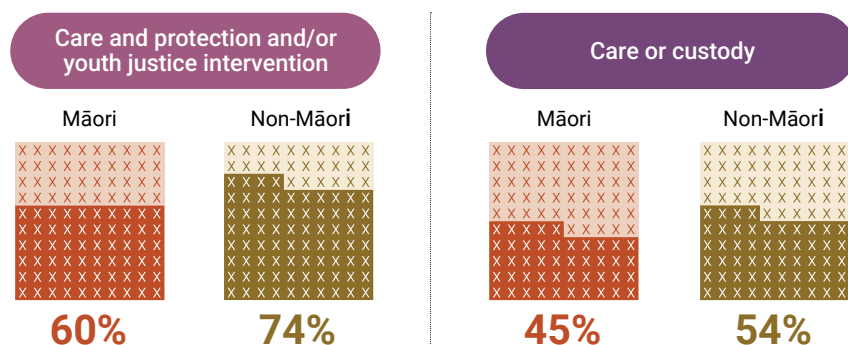
- there is a disparity in chronic absence rates between rangatahi Māori and non-Māori in youth justice intervention
- rangatahi Māori in youth justice intervention had a significantly high rate of chronic absence⁷³ from secondary school. The rate for Māori is 18 percentage points higher than non-Māori.

Those in youth justice intervention also had the lowest rates of secondary school attendance for rangatahi who were involved with Oranga Tamariki. This is for both Māori and non-Māori.

⁷³ A chronic absence is where a person is reported as attending school for less than 70 percent of term 1 in 2023.

Qualification rates were lower for Māori rangatahi and adults

Fewer Māori aged 18 had NZQCF level 2 or higher qualifications than non-Māori

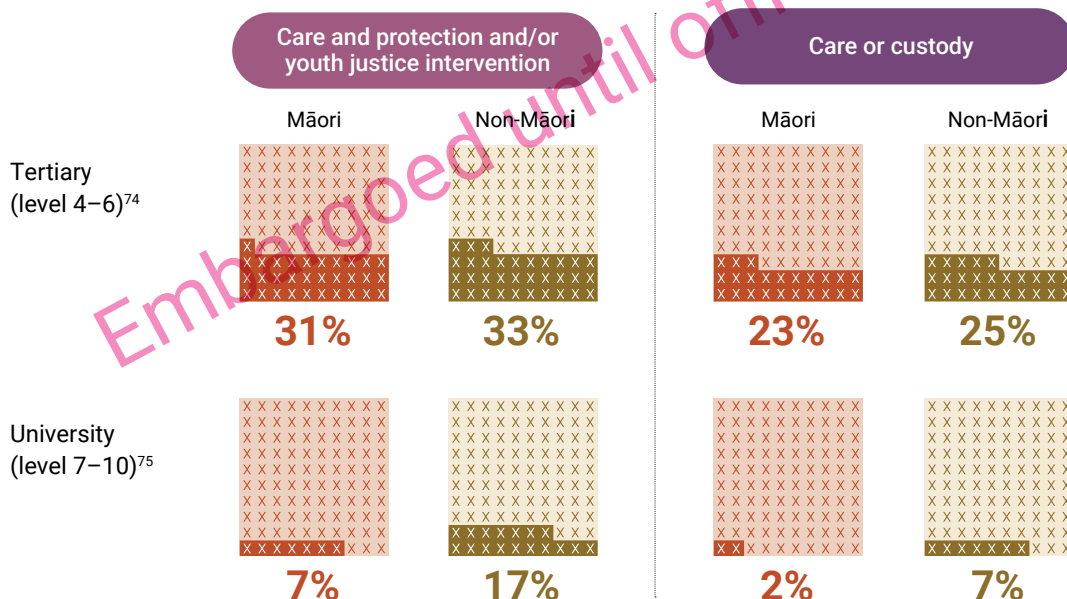


This outcome indicator shows the rates of educational qualification held by rangatahi at age 18 who were involved with Oranga Tamariki.

It shows disparity in NZQCF level 2 or higher qualification rates between rangatahi Māori and non-Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki.

Fewer Māori aged 27–30 had qualifications at tertiary level and above than non-Māori

IDI outcomes data 2023



This outcome indicator shows rates of educational qualification held by adults aged 27–30 who were involved in the oranga tamariki system as children.

It shows that:

- a similar proportion of Māori and non-Māori achieved level 4–6 as their highest qualification
- a smaller proportion of Māori held a university-level qualification than non-Māori.

⁷⁴ For example, certificates or diplomas from non-university tertiary education providers such as wānanga, polytechnics or institutes of technology.

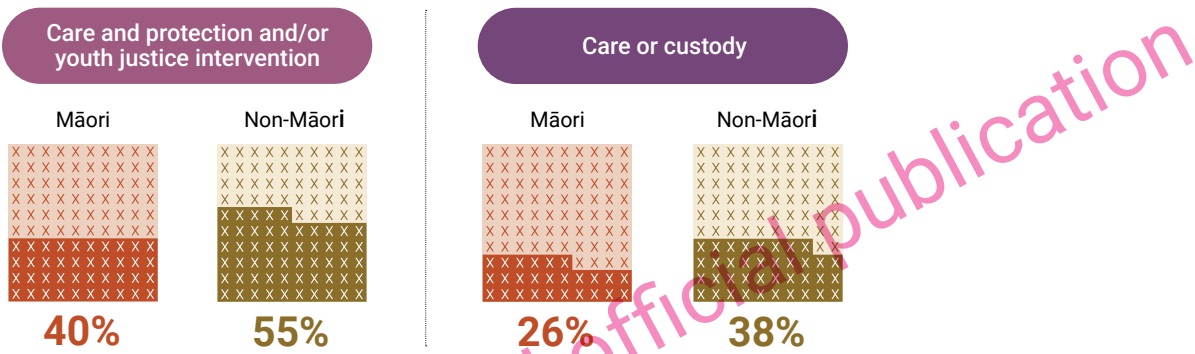
⁷⁵ For example, bachelor's degrees or postgraduate degrees and diplomas.

Māori hold a driver licence at lower rates

Outside of the oranga tamariki system, Māori and non-Māori hold driver licences at a similar rate, with around 65 percent holding a driver licence.⁷⁶ However, within the oranga tamariki system, there is a clear disparity, and this increases with deeper involvement in the system.

Every year in our regional engagements, we hear from rangatahi about how important it is to get a driver licence. It is important for independence, for securing employment, for “being legal” while driving and as a form of identification. Our 2024/25 *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* report outlines how rangatahi in Oranga Tamariki care or custody can struggle to get their driver licence as they transition to adulthood.

Māori aged 18–25 involved with Oranga Tamariki hold a driver licence at lower rates than non-Māori

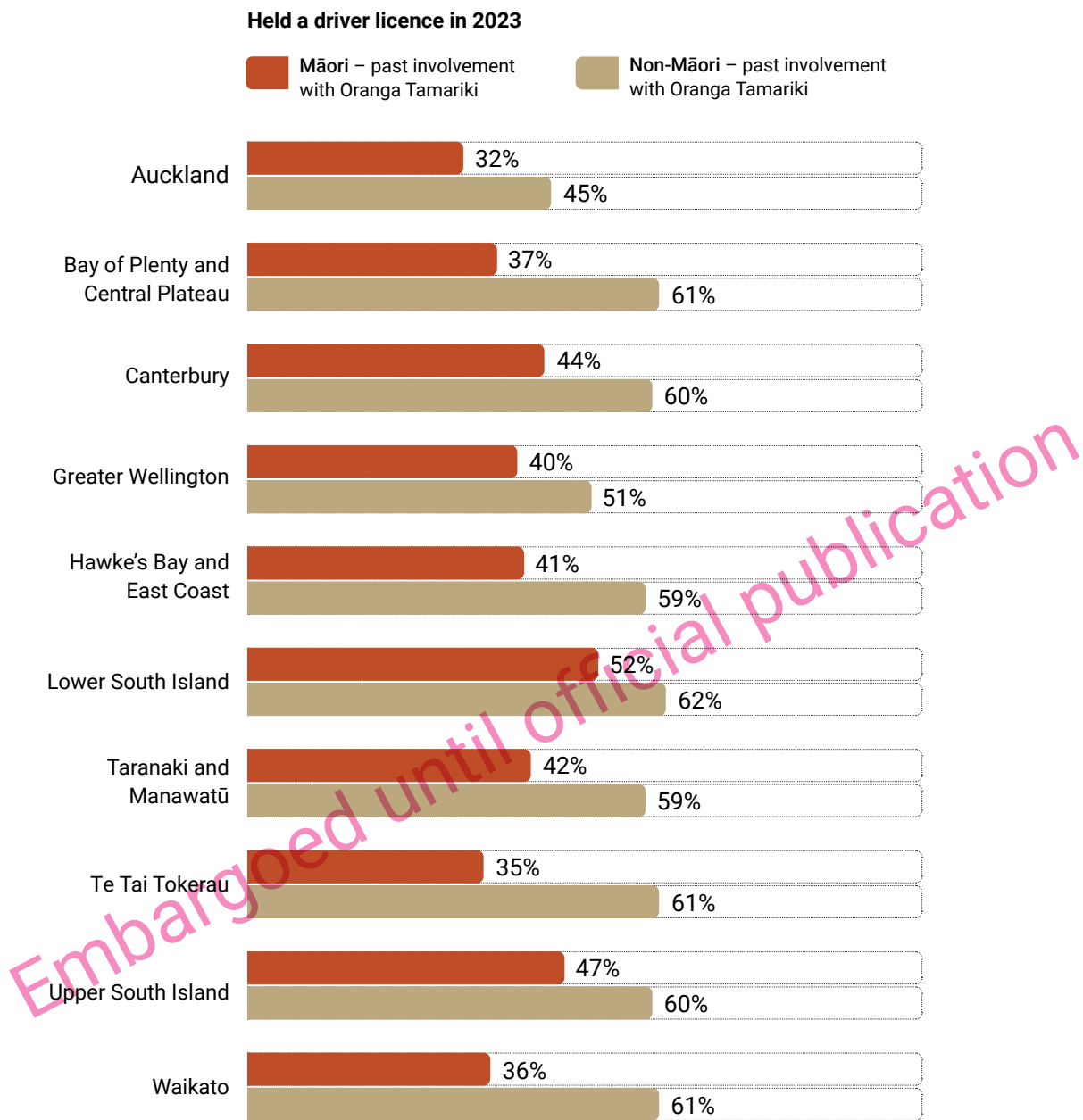


This outcome indicator shows rates of holding a driver licence for those aged 18–25 who were involved with Oranga Tamariki.

When we look at those aged 27–30 who had been in care or custody as children, the rate of holding a licence is higher but the disparity is even more pronounced. Only 38 percent of Māori had a driver licence compared to 52 percent of non-Māori.

⁷⁶ In 2023, of all those aged 18–25 in Aotearoa with no involvement with Oranga Tamariki, 64 percent of Māori and 65 percent of non-Māori had a driver licence.

In every region, Māori aged 18–25 held a driver licence at lower rates than non-Māori, but the difference was greater in some regions than others⁷⁷



This outcome indicator shows regional rates of holding a driver licence in 2023 for those aged 18–25 involved with Oranga Tamariki.

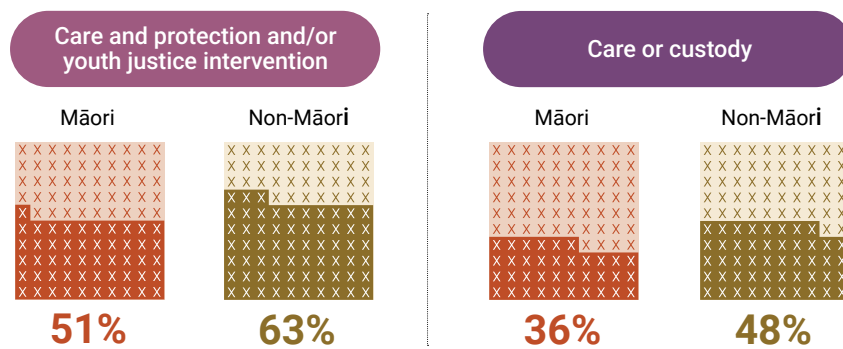
This data shows that, in all regions, Māori aged 18–25 who were involved with Oranga Tamariki held a driver licence at lower rates than non-Māori.

The disparities were less pronounced in the Lower South Island and Greater Wellington regions. Practice in these regions may indicate how to better support rangatahi Māori to gain a driver licence.

⁷⁷ Regional differences can be for a variety of reasons, including the availability of driver licence programmes and testing centres.

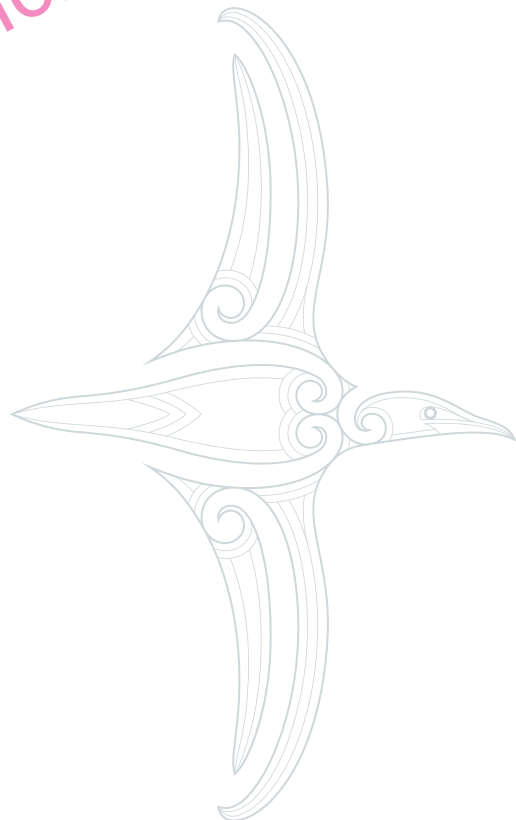
Māori had lower employment rates later in life than non-Māori

Māori aged 27–30 had lower employment rates than non-Māori

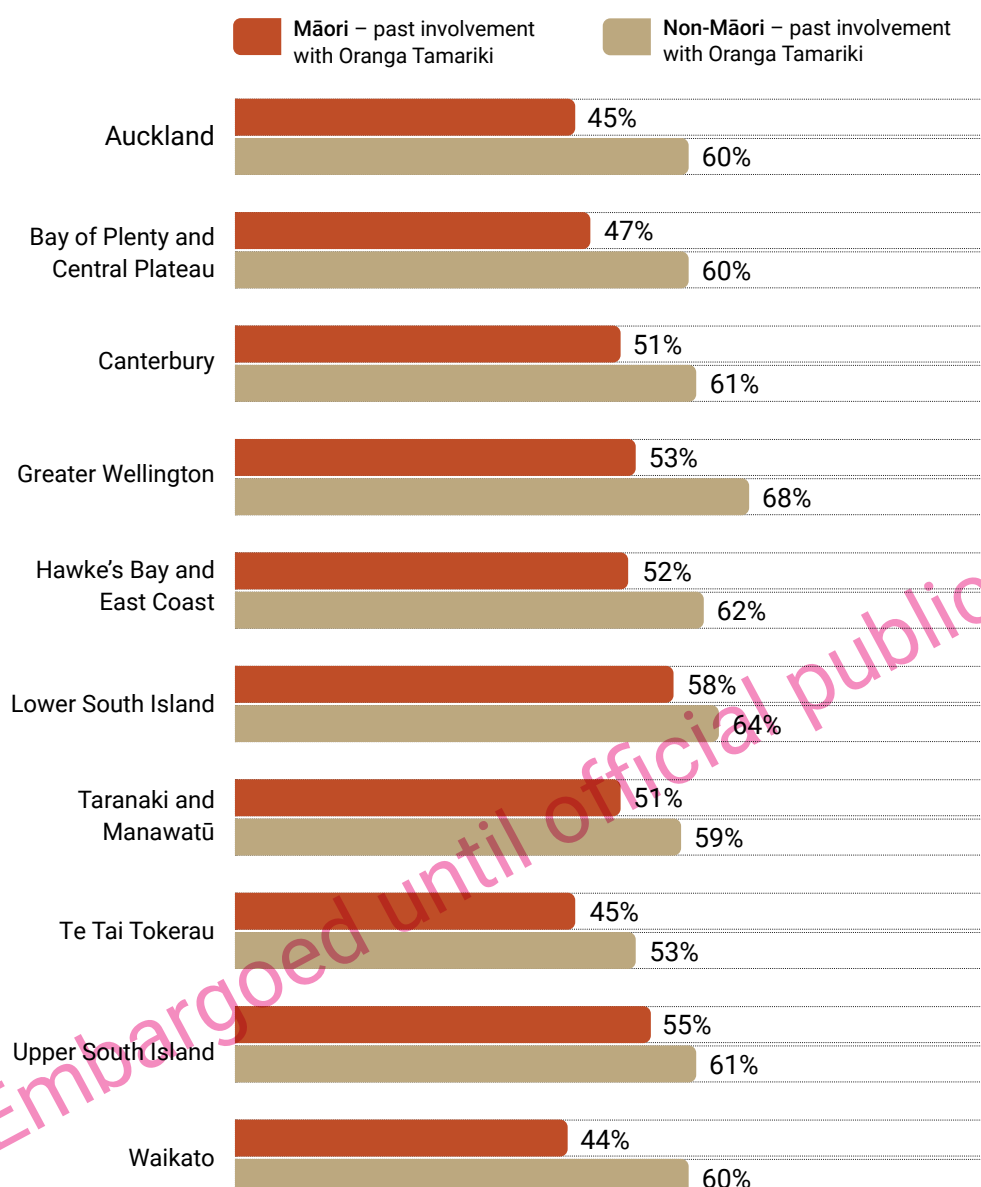


This outcome indicator shows rates of employment for adults aged 27–30 who had been involved in the oranga tamariki system as children.

Embargoed until official publication



In every region Māori aged 27–30 had lower employment rates than non-Māori, but the difference is greater in some regions



This outcome indicator shows regional rates of employment for adults aged 27–30 in 2023 who had been involved in the oranga tamariki system as children.

This data shows that the largest differences in rates of employment were in the Auckland, Greater Wellington and Waikato regions.

Stable housing is crucial to a successful transition from care for rangatahi Māori

Lack of stable accommodation continues to be a barrier to a successful transition from care. Housing unavailability was noted as an ongoing challenge faced by rangatahi transitioning from care in the four-year evaluation of the Oranga Tamariki Transition Support Service.⁷⁸

Safe, healthy and affordable housing is fundamental to living with dignity. Housing stability strongly influences wellbeing, health outcomes, educational attainment, employment and a sense of belonging. Rangatahi without stable housing are at higher risk of poor mental and physical health, substance use, imprisonment, victimisation and risky sexual behaviour.⁷⁹

Rangatahi are living in unstable accommodation

In our 2024/25 regional engagements, we heard from a couple of transition workers about housing for rangatahi transitioning to adulthood in Te Tai Tokerau and the Bay of Plenty. They told us about a small number of rangatahi in precarious living situations, including in a holiday park, couch surfing, and living in a car.

In Te Tai Tokerau, we heard from an iwi social service leader about the need for supported accommodation in the region.

“In an ideal world, we would have supported accommodation here in Kaikohe – a space where [rangatahi] can come and they can learn. That’s another thing I’ve been noticing – [rangatahi] haven’t learnt basic skills to wash clothes, cook, clean – in an ideal world, we have that. But right now, it’s just supporting them and advocating for them even with our own services with Ministry of Social Development.” IWI SOCIAL SERVICE LEADER

With inadequate transition support and a shortage of stable accommodation options, many rangatahi have few options and sometimes nowhere to go. This gap in support at such a vital stage can be the beginning of long-term housing insecurity.

“I’m turning 18 next year and what will happen then? If I turn 18 and there is no support around me, I don’t know what will happen to me. I don’t know where I will be.” RANGATAHI

⁷⁸ Malatest International. (2023). *The four-year evaluation of Oranga Tamariki Transition Support Service*. orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Transition-Support-Service-four-year-evaluation/TSS-Evaluation-report.pdf

⁷⁹ Fraser, B., Chun, S., Pehi, T., Jiany, T., Johnson, E., Ombler, J., McMinn, C., & Pierse, N. (2022). Post-housing first outcomes amongst a cohort of formally homeless youth in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 53(5), 656–672. doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2022.2088572

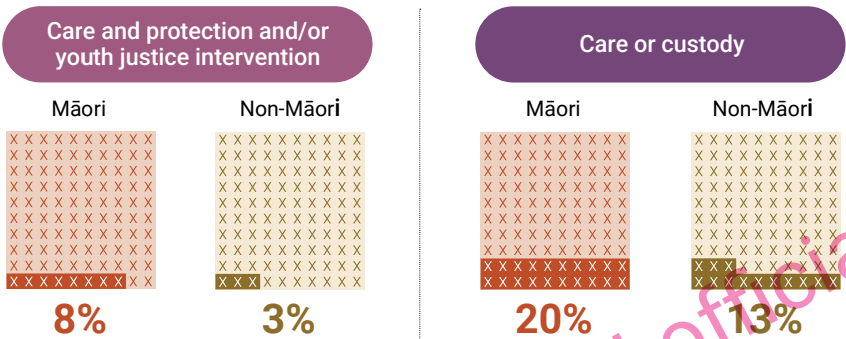
Māori who were in care as children face greater long-term housing insecurity than non-Māori

There is a clear and ongoing gap between housing outcomes for Māori and non-Māori. Māori have lower rates of home ownership and higher rates of intergenerational poverty and are more likely to experience homelessness.

This is not a new issue. Evidence shows how the long-term impacts of colonisation and structural inequities in the housing system have created these disparities. These systemic issues have a direct impact on whānau Māori that carry through generations.⁸⁰

Data from the IDI highlights these risks. It shows that Māori who have been in care are much more likely to have used emergency housing at some point in their lives.

Use of emergency housing was higher for Māori aged 18–25



This outcome indicator shows the rates of use of emergency housing by Māori aged 18–25 who had been involved in the *oranga tamariki* system as children.

80 Waitangi Tribunal. (2024). *Kāinga kore: The stage one report of the Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry on Māori Homelessness*. forms.justice.govt.nz/search/Documents/WT/WT_DOC_211421672/Kainga%20Kore%20W.pdf

This data tells us more needs to be done if outcomes are to improve for Māori

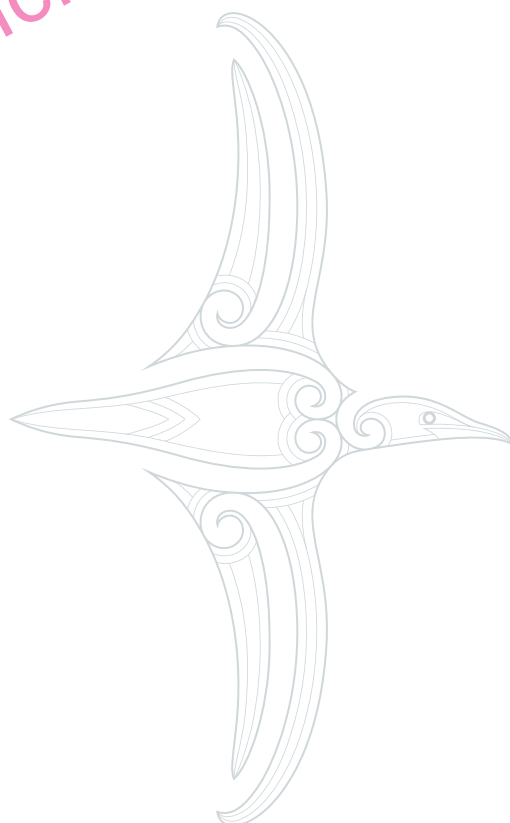
The data in this section shows that high levels of unmet care and protection needs have a long tail of impact across the lives of tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

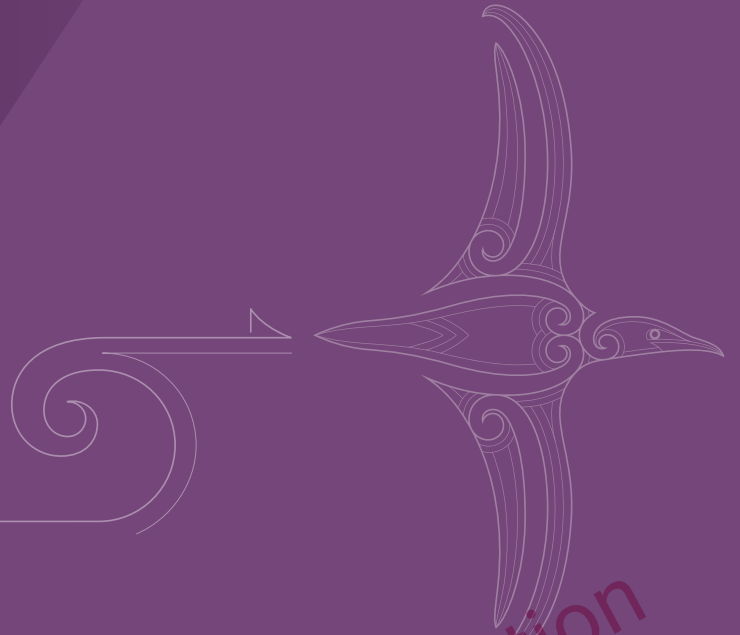
Outcomes for Māori involved in the system are worse than for Māori not known to Oranga Tamariki. Data continues to show that, overall, the more involved tamariki and rangatahi Māori have been in the system, the worse their long-term outcomes.

While outcomes are not necessarily caused by involvement in the oranga tamariki system, disparity data shows that outcomes for Māori in the system are often worse than for non-Māori. Māori also experience poorer services in some areas such as timeliness of response to reports of concern and aspects of care.

If long-term outcomes are to improve and inequities to reduce, responses that better meet the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau, delivered at the earliest opportunity, are required.

Embargoed until official publication





How the system meets the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori

Embargoed until official publication

In this part of the report, we outline how the oranga tamariki system does not always meet the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.

Improving outcomes and reducing inequities requires that whānau can access the right services and supports when they need them. This is key to preventing escalation through the oranga tamariki system, which is costly and likely to lead to poorer outcomes. Interventions need to be delivered in ways that respond to needs and by those who understand the people they are supporting and what can make the most difference for them.

Too often, the oranga tamariki system is responding to individual needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in isolation of the wider needs of their whānau. Services and supports need to address both.

“Sometimes it’s not only about the [report of concern] that’s happening, it’s everything else behind the doors. There’s no pūtea, drug addictions, no kai, no attendance [at school for tamariki and programmes for parents] ... [Our service] is able to get in deep and find the core of what’s going on.”

MĀORI SOCIAL SERVICE KAIMAHI

There are instances where tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau are having positive experiences and the system is serving them – we highlight some of these from the regions we monitored. We also profile three initiatives where iwi and Māori providers, supported by Oranga Tamariki, are successfully delivering for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.

As outlined earlier in this report, data shows significant and sustained over-representation and poorer life outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori who are involved with the oranga tamariki system.

In 2024/25, while 57 percent of reports of concern are for Māori, 68 percent of those in care or custody are Māori.⁸¹ Of those tamariki aged 10–13 proceeded against by NZ Police, 68 percent are Māori. The data also shows that most outcomes are worse for those who have had deeper involvement in the system.

The over-representation of Māori in care or custody and in the tamariki and rangatahi coming to the attention of NZ Police indicates that the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau are not being met at the right time. The right services and supports are not being mobilised early enough to avoid the need for entry to state care and to prevent involvement in youth offending.

⁸¹ Under care or protection orders.

The oranga tamariki system is not always intervening early enough with the right services and support

The chief executive of Oranga Tamariki has a duty to intervene early to help whānau, hapū and iwi prevent harm, abuse and neglect to tamariki and rangatahi and prevent offending.⁸² Principles set out in the Oranga Tamariki Act state that those exercising powers under that Act should provide early services and supports to increase wellbeing and prevent further harm or escalation.⁸³

A report of concern is an early opportunity to address any safety, care and wellbeing needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. Not all of those who have a report of concern will need services and supports. For those who do, a report of concern is an important opportunity for Oranga Tamariki to put in place what is needed for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau to prevent further escalation.

As we found in our report *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*,⁸⁴ the Government must prioritise the safety of tamariki by ensuring that the statutory care and protection system is resourced and equipped to respond when needed. In that report, we noted that Oranga Tamariki needs the support of a well-funded and well-resourced community sector. That sector could provide the first line of response to reports of concern that are lower risk and provide the support needed by whānau with the help of government agencies. Later in this report, we feature two initiatives that are focused on delivering early support in this way.

Earlier care and protection intervention could prevent later youth justice involvement

Oranga Tamariki data shows that missed opportunities to address care and protection concerns earlier are likely to be contributing to tamariki and rangatahi Māori over-representation in the youth justice system.

Nearly all tamariki and rangatahi Māori who come to the attention of NZ Police and are referred to Oranga Tamariki for a family group conference (FGC) had had a report of concern made about their safety or wellbeing when they were younger.

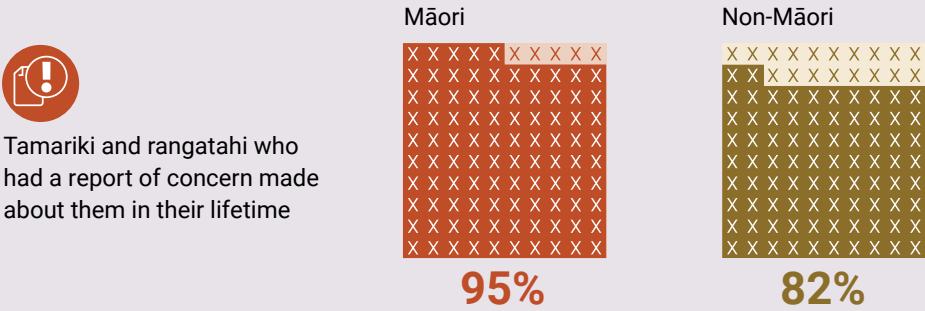
A much higher proportion of rangatahi Māori who had a youth justice FGC in 2024/25 had had one or more report of concern made about them in their lifetime compared to non-Māori.

⁸² See section 7 of the Oranga Tamariki Act, which sets out the duty of the chief executive to take actions and steps the chief executive considers will achieve the purposes of the Act. The purposes of the Act are in section 4. Those that relate to intervening early and prevention are in sub-sections 4(1)(b), (c) and (d) legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/24/en/latest/#DLM147088

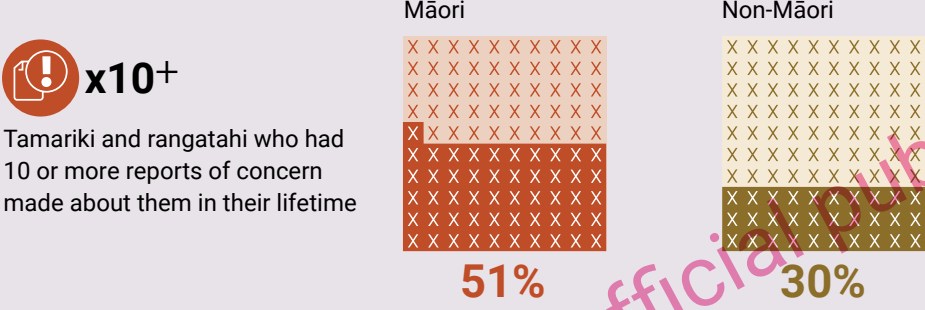
⁸³ See sections 13(2)(a) and (b) and 208 of the Oranga Tamariki Act.

⁸⁴ See footnote 30.

Most tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had a youth justice FGC had previous reports of concern

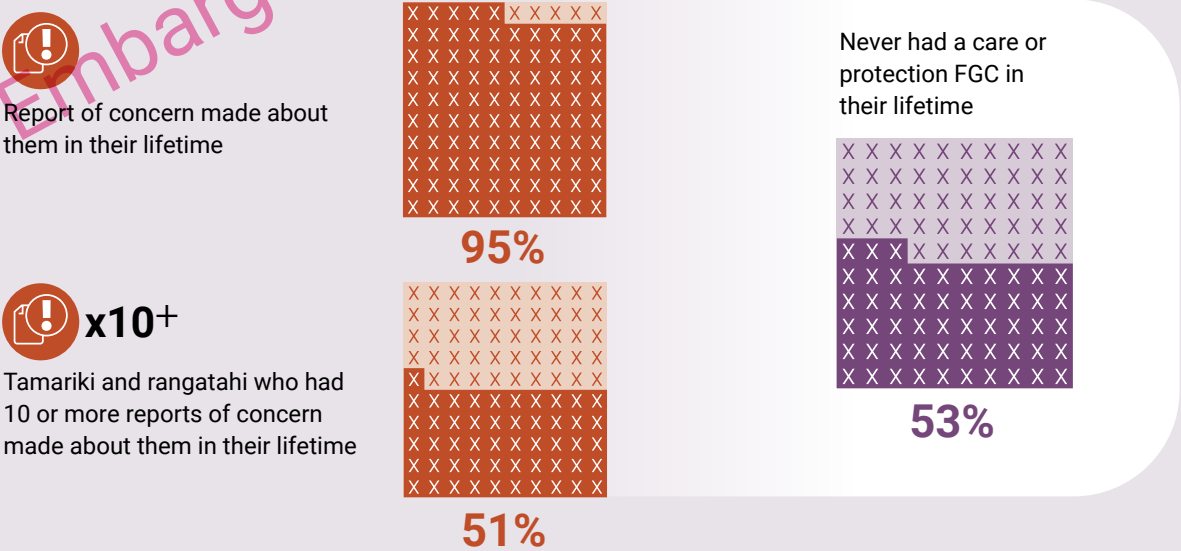


Half of tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had a youth justice FGC have had 10 or more reports of concern made about their safety or wellbeing



Most tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had a youth justice FGC have had a previous report of concern, but over half have never had a care and protection FGC because of that report of concern

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had a youth justice FGC in 2024/25



Not every report of concern leads to an FGC. However, a significant proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori involved in youth justice FGCs had had multiple reports of concern made about their safety or wellbeing previously. An earlier care and protection FGC could have brought whānau and professionals together to develop a plan to address underlying needs, including unmet needs that may be drivers of future offending behaviour.

Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police recognise that tamariki and rangatahi who offend often have underlying care or protection needs

A 2025 Oranga Tamariki report on serious and persistent offending⁸⁵ observed that those interviewed for that report “agreed there are massive systemic issues that have led to youth offending that are not being addressed adequately”. The report noted offending “has, and is often linked to, deeper regional issues such as homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, physical and mental abuse, gang influence, unemployment and non-engagement in education”.

In our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report, we referred to a 2022 study⁸⁶ that looked in detail at tamariki aged 10–13 who offended in 2019/20. The study found significant care and protection concerns in this group of tamariki.⁸⁷ It also found that “having a report of concern before age 5, 10 or 14 was significantly associated with offending as a child, a youth or both. Higher numbers of reports of concern/notifications to Oranga Tamariki were associated with increased risk of child offending as well as combined child and youth offending.”⁸⁸

This was also noted by police officers in our regional engagements.

“From what I’ve seen, a lot of the problems are actually health or learning issues, and some of the offending is out of frustration.”

POLICE OFFICER

An early care and protection response for tamariki Māori aged 10–13 can prevent escalation through the system

There is a significant opportunity to focus on care and protection for tamariki Māori aged 10–13 to prevent their escalation into and through the youth justice system.

Over-representation of Māori in the youth justice system is greater for this age group. A focus on all tamariki Māori in this much smaller and younger cohort – around 650 tamariki Māori aged 10–13⁸⁹ – could address the underlying causes of offending at this point.

A 2022 study⁹⁰ that looked in detail at tamariki who offended between the ages of 10 and 13 in Aotearoa found that “child offending does not occur in a vacuum but, in the vast majority of cases, was preceded by significant child welfare concerns”. It also found that “the frequency of offending increased with age, highlighting the importance of preventing offending in the first place”.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Oranga Tamariki. (2025). *Target 3: Serious and persistent youth offending – understanding the regional perspective* (p. 13). orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/A-regional-perspective-on-serious-and-persistent-offending/Target-3-Understanding-The-Regional-Perspective-accessible.pdf

⁸⁶ Aroturuki Tamariki. (2025). *Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau in the oranga tamariki system* (pp. 107–108). aroturuki.govt.nz/assets/Reports/outcomes/Outcomes-for-Maori-23-24-WEB.pdf

⁸⁷ Reil, J., Lambie, I., Becroft, A., & Allen, R. (2022). *How we fail children who offend and what to do about it: A breakdown across the whole system*. *Research and recommendations*. Michael and Suzanne Borrin Foundation, New Zealand Law Foundation & University of Auckland (p.19). borrinfoundation.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Children-Who-Offend-Final-research-report-March2022.pdf

⁸⁸ See (p. 6) of reference at footnote 87.

⁸⁹ Ethnicity was not known for around 350 tamariki aged 10–13 involved in police proceedings in 2024/25, so this number is likely to be higher.

⁹⁰ See footnote 87.

⁹¹ See (p. 4) of reference at footnote 87.

Alternative action plans are increasingly being used by NZ Police for tamariki Māori

We can see from data that NZ Police has been putting effort into one type of police proceeding for tamariki aged 10–13 with offending behaviour that provides an alternative to more serious responses.⁹² In the nine-month period 1 July 2024 to 31 March 2025,⁹³ the proportion of NZ Police proceedings for those aged 10–13 where an alternative action plan⁹⁴ was the first NZ Police response⁹⁵ was higher than for the same nine-month period in 2023/24.

This increase was most significant for tamariki Māori, with 30 percent having an alternative action plan in the first nine months of 2024/25 compared to 19 percent in the first nine months of 2023/24. This is an encouraging sign. It would be good to know whether these NZ Police responses are resulting in tamariki not going on to reoffend or reoffending less or less seriously.

We understand that NZ Police has work underway to consider its use of youth justice interventions, including their effectiveness. The Office of the Auditor-General is also carrying out a performance audit to look at the effectiveness of actions that are meant to divert young people who offend from criminal proceedings. This work is expected to be completed in the first half of 2026.⁹⁶

Government's focus is on reducing serious and persistent offending

Government's focus for youth justice during 2024/25 was on tamariki and rangatahi identified as serious and persistent offenders.

- A Government target of reducing serious and persistent offending behaviour by 15 percent by 2030 (from June 2023) was supported by proposed amendments to the Oranga Tamariki Act. The proposed amendments focus on serious and persistent offending by those aged 14–17 and, if made, will introduce a new military-style academy custodial order.⁹⁷
- Additional funding was made available to Oranga Tamariki and NZ Police in Budget 2024 for Fast Track. Fast Track is aimed at addressing serious and persistent offending by the younger 10–13 cohort.

There is an opportunity to focus on all tamariki aged 10–13 with offending behaviour, even where the offending is less serious and not persistent. This focus could help address the underlying causes of offending earlier before offending escalates to being persistent and more serious.

⁹² Police proceedings means any recorded interaction NZ Police had with tamariki and rangatahi in relation to offending or alleged offending. This could include taking no further action, issuing a warning or caution, alternative action, a referral to Te Pae Oranga Rangatahi (an alternative to prosecution designed for youth offenders aged 14–17 who have not met the level for a statutory response – discussed further at the end of this section of the report), a referral to a family group conference or prosecution.

⁹³ We have only been able to present data for the first three quarters of 2024/25 because NZ Police changed the way it recorded against some categories of police proceedings from 1 April 2025. Instead of being listed in separate categories, warnings/cautions, alternative actions, FGCs and Te Pae Oranga Rangatahi were grouped together under one proceeding type – 'youth justice intervention'.

⁹⁴ Alternative action is a form of diversion led by a NZ Police Youth Aid Officer that addresses the offending without criminal proceedings. Examples of alternative actions are writing an apology letter or helping remove graffiti.

⁹⁵ Police proceedings data records the first proceeding response to tamariki and rangatahi offending. It is possible that this initial response could progress to a different response – for example, a referral to a youth justice FGC for a rangatahi could turn into a decision to prosecute at a later date and prosecution would not be reflected in the method of proceedings data for this rangatahi.

⁹⁶ Office of the Auditor-General. (2025, July 14). *Our intentions: Looking at how well the New Zealand Police maximise the effectiveness of "alternative actions"*. oag.parliament.nz/media/2025/nz-police

⁹⁷ At the time of writing this report, the amendments to the Oranga Tamariki Act that would introduce a new military-style academy custodial order, contained in the Oranga Tamariki (Responding to Serious Youth Offending) Amendment Bill, had not been made.

The Fast Track programme is a good initiative but needs more focused resource and a broader reach

Initiatives like Fast Track are a step in the right direction, but it needs more focused resource and to be available across Aotearoa.

The Fast Track programme was originally aimed at tamariki aged 10–13 who commit serious offences or continue to reoffend and need a more intensive wraparound approach. It began as a pilot in December 2022 and expanded to nine locations in Aotearoa by December 2024.

It has since been extended across six locations to include young people aged 14–17 who may not have offended or may be at a lower level of offending but whose circumstances are of concern.

Fast Track is designed as a rapid response. NZ Police contacts Oranga Tamariki within 24 hours of these tamariki or rangatahi coming to its attention. Within 48 hours, Oranga Tamariki, NZ Police and community organisations develop an initial plan to support the tamariki or rangatahi and their whānau.

A recent Oranga Tamariki report looked at the reoffending outcomes for 342 of the tamariki and rangatahi who participated in Fast Track up to 30 June 2024.⁹⁸ The report found that 60 percent of participants reduced the frequency and/or seriousness of their offending in the year after their referral. However, 37 percent of participants increased the frequency of offending and the report suggested that additional support may be needed in those cases.

In our regional engagements in 2024/25, we heard that Fast Track is known to be operating well in Auckland and Christchurch. However, it is not working consistently well across Aotearoa, for example, in Te Tai Tokerau and some parts of the Bay of Plenty.⁹⁹

In Te Tai Tokerau, we heard there are delays in referrals being made and resourcing constraints and that not all partners are present. Poor implementation was identified as an issue. Fast Track was set up too quickly in the region before all partners were ready and sufficient funding was in place.

“Fast Track is not working well. Some of the speed of referrals [is not happening]. For example, a young person gets picked up [for a crime] and suddenly you find hits [records] from other crimes they were involved with. It can be two to three months before we get a referral [to Fast Track].”

ORANGA TAMARIKI REGIONAL LEADER

“[Fast Track] fell over because it wasn't planned properly. There was a lack of funding and resources put into it. It [Fast Track] is being revamped but that is not going well either because the time and resource isn't being put into the revamp. We need [Fast Track] here because it is the under 14-year-olds who need the wraparound support.” NZ POLICE AREA LEADER

⁹⁸ Oranga Tamariki. (2025). *Fast Track: Reoffending analysis*. orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Fast-Track-reoffending-analysis/Fast-Track-Reoffending-Analysis.pdf

⁹⁹ We heard that Fast Track was not available in Tauranga but does operate out of Rotorua.

Some things are getting in the way of providing effective services and supports that prevent escalation

In our regional engagements, we heard about some of the reasons services and supports may not be provided to tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau at the earliest opportunity. We also heard about barriers to tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau accessing the services and support they need.

In our report *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*,¹⁰⁰ we also highlighted that a high proportion of reports of concern do not result in further action by Oranga Tamariki. This could be a missed opportunity to identify needs early and refer whānau to services and supports that could benefit tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau to prevent renotification or escalation through the Oranga Tamariki system.

Care and protection FGCs are not always enabling services and support to be provided

FGCs are intended to enable whānau to be involved in decisions and plans for their tamariki and rangatahi. The FGC ideally produces a plan that identifies interventions, including services, that can make a difference for tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau. Gaps in Oranga Tamariki data make it difficult to measure the effectiveness of FGC plans. For example, data does not show how many FGCs result in agreed plans. It also does not show whether services that would help tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau were offered or provided.

However, the fact that over-representation increases as tamariki and rangatahi Māori move deeper into the system suggests that, overall, services and supports provided at the FGC stage are not always effective in addressing the needs underlying their entry into state care or enabling them to return home in a timely and supported way.

We continue to hear that care and protection FGCs are not being convened

In our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report, we found that care and protection FGCs are not always valued by Oranga Tamariki kaimahi, with some kaimahi favouring hui ā-whānau and avoiding FGCs.¹⁰¹

We heard this again in 2024/25. A small number of social workers and FGC coordinators told us that hui ā-whānau can lead to a robust plan and negate the need to go to FGC. They said FGCs can take too much time and effort to convene and are less inclusive of whānau voice. However, Oranga Tamariki kaimahi also acknowledged that services and supports identified in plans agreed in FGCs are more likely to be funded.

¹⁰⁰ See footnote 30.

¹⁰¹ A hui ā-whānau is a less formal whānau meeting, which can be used in multiple instances, including as a precursor to the FGC. While hui ā-whānau are facilitated using an ao Māori approach, they lack the statutory responsibilities of the FGC that make the chief executive of Oranga Tamariki accountable.

“ There are no good options available for hui ā-whānau because there is no funding attached to it. It is not official and we still have to go through the FGC. Because of this process, it's a hit and miss process, while if we go straight to FGC, we can create a robust plan, and we could get funding for it. If we knew that [hui ā-whānau] will still gonna happen that way, we could have gone straight to the FGC.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI SITE LEADER

Kaimahi from Oranga Tamariki and from other organisations spoke about FGCs as the doorway to services, such as the Gateway health and education assessment.

“ If you are lucky or fortunate enough to get an FGC, you have the ability to receive a myriad of assessments like the Gateway ... If you are a child attached to [Oranga Tamariki] and get an FGC then it makes it far quicker to get assessments done and receive the intervention help you need. If there is not an FGC then it can be much more difficult to get the assessments done, which then means you are likely to miss out.” HEALTH LEADER

A small number of Oranga Tamariki kaimahi told us that cases are sometimes closed too early, without an FGC being convened. This results in lost access to assessments and services that could prevent a long wait on public health waitlists.

“ Gateway would be the primary way to get health services involved [with whānau who come into contact with the oranga tamariki system]. But so many cases get closed before it can go to FGC and there are lots of flags that come up through our [Oranga Tamariki investigation] process and they get missed. At a site level, if it doesn't [meet] the threshold to go to an FGC, they close it ... [Whānau] then have to sit on the public waiting list for an assessment for months and years through the health system.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI HOSPITAL LIAISON KAIMAHI

Plans made at FGCs are not always actioned and services and supports are not always available to tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau at the FGC stage

We reported in 2023/24 that a lack of available services and supports meant that plans made at FGCs are not always followed through and actioned.¹⁰² We heard that this issue remained in 2024/25.

Services and supports for education and health, including those for mental health, were mentioned as examples where funding is insufficient.

Oranga Tamariki kaimahi told us that requests for Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (ICAMHS) are sometimes declined for tamariki and rangatahi known to Oranga Tamariki because their needs are considered 'behavioural' rather than due to mental health issues or because tamariki are in Oranga Tamariki care and ICAMHS expects Oranga Tamariki to fund services for these tamariki. We have reported on this over several years in our *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* reports. We continue to hear from Oranga Tamariki kaimahi that tamariki and rangatahi known to Oranga Tamariki are missing out on the mental health services they need.

¹⁰² See footnote 1.

In our 2024/25 *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* report, Oranga Tamariki kaimahi again told us that the thresholds for support from high and complex needs (HCN) funding are too high.¹⁰³

Oranga Tamariki kaimahi also told us about being unable to refer to services agreed to in FGC plans or not having services available to put into plans. This can be due to a lack of funding, because there are no service providers or because there are no professionals such as psychologists available to complete assessments. This leaves tamariki, rangatahi and whānau without the help they need to address identified care and protection concerns.

“It means we can’t refer or recommend any services at the FGC. There will be recommendations, but who pays for it? Especially when plans go to court.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

“We’re expected to put FGC plans in place and the courts expect X amount to be seen in FGC plans. But we’re struggling to do that. We do it ourselves, the mentoring and the community work.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI YOUTH JUSTICE KAIMAHI

We also heard from Oranga Tamariki kaimahi that sites are not sufficiently budgeted to fund prevention services. Funding for things in youth justice FGC plans such as help acquiring birth certificates and driver licences for rangatahi is no longer guaranteed. Kaimahi told us that community services such as mentoring and peer support are often private and expensive to fund. There is little funding for prevention so they must “resort to contracts and short-term services” and cannot fund everyone.

“It would be great to have mentoring, but a lot of the contracting that we have – the mentoring units – is coming up to about \$4,500. If you’re mentoring with a child for 12 months, that can make a huge difference. But \$4,500 will only last for a few months. Longer-term involvement is what we’re challenged to provide and fund.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

A small number of kaimahi told us about the practice of having funding for services approved in advance of the FGC. They told us that, if unexpected expenses are raised during the FGC, there is no guarantee these will be approved.

“One thing our site has been doing now, with our manager, who is careful [with money], is before we go into [FGC], we have been encouraged to put in the plan and get it approved before, like with travel or if we think parents would be good to go to therapy. Our manager encourages us to put in the plan for the manager to approve. Doesn’t want us to come out [of FGC] with unexpected expenses.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

As stated in this and other reports, FGCs are not always being convened as the legislation intended. If plans are approved before the conference, it suggests they are pre-determined without the intended input from whānau and other professionals. It also suggests that decisions are made based on resources rather than need.

¹⁰³ The High and Complex Needs Unit was established by Cabinet in 2002 to support whānau (including kin and non-kin caregivers) with tamariki and rangatahi who have HCN. It is now within Oranga Tamariki and manages funding allocated for HCN. Funding for HCN is from the wider funding provided to Oranga Tamariki through the multi-category appropriation ‘Investing in Children and Young People MCA’.

Sometimes services and supports are promised but not delivered

While we heard some positive accounts from tamariki, rangatahi and whānau about services and supports they received – which we highlight at the end of this section – we also heard accounts of services and supports being promised by Oranga Tamariki but not provided.

“ [Oranga Tamariki] didn't follow through with some of the support. I thought I would be closer to my family, and my sister and my mum came down to support me, but in regards for the support in the whānau hui, [Oranga Tamariki] didn't follow through ... I would send them quotes but they wouldn't get back to me.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

“ Things not getting done is frustrating and gets in the way of me doing good.”
RANGATAHI

We were given examples of difficulties accessing Gateway assessments, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder/ADHD diagnoses, family therapy and help to enrol in education. We also heard about difficulties with financial support for medical appointments, daycare and – in some cases – to move location. A grandparent said it had taken a year for a social worker to refer them to a particular therapy service, and one parent told us that it wasn't until they threatened to make a complaint that support became available.

“ My expectations have not gone up. I am going to give functional family therapy a go. I don't want to, as a year ago it would have been perfect. It is now too late, but I will give it a go to see what happens.”
WHĀNAU MEMBER

One whānau member discussed not being told about supports that would have been available in school, such as Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour and Social Workers in Schools.

“ It would be nice for those who do take on kids to have information about what things are available. It's been really hard not having anyone back you up. The only support I have is family – they see the holes in the walls and bruises. Access to services and supports is a real barrier especially if you don't know about it.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

There are barriers to successful delivery of youth justice intervention services

Kaimahi from iwi and Māori services, NZ Police and Oranga Tamariki told us about barriers to youth justice intervention services working well for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

Kaimahi from iwi and Māori services spoke about there not being enough social workers, referrals from Oranga Tamariki being late and lacking information about rangatahi and a lack of funding for a variety of programmes, resulting in rangatahi getting bored with the same limited programmes.

NZ Police spoke about communication issues between frontline police officers and Youth Aid and between NZ Police and some iwi and Māori service providers that prevent tamariki and rangatahi accessing services they need in a timely way.

We heard from NZ Police and Oranga Tamariki kaimahi that waitlists for services are too long. Waits for services that help address behavioural needs and provide supported bail and mentoring can be up to two years. This means tamariki and rangatahi don't receive the services and support they need and may continue to offend.

We also heard about the scarcity of services and, where services such as mentoring are helping, them not being provided for the length of time needed.

“It feels like quantity over quality and not very preventative over the amount of time. It's too short term.”

MĀORI SOCIAL SERVICE KAIMAHI

“The supported bail programme is limited, limited mentors. We are trying to get more agencies contracted but Oranga Tamariki are cutting funding, not increasing it.”

POLICE OFFICER

Oranga Tamariki kaimahi we heard from told us that community providers are doing what they can to help, but they are struggling with limited resources.

“[It's] pretty dire across the bail without support. There's no supported bail in Tauranga. One of our big community organisations [that ran supported bail] was shut down and we lost two remand homes and a bail home. We lost supported bail and mentoring with that.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

“There's pressure on iwi and other services that are already struggling. Like Rotorua, we've got very little mentoring contracts available to us. The [mentoring programmes] that are there are full and are taking on extra kids to do us favours at times. Then the rangatahi they are working with aren't getting the regular support they need because [mentoring programmes are] trying to fit kids in.” ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

Police officers spoke specifically about the difficulties in getting a timely diagnosis for neurodiversity for tamariki and rangatahi and a lack of help for whānau. They referred to this having a negative impact on engagement in school and services and supports not being available without a diagnosis.

“A lot of our whānau need help with neurodiverse rangatahi because they are not getting support from the Ministry of Health and we have a school system that says one way fits all. A lot of our Māori kids are getting kicked out of school ... Majority of our kids are on the spectrum. This is how we are getting kids who aren't going to school. Where are these kids going? Nowhere, because they don't have a place ... If we had the supports that could support whānau, things could be different.”

POLICE OFFICER

Some services and supports are making a difference

Some tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori had positive experiences accessing services and supports

In our 2024/25 regional engagements, we heard from a small number of rangatahi and whānau Māori about their access to services in the early stages of involvement with Oranga Tamariki.

Some spoke positively about services and supports they received from a range of providers. These included Family Works, the Miriam Centre, Safe Network, Barnardos, counsellors and youth groups. Whānau spoke particularly positively about support that is relationship-based, culturally grounded and focused on strengthening whānau capability.

“Miriam Centre, [counsellor] talks with me sometimes. When I am having problems with my family, we talk about boundaries and what I can do to change the situation. Safe [Network] help too. They help me understand what is right or wrong. It helps me understand what I have done in the past is wrong and what I need to do in the future to do better.” RANGATAHI

Similar themes were identified in our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report, which highlighted the value whānau place on working with trusted iwi, Māori and community providers.

Whānau were also positive about iwi and Māori providers such as Waitomo Papakāinga, Raukawa, Kōkiri Marae and Ōrongomai Marae. We were told that support from iwi and Māori providers is effective because it is wide-ranging and always available.

“[Ōrongomai Marae] are amazing. I’ve built a relationship with them in the community, they’ve always got their doors open. They’ve seen me in my dark spaces and have been there for me.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

“My kids have seen the progress I have made here, how I have changed as a person – it’s the longest I have ever been off drugs and alcohol for the most part of my life. My eldest girl, she is amazed at the change that I have made, cos she doesn’t know this side of me.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

“[Waitomo are] helping me with my kids and school and stuff. Keeping me on track. The main stuff with being with Waitomo Papakāinga is that I’d probably be drinking and looking for someone to hang out with or just not at home but out at the beach and that. Knowing that I’ve got the kids at home and I have to get them ready for school in the morning, I got to be clear minded all the time. I suppose it’s just the standard father issues.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

“[The service is] a two in one. We learn our culture while learning about ourselves.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

We also heard a few examples of positive support provided or organised by Oranga Tamariki, such as where Oranga Tamariki was able to find the right therapist to build a good relationship and work with a particular child.

Mentors and programmes help tamariki and rangatahi Māori in youth justice

Tamariki and rangatahi Māori involved in the youth justice system told us about things that make the most difference to them. These include having mentors and support people to help them complete their plans, achieve their goals, participate in education and have a pro-social focus. Access to programmes like supported bail keep them busy.

“When I was staying at home, I would get bored and then I would go and steal cars, but [kaimahi at Maatua Whāngai] come pick me up and take me out to do things every day, so I don't get into trouble. They help me do things and look after me and get me to do things. [Kaimahi at Maatua Whāngai] keep me occupied, they get me out the house, I'm never bored with them.”

RANGATAHI

“[Te Aranui kaimahi] just tries to keep me out of trouble ... I got suspended from school and then got connected with [Te Aranui kaimahi] and they came up with some plan to come here and do the breakfast programme and do the boxing gym.”

RANGATAHI

“The plan I have now is like helping me not want to reoffend – like get my licence, get a job and come here do the programme, get my benefit and shit. The old plans weren't plans, they were just words.”

RANGATAHI

“Pretty much every day [Te Korowai] help me keep me busy.”

RANGATAHI

We heard similar things from whānau of tamariki and rangatahi Māori. They were positive about the impact of supported bail programmes, mentoring and counselling on their rangatahi. They spoke about feeling that this was the reason their rangatahi were happier, more confident and willing to engage in education.

“Every time he's with [kaimahi at Maatua Whāngai] and them, he's a bright ... he's just happy. He is a different person when he's with them ... When it comes to Maatua Whāngai, he's getting me up in the morning – 'Mum, what's the time? I've got course today'. He greets them at the door, his energy with them is like, his aura is beautiful ... Those are positive things for him, if you knew him, then you'd know that these are massive changes for him. From a kid that's like, 'No way, I'm not f'n doing that' – to getting me up, being ready, you know enjoying the experience, going to training with them, loving it. Loving it. Comes home, energy is through the roof, it's really good. He's quite an aggressive person normally, so when he comes like that, that for me is a massive change while he is with them.”

WHĀNAU MEMBER

“[My daughter] had to do counselling. Did [Youth Encounters] programme. It was helpful, and the programme boosted her confidence.”

WHĀNAU MEMBER

“It's been great they have been doing Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Pikiao counselling. It's good for her – her attendance at school is now up because it's in her plan.”

WHĀNAU MEMBER

Some whānau also told us how valuable it is for them when the service supports them as well as their rangatahi.

“They come and check on my own mental health. Not often do people ask how YOU are in this situation, not often – it's all focused on the youth. We forget as a whānau it puts us in turmoil too. I've lost a lot and given up a lot during this journey for him, so just having that person come and say 'Hi, I just wanted to stop in to see how you are' – to me, that's massive support.”

WHĀNAU MEMBER

“It can be tough on the family, just added stress you know. Really grateful for their support. Even just having someone on the other end when you’re going through this stuff. Just reassuring you that everything will be alright. Truly blessed by them and the services they provide and support. And it’s generally *kōrero kanohi ki te kanohi*. ‘How’s things?’ You can tell they understand what pressure the *whānau* is under. Been hard, but definitely a lot easier with [Maatua Whāngai] support.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

Te Pae Oranga Rangatahi and services delivered by kaupapa Māori providers are valuable

Te Pae Oranga Rangatahi is an alternative to prosecution specifically designed for youth offenders aged 14–17 who have not met the level for a statutory response.¹⁰⁴ It uses *tikanga* and kaupapa Māori and restorative justice practices with trained facilitators and a panel of respected local community leaders. It aims to address the underlying causes of offending and reduce escalation through the youth justice system.

Te Pae Oranga Rangatahi began in 2022 as a variation on the Te Pae Oranga programme, which is only available for those aged 18 and over. It now operates in 12 locations in Aotearoa.¹⁰⁵

Te Pae Oranga Rangatahi is delivered in partnership between NZ Police and contracted iwi providers. Rangatahi referred by NZ Police attend a Hui Matua panel meeting where they take responsibility for their offending and agree an action plan to put things right and get help for underlying issues that contributed to their offending. Whānau and support people are included in the process – as are victims, if they wish to take part.

In our Bay of Plenty engagements, we heard from police officers about the value of expanding Te Pae Oranga to rangatahi involved in the youth justice system. We also heard about the positive difference kaupapa Māori approaches and services make when working with rangatahi.

“The concept of the kaupapa is massive. I’ve been in Police 30 years and it’s the best ever they brought out, looking after our people ... Police are talking about fixing the *whānau* dynamics and looking at the background.” POLICE OFFICER

“I’ve noticed it’s a much more holistic thing as opposed to when we were referring to more mainstream providers [where] it tends to be that you do a lot of work with young people, then if they go back to the same environment, can we expect a different outcome? So it’s becoming more about the wider issues.” POLICE OFFICER

Prevention initiatives with an education focus can make a difference

Given the high proportion of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the youth justice intervention population who were chronically absent from secondary school in 2023, initiatives that focus on engaging tamariki and rangatahi in education are important.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Either a referral to Oranga Tamariki for a youth justice FGC or prosecution through the Youth Court.

¹⁰⁵ Moerewa and Whangārei/Kaipara in Northland, Auckland City, Manukau in Counties Manukau, Hamilton/Huntly in Waikato, Tauranga and Rotorua in the Bay of Plenty, Napier/Hastings, Wellington/Hutt Valley and Porirua in Wellington, Nelson/Blenheim in Tasman and Christchurch in Canterbury.

¹⁰⁶ As reflected in education outcomes indicators for tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged 0–17 (rangatahi Māori involved with Oranga Tamariki had lower attendance at secondary school) outlined in this report.

In Greater Wellington, we heard about two initiatives with an education focus.

The CACTUS youth programme is being run by NZ Police out of Porirua College. It is an early morning boot camp that takes rangatahi through physical training activities. It is designed as a short period of high-impact intervention for rangatahi who are in college, aimed at building confidence and preventing

offending. The teachers, NZ Police Youth Aid team and other Porirua-based services support the programme.

We also heard that NZ Police in Porirua is developing a programme like Fast Track with the Ministry of Education to be based in Cannons Creek where engagement in learning is lower.

How iwi and Māori providers are delivering for tamariki, rangatahi Māori and their whānau

Iwi and Māori organisations across the motu are increasingly willing and able to take on some of the responsibilities and functions of the oranga tamariki system to prevent entry into care and improve outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori. In doing so, they are delivering a system that offers a kaupapa Māori and whānau-centred alternative to the way Oranga Tamariki and its predecessors have operated.

Iwi and Māori providers can be better placed to support whānau Māori than government agencies. Reasons include their ability to build lasting and trusting relationships with whānau, particularly where whānau have the same iwi affiliation and iwi involvement is lifelong.¹⁰⁷

Iwi and Māori organisations can also provide more flexible, holistic and culturally appropriate support than government agencies. They can often work alongside whānau, responding to their particular circumstances (whatever

they are), and can also focus on long-term, intergenerational needs. They have a vested interest in seeing whānau thrive.¹⁰⁸ In contrast, government services and supports tend to be short term and bound by rigid criteria and service specifications.¹⁰⁹

In this section, we highlight three iwi-led initiatives in the regions we visited in 2024/25. They demonstrate the potential of iwi and Māori providers to strengthen the oranga tamariki system. In each case, iwi and/or their provider arms are delivering parts of the system previously delivered by Oranga Tamariki and activating what 'good' looks like for whānau Māori.

Oranga Tamariki is supporting these initiatives through its contracting of services and supports and with varying degrees of decentralising responsibility.

¹⁰⁷ We recognise that some whānau are not – and do not wish to be – in contact with their iwi and that a choice of service provider should be available wherever possible.

¹⁰⁸ Independent Children's Monitor. (2019). *Engagement hui with Māori on the independent oversight of the Oranga Tamariki system*. aroturuki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Documents/What-the-Monitors-doing/report-engagement-hui-2019.pdf

¹⁰⁹ See (p. 19) of reference at footnote 87. "That's the difference between programmes and iwi. They're short-term, iwi is for life."

Mahuru delivers youth justice intervention in a rangatahi-centred way

Mahuru is a six-week intensive remand programme based in Kaikohe, delivered by Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services (NISS) through a contract with Oranga Tamariki for shared care. Mahuru is for taitamariki¹¹⁰ Māori from Ngāpuhi who are in the custody of Oranga Tamariki on remand¹¹¹ because of alleged or admitted offending.¹¹²

NISS supports up to three taitamariki Māori on Mahuru at any one time.¹¹³ Since November 2019¹¹⁴ and up until 30 June 2025, 64 taitamariki have attended Mahuru – 15 taitamariki attended Mahuru in 2024/25.¹¹⁵

Taitamariki live with supportive caregivers

In Mahuru, taitamariki Māori live with mātua atawhai (caregivers) in their homes. This is a key point of difference from community remand homes run by Oranga Tamariki or other providers – where a group of rangatahi are detained together in a home usually run by staff who work in shifts.

Mātua atawhai provide a safe home and one-to-one care while taitamariki are on remand. They also provide guidance and stability while helping taitamariki strengthen their cultural identity through shared experiences and whakapapa connections.

“This young fella we had, we found out he was connected to us by my great great grandmother. When we went to go and meet the whānau and saw how close we were connected, he then felt connected. He had come up from Auckland and he felt part of our family right away. That’s what is important. Some of them don’t have that when they come up. It gives them some kind of foundation here with us.”

MĀTUA ATAWHAI

“We treat them like our own. We make sure they feel like whānau first.” MĀTUA ATAWHAI

Taitamariki have dedicated mentors to support them

Each taitamariki also has two Ngāpuhi mentors as they participate in a six-week individualised programme. These activities are designed to develop their cultural identity and pride as young Ngāpuhi and achieve the goals outlined in their teina¹¹⁶ plans.

“[Mentors] just try and see what I want to do, not what they want me to do. They are helping me get a job, they are teaching me my background, my Māori history. Teaching me new skills, like gathering kai, learning how to budget ... They teach you about keeping yourself tidy, and they like keeping me active.” RANGATAHI

¹¹⁰ NISS refers to rangatahi (young people) as taitamariki.

¹¹¹ This means that the Youth Court has made an order under section 238(1)(d) of the Oranga Tamariki Act that the young person be detained in the custody of the chief executive of Oranga Tamariki while awaiting further Youth Court hearing(s) on alleged or admitted offending.

¹¹² It is also possible for the young person to have been remanded into the custody of NISS under section 238(1)(c) of the Oranga Tamariki Act, but this is less common.

¹¹³ The number of taitamariki who can be supported depends on whether there are mātua atawhai (caregivers) available.

¹¹⁴ Mahuru was launched on 1 September 2018. Data used in this report dates back to November 2019 due to changes in reporting software.

¹¹⁵ Seventeen taitamariki were referred in 2024/25 but two did not start.

¹¹⁶ Mahuru kaimahi use the term ‘teina’ to refer to taitamariki who participate in the programme. Teina is a word used to describe a younger sibling of the same gender.

When taitamariki are placed on the Mahuru programme, they initially attend a three-day camp with their mentors, usually on the east coast of Te Tai Tokerau. This is an opportunity to reflect, relax and enjoy being surrounded by Tāne Mahuta and Tangaroa. Taitamariki also build connections with their mentors and learn about the expectations of the programme.

“We have found that this is a fabulous opportunity for the young person to build a rapport with the mentors and for them to know each other well, and then they start to talk about the programme and the things they can potentially do.” NISS LEADER

Taitamariki are supported by their mentors to complete a teina plan based on their goals and needs

A key feature of the programme is an individualised teina plan that is developed with taitamariki and based on their specific goals and needs. The teina plan addresses culture (including whakapapa and connection to marae), health, education, life skills and recreation.

Taitamariki are able to participate in a range of activities and to learn new skills.

“They take me places. I have to earn it first before fun stuff, like fishing, hunting, diving, bush walking, gym, carving, gardens.”

RANGATAHI

Cultural connection is compulsory. Taitamariki have opportunities to visit their marae and to reconnect with their whenua (land), including through visits to their maunga (mountain) and awa (river). Taitamariki also have opportunities to visit places of cultural significance such as Waitangi, Tāne Mahuta and Ōhaeawai to learn about their history.

“If we only have a bit of their whakapapa, we will tap into finding out more about their whakapapa – spending time at their marae, meet kaumātua living on the papakāinga.”

NISS LEADER

“I’ve been to Tāne Mahuta and learnt about him and what he brings and then I’ve been to the battlefields. They took me there and explained what had happened.” RANGATAHI

Education is compulsory up to the age of 16, and taitamariki at Mahuru are enrolled through Te Kura. They also receive support from Te Kona,¹¹⁷ an organisation contracted by NISS to work with taitamariki on Mahuru. Taitamariki are helped to get NCEA credits and, if eligible, a learner driver licence.

“They are enrolled through Kura and [Te Kona kaimahi] strives to get their credits – numeracy and literacy and a driver licence. They will focus on an activity where they can go out like fishing – do karakia, baiting, and get credits for it.” NISS LEADER

“It’s a good learning place. I learn about my Māori history and getting my credits in numeracy and literacy.” RANGATAHI

“I got my NCEA in health and food safety at Te Kona, so that’s cool.” RANGATAHI

Kaimahi also help taitamariki to set up bank accounts, prepare a CV and get ID to help prepare them for adulthood.

¹¹⁷ Te Kona is a digital, business and learning hub located in Kaikohe.

Taitamariki feel seen, cared for and safe

Taitamariki we heard from told us about feeling seen, cared for and safe while on the Mahuru programme.

“This place is good for me ... They are all welcoming, all the nannies have all the stories, and they know who you are and where you come from.” RANGATAHI

“These people actually care about you.” RANGATAHI

“I just know that I’m safe, feel safe, just the way they speak to me, I know I’m safe.” RANGATAHI

NISS kaimahi told us they provide support to taitamariki that rangatahi in remand homes would usually get from their Oranga Tamariki social workers. This includes supporting taitamariki at their court appearances and taking them to FGCs.

“What we do differently, as I understand it, from community homes is we take them to court and support them in court. Whereas in other community homes, the social worker does it. We do doctor, dentist, that stuff as well, we take them to family group conference – we are there for their whole journey.” NISS LEADER

Taitamariki are also farewelled from Mahuru in a personal way.

“We get a taonga for them at the end of the programme. Not just any old taonga. Our team who have built a good relationship with them over the six weeks – and we have a good relationship with a woman up here – and they will talk to her about the attributes of the young person. So there is a lot of thought that goes into the taonga – it could be wooden, greenstone or bone.” NISS LEADER

Oranga Tamariki is not referring rangatahi to Mahuru in line with the original intent

NISS kaimahi told us that, when Mahuru was first established, the intent was for taitamariki Māori to go to Mahuru immediately following their arrest and first appearance in Youth Court. Taitamariki Māori referred to Mahuru were also to be living in Te Tai Tokerau, so they would be on remand in their communities and closer to their whānau. This would make their transition out of custodial remand more likely to succeed.

Over time, the reality has moved away from the original intent. In 2024/25, most taitamariki Māori referred to Mahuru, while of Ngāpuhi descent, resided in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Many had also been on remand in a secure institutional environment before coming to Mahuru.

But a supportive and collaborative relationship with Oranga Tamariki is making a difference

Despite some earlier issues, we heard from NISS kaimahi that communication with Oranga Tamariki has greatly improved. This is benefiting taitamariki and usually means that a transition plan is in place and that taitamariki will be able to get bail at the end of the programme rather than remaining in the custody of Oranga Tamariki.

“There is more of an assurance that there is a plan for [taitamariki] when they leave us and that’s the best impact I can see.” NISS LEADER

Rangatahi attending Mahuru also told us they felt well supported by their Oranga Tamariki social workers.

“He tries to keep me out of trouble by keeping me busy, does heaps of paperwork so I can go home to whānau. He was here yesterday. I asked to go back to my course [when back in Auckland]. Social worker has been up twice in the last four and a half weeks. He calls me every week ... My social worker cares about me.” RANGATAHI

Gains delivered by Mahuru can be impacted by the broader system

NISS leadership told us some external factors can remove some of the gains and positive changes produced by Mahuru. These include:

- lack of suitable placements for taitamariki to move to after completing Mahuru, which can mean they move to an institutional environment like an Oranga Tamariki residence or a community remand home
- periods of remand being too long
- lack of support for whānau and taitamariki to prevent further offending where taitamariki return home or to their previous living arrangement on bail.

More support needs to be provided to taitamariki after they leave Mahuru

While the Mahuru programme is making a difference to taitamariki, mātua atawhai told us they wish more services and support were available to taitamariki after they leave the programme.

“Transition our tamariki from here to the adulthood needs more work to be done, someone to help the rangatahi with their licences, bank accounts, all that stuff they need in real life. That’s what makes me sad about these kids, we need someone to help them on that end.” MĀTUA ATAWHAI

Mahuru is demonstrating some positive impacts

While there are some challenges, positive results are being realised for taitamariki who attend Mahuru.

Mahuru kaimahi record a video interview of all taitamariki completing the programme, and these are often provided to the court. NISS kaimahi described seeing many positive changes in taitamariki during their time on Mahuru, with Youth Court judges being visibly moved by the changes. What may look like small changes – such as taitamariki being able to pause and reflect on their actions or being proud of themselves – are marks of enormous progress.

NISS records give examples of changes observed in taitamariki completing Mahuru in 2024/25. Examples include taitamariki being described as hard workers, completing all tasks put to them, encouraging other teina to participate, engaging in voluntary work for kaumātua (elders), coming out of their shells and becoming more honest.

“These are mostly kids who have been told they are useless, [that they will] fail at school. And they come here and get attention and love it. They get credits and can show success.” NISS LEADER

Some taitamariki keep in touch with their Mahuru mentors after they leave and report that they are doing well.

“[Taitamariki] might reach out to mentors after they have left here. They might say ‘I’m still doing really good, I’m staying out of trouble’.” NISS LEADER

Hapori is led by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira in partnership with other providers and is reducing reports of concern

We mentioned the Hapori pilot in our 2023/24 *Outcomes for Māori* report. This was in the context of the strategic partnership agreement between Oranga Tamariki and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira. We have looked at the pilot in more detail as part of our 2024/25 regional engagements in Greater Wellington.

When we visited in early 2025, the Oranga Tamariki site in Porirua had been managed by one of the leaders from the provider arm of Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira for two years. This secondment had strengthened local relationships between Ngāti Toa iwi and Oranga Tamariki. It had also provided new opportunities for local whānau to be supported.

Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira leaders told us they had intentionally made space for other community providers to work with tamariki, rangatahi and whānau coming to the attention of Oranga Tamariki. This built upon the desire, aspiration and ability of iwi and partner agencies to work more collaboratively.

The Porirua Hapori pilot was established in 2023, building on work that was previously underway between Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira and Oranga Tamariki.

Through the Hapori referral pathway, reports of concern are triaged by the Porirua site in consultation with Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira. Based on the presenting early risk factors, every whānau of tamariki at the centre of these reports of concern is referred to one of the partner social service providers. These providers are Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira, Porirua Whānau Centre, Taeaomanino Trust, Wesley Community Action and – more recently – ASK (A Safe Kapiti). The providers then work directly with whānau to offer support that can address and/or resolve the risk factors that led to the report of concern being made.

Hapori shows the value of wraparound supports for whānau

It is widely recognised that an approach to whānau from an iwi or community provider is more likely to be accepted than an approach from Oranga Tamariki. The ability of providers to work directly and holistically with whānau can have positive impacts and ultimately prevent entry into care for tamariki and rangatahi.

In late 2023, Oranga Tamariki evaluated the pilot and found positive results.¹¹⁸ Whānau spoke positively about the way they were approached by partner providers and the support they received. They spoke about feeling more comfortable and open with iwi and community providers rather than having to talk to Oranga Tamariki about the reports of concern. Kaimahi involved in the pilot were also positive.

¹¹⁸ Oranga Tamariki. (2023, December). *Evaluation of the Porirua Hapori pilot*.

Data shows that 153 whānau Māori, involving 334 tamariki Māori, were supported by Hapori between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025. More recent data shows that the Porirua site has had the lowest renotification rate for the region¹¹⁹ as well as a minimal increase in reports of concern compared to the same period in the previous year.¹²⁰

The Hapori pilot is continuing to work well

When we spoke with people in Greater Wellington, we heard several accounts of the Hapori pilot continuing to work well.

Oranga Tamariki leaders emphasised the partnership approach led by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira and the ability for providers to work together to identify who could best support each whānau.

“On this site, [the relationship with Ngāti Toa] is a massive enabler. We can manage work easier and get better outcomes for kids and whānau. Hapori are genuinely around the table with other organisations for the work that is potential low level. We have developed trust. They are working with us and it means whānau think if [Hapori] trust them, we will too. It opens doors quite literally.” ORANGA TAMARIKI LEADER

“At Hapori, we are not the head of that table. It is the community lead. That’s partnership. We aren’t the boss of everything ... They are inside our house and can see everything, not just halfway.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI REGIONAL LEADER

Kaimahi from a Hapori provider told us about the importance of an organisation other than Oranga Tamariki approaching whānau to offer support.

“Our families, they’re really anxious when Oranga Tamariki is mentioned in any conversation and when they knock on their door because [Oranga Tamariki] have no knowledge, because of the language and cultural protocols. [Oranga Tamariki] don’t get it and so I really like my Hapori role.”

NGO KAIMAHI

Preventing entry into care is at the heart of Hapori

The intention of Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira is to prevent its tamariki and rangatahi coming into care. We heard this is a key motivator behind joint efforts to strengthen whānau when concerns are raised and to enable them to keep their tamariki and rangatahi at home safely with them.

“We’ve worked for years in the community, and we’ve asked for help and [iwi social service] has always been willing ... They were so concerned about the number of tamariki coming into Oranga Tamariki. They took on so many young people and whānau because of their worry of numbers coming into care, so it has been a humbling journey. So we want to break the cycle. We work with Hapori. It’s exciting and keeps me going.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI LEADER

¹¹⁹ From June 2025 to January 2026, the Porirua site had a renotification rate of 33 percent, with the next lowest rate in the region being recorded at 37 percent (other sites in the region have renotification rates at 40 percent or above). Renotification data is not routinely available across Oranga Tamariki and so is unavailable for the reporting period.

¹²⁰ From June 2025 to January 2026, the Porirua site had an increase of reports of concern at 11 percent compared to the same period in the previous year. This compares to other sites in the region having increases of 30 percent or above.

Oranga Tamariki could take a longer-term approach to supporting this work

At the time of our engagements in 2025, the future of Hapori was uncertain. Oranga Tamariki had funded one full-time kaimahi from each of the partner organisations, and the contract for this was due for renewal in December 2025.

We were told by Oranga Tamariki that Hapori would benefit from sustained infrastructure, including ongoing quality assurance. We also heard how the commitment and support from Oranga Tamariki kaimahi have helped to keep the pilot going.

At the time of writing this report, Hapori continues as an inter-agency response to reports of concern that would benefit from a long-term investment from Oranga Tamariki. We have heard from Oranga Tamariki that it has recently used an existing vacancy to recruit a Kaiarahi Hapori, who will support the pilot for 12 months.

In late 2025, Hapori was also awarded funding through the Resilience to Organised Crime in Communities initiative for an expansion of the model. This expansion supports tamariki aged 8–12 who have had multiple interactions with NZ Police and who are at risk of becoming involved in organised crime. This work includes input from a cross-agency team from NZ Police, Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education.

We will be interested to see the difference this is making in future, building on the success of the Hapori pilot.

Te Pūkāea o te Waiora provides a local alternative to the National Contact Centre

As outlined in our report *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*,¹²¹

Te Pūkāea o Te Waiora (Te Pūkāea) offers a whānau-centred alternative to the Oranga Tamariki front door. As our report found, Oranga Tamariki site capacity is driving its response to reports of concern rather than the safety of the child. Te Pūkāea works on the premise that all tamariki and rangatahi who are the subject of a report of concern should be seen and supported.

Te Pūkāea is an initiative between Oranga Tamariki and the Eastern Bay of Plenty Iwi Provider Alliance, led by Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa. Te Pūkāea is supported by the Oranga Tamariki Enabling Communities¹²² initiative to strengthen community-led approaches to intake, early response and support.

Through Te Pūkāea, a network of whānau navigators work across the Eastern Bay of Plenty to provide services and supports to whānau, often – but not always – in response to a report of concern. It represents an intentional shift away from a one-size-fits-all national intake model towards a community-driven gateway to services and supports for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau.

An important part of the model is Te Reo Karanga, a kaupapa Māori referral and triage service based in Whakatāne. Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa (Ngāti Awa) operates the service, receiving the Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre calls during office hours that relate to tamariki, rangatahi and whānau located within the Whakatāne site catchment.

¹²¹ See footnote 30.

¹²² Enabling Communities is an Oranga Tamariki initiative to better support tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. Oranga Tamariki is working with iwi, Māori and communities to develop prototypes to shift decision making and resources to communities.

Decentralising operational functions enables decision making to occur closer to whānau

Te Pūkāea demonstrates the transfer of specific operational functions ordinarily carried out by Oranga Tamariki.¹²³ Te Reo Karanga receives calls and reports of concern for the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Qualified social workers then assess needs before determining the appropriate pathway.

Te Reo Karanga social workers:

- receive reports of concern
- undertake initial triage and assessment
- determine appropriate non-statutory pathways
- refer whānau to navigators with connections to local supports.

Cases that require statutory involvement are referred back to Oranga Tamariki. Other cases are referred to Te Pūkāea, which connects whānau with community services to meet their identified needs.

This enables decisions to be made closer to whānau within a service that is grounded in local relationships, knowledge of the rohe and kaupapa Māori practice. Oranga Tamariki retains responsibility for statutory decision making and child safety but is no longer the sole entry point to the wider oranga tamariki system in this region.

Crucially, all whānau who are referred to Te Pūkāea are offered support. No case is considered to require no further action.

Over one-third of reports of concern did not need a statutory response, but support was offered instead

All contacts received by Te Reo Karanga are recorded in CYRAS. However, at the time of writing this report, Te Pūkāea kaimahi are unable to get comprehensive data back from Oranga Tamariki. As such, they are relying on their own records. Recent changes to data entry at Te Pūkāea means that some detailed data is available for this report for the period February to June 2025.¹²⁴

For the five months from 1 February to 30 June 2025:

- Te Reo Karanga received 350 reports of concern – these related to 324 individual tamariki and rangatahi and some individuals were the subject of multiple reports of concern
- of the 324 tamariki and rangatahi who were the subjects of a report of concern:
 - 83 percent were identified by the notifier as Māori (270 individuals)
 - 56 percent were known to be female (180 individuals) and 40 percent male (128 individuals)¹²⁵
 - 29 percent (94 tamariki) were aged 0–4, 38 percent (124 tamariki) were aged 5–12, 28 percent (90 rangatahi) were aged 13–17 and 2 percent (seven pēpi) were not yet born¹²⁶
- just over half (54 percent) were referred back to Oranga Tamariki for a statutory response

¹²³ Outside of office hours, calls are connected back to the National Contact Centre. Where the National Contact Centre takes a call and considers that an immediate response is not required, it refers it back to Te Reo Karanga to respond on the next working day.

¹²⁴ Te Pūkāea kaimahi have requested comprehensive data from Oranga Tamariki and, at the same time, are in the process of backdating records held by their officers in order to ensure their data collection is as robust and comprehensive as possible.

¹²⁵ Gender was unknown for the remainder.

¹²⁶ Ages were unknown for nine tamariki/rangatahi (3%).

- just over a third (36 percent) were referred to Te Pūkāea for the offer of support from whānau navigators¹²⁷
- of those tamariki, rangatahi and whānau referred to Te Pūkāea:
 - 100 percent were offered services and supports from whānau navigators
 - 22 percent have not yet engaged with whānau navigators (and may be reluctant to) but are aware that the door is always open
 - 36 percent have services and supports in place at the time of writing
 - 11 percent have exited without needing further referrals
 - 69 percent are considered to be stable and supported – a combination of those with supports currently in place and those not requiring them.

Data also shows that the profile of cases in the Whakatāne site has changed as a result of Te Pūkāea being in operation. This is to be expected given the arrangement that only reports of concern requiring a statutory response are referred to Oranga Tamariki. Te Reo Karanga referred 54 percent of reports of concern it received to Oranga Tamariki for statutory response. Of those, 63 percent were referred for a child and family assessment and 37 percent required NZ Police involvement under the Child Protection Protocol.

Te Pūkāea delivers responsive and connected support for whānau

In our regional engagements, we heard Te Pūkāea is working well to triage reports of concern and support tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. Some professionals told us that Te Pūkāea is responding quickly to reports of concern and tamariki, rangatahi and

whānau can access a range of services in the community to support their needs.

“The main benefit of having the call centre here is that they can get a [report of concern], take all the details down. The decision is then made as to whether that referral is to come to us. That whole process can take just 30–40 minutes. If it’s family harm that maybe occurred overnight, then a whānau navigator calls them the next day. The victims can’t believe the response is so quick.” WHĀNAU NAVIGATOR

“Some of the cases we were getting in the past were not meeting [the Oranga Tamariki] threshold. It was just really ‘need for services’ and we were annoying whānau – thinking we [were] gonna remove [tamariki and rangatahi from] whānau. By going to Te Pūkāea, they can identify if they [tamariki and rangatahi] need care and protection or not.” ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

“[Whānau] prefer Te Pūkāea showing up than Oranga Tamariki because we’re really quite transparent ... They prefer that we’re working with them than Oranga Tamariki. They’re more open to looking at the services because they have a choice.”

TE PŪKĀEA KAIMAHI

When we visited Te Pūkāea again in early 2026, we also heard that relationships with other stakeholders in the Eastern Bay of Plenty were strong. We were told that kaimahi at Whakatāne Hospital had initially doubted the capacity of Te Pūkāea to respond to whānau following reports of concern, but this had been turned around. Hospital kaimahi now trusted Te Pūkāea and referred directly to Te Reo Karanga rather than to Oranga Tamariki.

¹²⁷ The remaining 10 percent were either already receiving services and supports from community providers or were not yet recorded at the point of data collection.

Looking to the future with a whānau-centred approach

At the time of writing, discussions were underway between the Eastern Bay of Plenty Iwi Provider Alliance and Oranga Tamariki about the future of Te Pūkāea. Both parties recognise the success of the prototype and its ability to improve outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori.

It is expected that Oranga Tamariki will formalise Te Pūkāea with a delegation under the Oranga Tamariki Act in the near future. Oranga Tamariki leadership have told us they support the decentralisation of certain functions and responsibilities and are working towards ensuring that the delegation of authority in specific circumstances can happen smoothly and safely.

How strategic partnerships are making a difference

Our legislation requires us to report on the strategic partnerships that Oranga Tamariki has with iwi and Māori organisations. Strategic partnerships are one of the ways Oranga Tamariki works to improve outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.

Oranga Tamariki has 10 strategic partnerships in place

Strategic partnerships are formal partnerships between Oranga Tamariki and iwi and Māori organisations, including iwi authorities. They are intended to:

- provide opportunities for “innovative proposals” to improve outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori
- enable expectations and targets to be set for improved outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori
- enable robust and regular information sharing
- enable the chief executive of Oranga Tamariki to delegate functions
- support cultural competency and best practice among Oranga Tamariki kaimahi.¹²⁸

Oranga Tamariki had 10 strategic partnerships in place with iwi authorities and Māori organisations at the end of June 2025.

Each strategic partnership agreement is shaped by the values and objectives of the strategic partner. However, they share the same focus on supporting tamariki, rangatahi and whānau and preventing tamariki and rangatahi from entering care or custody.

Oranga Tamariki is refreshing its approach to partnerships

We met Oranga Tamariki leaders in March 2026 to discuss progress with the strategic partnerships. We were particularly interested to know about the difference these partnerships are making and how they are being leveraged to improve outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori involved with the oranga tamariki system.

We heard that Oranga Tamariki is refreshing its approach to all partnerships, including strategic partnerships. Work is underway to develop a new partnership framework. This will include a deeper understanding of the scope of partnerships needed to support the work of the oranga tamariki system and of the responsibilities and obligations entailed for each partner.

¹²⁸ Section 7 of the Oranga Tamariki Act.

We heard that engagements were to take place from mid-May with a range of iwi partners (up to five) across the partnership spectrum as well as other providers and stakeholders (also up to five).

Oranga Tamariki leaders expect to consider a final draft framework in mid-2026, with decisions about implementation some months after this.

Strategic partnerships can be leveraged for Enabling Communities prototypes

We also heard from Oranga Tamariki leaders that the existence of a strategic partnership has paved the way for Enabling Communities prototypes to be agreed and developed.

Enabling Communities prototypes are a means of testing new ways of working – often with iwi and Māori providers taking a lead role – to establish a blueprint that could be used in the future. This is vital groundwork for a detailed understanding of what iwi and Māori providers and other organisations need to be able to take on some of the functions and responsibilities currently held by Oranga Tamariki. As such, Enabling Communities prototypes will inform future changes to the Oranga Tamariki operating model, including collective learning about how to safely decentralise and delegate parts of the care and protection system.

A strategic partnership can open the door to Enabling Communities prototypes because the existing relationships often mean there is trust and understanding of each party's capability and capacity. When run by strategic partners, Enabling Communities prototypes put section 7(h)(a) of the Oranga Tamariki Act into practice as opportunities for "innovative proposals" to improve outcomes to be developed and tested.

Enabling Communities prototypes signal significant shifts for both Oranga Tamariki and its partners. Oranga Tamariki leaders told us that, although some partners want to move faster, the change required internally (for example, with systems, policies and processes) to support the successful delivery of individual prototypes takes time. They also spoke about the risks partners are taking on and the work needed to ensure those risks are understood and mitigated. This is important to keep tamariki and rangatahi safe.

Some strategic partners have told us that the potential of these partnerships has not been realised

We have spoken with a number of strategic partners in the last few years, particularly as we developed our approach to reporting on outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori involved in the oranga tamariki system. A common theme is emerging as some strategic partners have told us that the potential of these partnerships has not been realised.

The work Oranga Tamariki is now doing to refresh its partnership framework will be welcomed by some of these partners. We look forward to seeing an approach that both Oranga Tamariki and strategic partners will find purposeful and cohesive.

We focus on three strategic partners in this report

We featured Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-O-Ngāpuhi, Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira and Ngāti Kahungunu in our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report. These three iwi volunteered to be a focus of our inaugural report.

This year, to tie in with our 2024/25 regional engagements, we feature the Eastern Bay Iwi Provider Alliance. The purpose of this is to consider the impact of the partnerships at a strategic level rather than focus on services being delivered by iwi providers.

As our 2024/25 regional engagements took place in Te Tai Tokerau and Greater Wellington as well as the Bay of Plenty, we have also followed up and spoken with NISS and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira to see whether there had been any change to their experience as strategic partners.¹²⁹ As with last year's report, NISS has been delegated by Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi-O-Ngāpuhi to speak on matters relating to Oranga Tamariki.

We are grateful to the Eastern Bay Iwi Provider Alliance, Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira and NISS for speaking freely about their perspectives and experiences.

The Eastern Bay Iwi Provider Alliance was in place before the strategic partnership

The Eastern Bay of Plenty, Te Moana-a-Toi, lies on the eastern coast of the North Island with a population of approximately 55,000 people. It encompasses Whakatāne, Ōpōtiki and Kawerau districts.

The Eastern Bay Iwi Provider Alliance (the Alliance) was established in 2017 in recognition that there were strategic opportunities to work collaboratively with whānau and government agencies. Its mission is to improve the wellbeing of whānau through seamless service delivery, shared qualified workforce and influencing and responding effectively to opportunities across different sectors.

The Alliance comprises four organisations: Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa, Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau Hauora, Te Pou Oranga o Whakatōhea and Tūhoe Hauora. Most of these organisations are mandated by their iwi.

The strategic partnership agreement between Oranga Tamariki and the Eastern Bay Iwi Provider Alliance was signed in August 2020. Under the agreement, partners agree to work together to:

- centralise and coordinate regional approaches to engagement, support, decision making and solutions for tamariki Māori and whānau
- plan for the long term, with a focus on localised accountability, and tailored local solutions information by whakapapa, tikanga and kawa
- prioritise whānau aspirations to reshape the delivery of support services
- develop a new approach to outcomes measurement to enable a whānau-centric approach
- utilise the partnership to build a cross-government relationship.

When we met leaders from the Alliance, we heard about its leadership model whereby each of the four chief executives lead specific areas on behalf of the Alliance. This arrangement is based on the respective expertise and experience of each organisation and is designed to make the most effective use of the Alliance's combined resources. When one of the chief executives speaks with a government agency, they are doing so on behalf of the Alliance.

¹²⁹ We visited Hawke's Bay and East Coast in 2025/26 and therefore hope to speak with Ngāti Kahungunu again for next year's report.

Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa takes a lead role in the strategic partnership with Oranga Tamariki

Although each of the four organisations works with Oranga Tamariki, it is Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa that leads the Alliance's strategic partnership with Oranga Tamariki.¹³⁰

Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa (Ngāti Awa Social and Health Services) was established in 1989 and mandated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa to provide all social and health services to Ngāti Awa. This followed the successful establishment of Mātua Whangai Services by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa in 1987.¹³¹

When we spoke with leaders from the Alliance, we heard that Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa was already well placed to provide services and supports to tamariki, rangatahi and whānau in the rohe before its relationship with Oranga Tamariki was formalised. Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa works with whānau irrespective of whakapapa and ethnicity, including those who whakapapa to Ngāti Awa, those who whakapapa to other iwi and those who are tau iwi.

Although Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa – and the Alliance – was well established, we heard a perspective from Oranga Tamariki that it was the strategic partnership that led to the development of the Enabling Communities prototype, Te Pūkāea o te Waiora, which is featured separately in this report. Through its call centre, Te Reo Karanga, Te Pūkāea triages calls redirected from the Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre and helps whānau to access community information and services.¹³²

Leaders from the Alliance told us that, while Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa fronts Te Pūkāea and works directly with Oranga Tamariki on the prototype, the work sits across the Alliance. Whānau navigators from Te Pūkāea can put whānau in touch with services and supports offered by the other organisations and across the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

We also heard from the Alliance that the partnership enables Oranga Tamariki to have a relationship with most iwi that is relatively straightforward.

The strategic partnership can facilitate access to other areas of government

Both the Alliance and Oranga Tamariki share the view that the successful Enabling Communities prototype in Te Pūkāea brings a focus and a spotlight on the Alliance that is beneficial. This can open the door to other developments.

Te Tohu o te Ora o Ngāti Awa is in early stages of developing a family harm prototype, commissioned by the Social Investment Agency. This is a way in which the strategic partnership has been helpful. Publicly released information states that this second prototype will expand Te Pūkāea and “build community awareness of Family Harm and grow a fully trained workforce to support whānau dealing with historic trauma”.¹³³

Other government-funded initiatives are underway to support whānau wellbeing such as the Affordable Rentals initiative, which is targeted at whānau who are working and on a pathway to home ownership.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau Hauora leads in the housing and Ministry of Social Development space, Te Pou Oranga o Whakatōhea leads on mental health and Tūhoe Hauora leads on health.

¹³¹ Mātua Whangai Services had grown from a level 1 care and family support service to an iwi provider of services in a short space of time, necessitating a coming together of the policy arm (formerly known as Te Tōhanga Ora Mo Ngāti Awa) with the social services arm provided by the Rūnanga.

¹³² All reports of concern that come through Te Pūkāea are either referred to Oranga Tamariki or allocated to whānau navigators, who can refer to other providers. This allows tamariki, rangatahi and whānau to access support and have their needs addressed holistically.

¹³³ sia.govt.nz/social-investment-fund/pathway-one-new-investment/pathway-one-selected-initiatives

¹³⁴ tetohuoteora.org.nz/projects/kawarehe-trust-development

We also heard that Alliance leaders support the decentralisation of whānau service provision away from government and – through their experience of the strategic partnership to date – are developing a stronger sense of how it can be used.

“We want to have a bigger risk appetite because our whānau need it.”

EASTERN BAY IWI PROVIDER ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP

Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services wants to see a long-term plan from Oranga Tamariki

Last year, we outlined how Ngāpuhi has good relationships with Oranga Tamariki at national and regional levels but that the strategic partnership had not been used to full effect. We heard that Ngāpuhi was not routinely at the table when strategic decisions were being made for its whānau, despite Ngāpuhi tamariki and rangatahi being disproportionately represented in both the care population and those involved more widely with Oranga Tamariki. At the time, Oranga Tamariki agreed with this view but told us that the relationship had since been strengthened.

For this report, we heard from NISS leaders that the intent and potential of the strategic partnership are still yet to be fully realised. For example, NISS leaders would like to agree strategic targets with Oranga Tamariki that show how outcomes can be improved for their tamariki, rangatahi and whānau involved with the agency. This would recognise the mana of Ngāpuhi as a strategic partner rather than a contracted partner.

Despite this challenge, NISS is using the Enabling Communities prototype to establish the foundations for devolution of power, resources and the transfer of some services. This needs to be done in a way that works for the rohe and for the iwi.

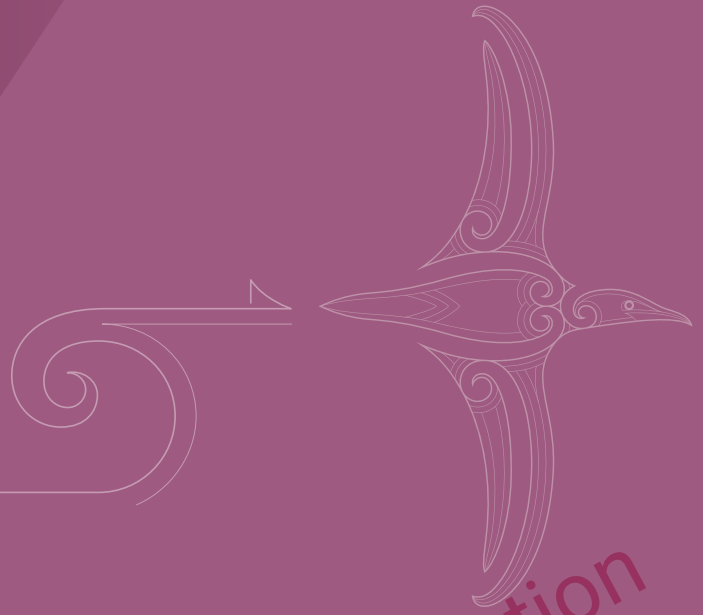
This is in recognition that each region faces unique challenges and has a unique landscape of service provision. The approach that Oranga Tamariki has taken to funding and contracting has, to date, resulted in providers competing with one another rather than collaborating.

Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira remains committed to working collectively in the rohe to support whānau wellbeing

In last year's report, we outlined how Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira views the strategic partnership as a tool to change the way the public sector works and that it is taking a leadership role within the rohe to support tamariki, rangatahi and whānau.

For this report, we similarly heard how Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira is pressing ahead with its mission to support whānau wellbeing despite the wider system of government agencies often failing to meet the needs of whānau. Leaders told us that the Oranga Tamariki system must focus on both preventing the need for statutory intervention as well as improving the quality of its intervention – but that there is a systemic failure among individual government agencies to understand the integrated, holistic nature of society's problems and solutions. Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira must move past this and focus on progressing its Mauri Ora holistic wellbeing approach in the rohe. This is what whānau need, and this is what's important.

We also heard how, as a part of this, there is a need for providers to work collectively in the rohe so that whānau have access to a range of services and supports to meet their needs. Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira is intentional about providing a broader set of supports. This is a view that is similarly echoed across the motu.



The impact of Oranga Tamariki changes to funding and contracts

Embargoed until official publication

Tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau rely on access to a range of services funded and delivered by government agencies, organisations and social service providers in the oranga tamariki system.

These services include parenting, counselling, therapeutic, health and education services, programmes to address family violence and transitional support to help rangatahi move towards independence. In the oranga tamariki system, Oranga Tamariki has primary responsibility for funding these services. Other government agencies such as the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development also have responsibilities.

Social service providers play a major part in how Oranga Tamariki delivers on its role, statutory functions and duties. It is important that providers deliver services and supports that address the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau and provide value for money.

In 2024/25, Oranga Tamariki contracted 509 social service providers with spending totalling about \$543 million.¹³⁵

For providers to consistently deliver services that meet the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau, they need clear and timely communication from their funding provider and to be involved in changes so they can manage transitions without disruption. Poorly managed changes can impact access to and the provision of services.

In 2024, Oranga Tamariki made contract and funding decisions that created uncertainty, reduced funding, put strain on its relationships and caused disruption across the social services sector. This led to an inquiry by the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) that found that the changes had been made without sufficient consideration of the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau and that significant improvements were needed.

Two-thirds of tamariki and rangatahi accessing services in the system are Māori. Almost one-third of Oranga Tamariki contracted funding is for iwi and Māori social service providers. This means changes to funding and contracting arrangements have a substantial impact on Māori accessing the services they need. The impacts are both immediate and longer term.

“The current funding environment is challenging, that kind of slash and burn approach, which is what we’re currently operating in. It instils fear and worry in the workforce, losing jobs and [impacting on] our own families. We are working with families, [seeing] loss and reduction of employment and the impact on our staff and that something is happening to us.”

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION LEADER

“When that funding changed, it caused us mayhem.” ORANGA TAMARIKI LEADER

¹³⁵ Oranga Tamariki confirmed the number of providers and total spend in March 2026.

Challenges with funding and contracting are longstanding

There are longstanding challenges with the funding of services and supports for tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau in the oranga tamariki system. Some services have been underfunded, leading to access issues, long waitlists and agencies being unable to respond early to needs. Government agencies have not prioritised the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau in the oranga tamariki system. These challenges have been covered in our *Experiences of Care in Aotearoa* reports and our *2023/24 Outcomes for Māori* report.¹³⁶

“Funding available to Oranga Tamariki or other agencies does not follow the child, and social workers are still having to spend time negotiating for the services and support that tamariki need.”¹³⁷

“... funding stand-offs between agencies result in tamariki and rangatahi in the care of the State missing out.”¹³⁸

Oranga Tamariki was aware of problems with its procurement and contract management practices before the 2024/25 contracting round. Both Oranga Tamariki kaimahi and social service providers had raised concerns over several years, with Oranga Tamariki identifying that improvements were needed following its 2022/23 contracting round.

Oranga Tamariki was under pressure to reduce funding

Oranga Tamariki entered 2024 facing several financial pressures and identified that its 2023/24 spending was likely to go over budget.

In November 2023, the Minister for Children directed Oranga Tamariki to refocus its spending on its core statutory functions and activities, particularly tamariki and rangatahi in care. This reduced its focus on prevention and early intervention and may mean Oranga Tamariki did not meet some of its broader responsibilities under the Oranga Tamariki Act.

At the same time, the Government required all government agencies to reduce budgets. Oranga Tamariki needed to deliver savings of 6.5 percent across its overall budget for 2024/25. During this time, like other government agencies, Oranga Tamariki restructured to reduce staff numbers as a way of creating savings.

In response to budget pressures, Oranga Tamariki also made decisions to reduce spending on contracted services for tamariki, rangatahi, whānau and caregivers within a highly compressed timeframe. It also sought to recover funding for services that had not yet been delivered by social service providers.

We understand that Oranga Tamariki was the only government agency that reduced frontline contracts for social services being delivered to tamariki, rangatahi and whānau at this time.

¹³⁶ See footnote 1.

¹³⁷ See (p. 6) of reference at footnote 44.

¹³⁸ See (p. 8) of reference at footnote 44.

The Auditor-General found Oranga Tamariki needed to make significant and urgent improvements to its management of funding and contracts

The OAG report on the 2024/25 funding round¹³⁹ makes recommendations focused on improving planning, governance, decision making, engagement with providers and overall contract management.

The OAG found:

- no evidence that Oranga Tamariki understood how its decisions would affect tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau, which was unacceptable given its core role
- Oranga Tamariki was poorly prepared for the 2024/25 contracting round, lacked a coherent strategy and did not consistently follow good procurement practice
- the views of regional kaimahi on changes to services and contracts were not reflected in top-down decisions by national office

- most contracts were not awarded through a transparent and competitive process
- providers were not consistently paid promptly
- Oranga Tamariki had not taken account of its commitments to Tiriti o Waitangi partners in managing contracts.

“We found that Oranga Tamariki was poorly prepared to carry out the 2024/25 contracting round. It did not have a strategic approach to procurement and did not plan the contracting round well. Oranga Tamariki did not provide adequate advance warning about reconciliation, which was a change in process, and service providers were taken by surprise. Contracting decision-making was left until late in the process, poorly documented, and not adequately informed by evidence of how decisions would affect children and their families”.¹⁴⁰

Oranga Tamariki contract management was in disarray

In our regional engagements, we heard about the far-reaching and range of impacts of Oranga Tamariki decisions during the 2024/25 contracting round. Most of what we heard was from social service providers and Oranga Tamariki kaimahi about their experiences of the changes. What we heard closely echoes the findings of the OAG report.

Community organisations described late, unclear and inconsistent decision making, limited engagement and ongoing uncertainty about their contracts. One community

organisation told us its funding was reduced by 70 percent and the explanation for this from Oranga Tamariki was that it was for “a budgetary reason”.

“The contracting process for the ‘new contracts’ did not adhere to any previously published funding policies. This lack of transparency is deeply concerning. During the contracting negotiations, Oranga Tamariki failed to disclose until the last minute that they were not following any established policies.”

MĀORI SOCIAL SERVICE LEADER

¹³⁹ Controller and Auditor-General. (2025). *Oranga Tamariki: Inquiry into procurement and contract management*. oag.parliament.nz/2025/oranga-tamariki/docs/oranga-tamariki.pdf

¹⁴⁰ Controller and Auditor-General. (2025). *Summary – Oranga Tamariki: Inquiry into procurement and contract management*. oag.parliament.nz/2025/oranga-tamariki/docs/summary.pdf

Funding decisions and poor communication undermined relationships, trust and workforce stability

Social service providers told us that contract and funding uncertainty has made workforce planning difficult, contributed to organisational instability and undermined trust in commissioning relationships.

“The driver from Oranga Tamariki is they are trying to figure out what we haven’t delivered so they can claw back funding. However, there’s been no discussion on how we can do it better. It’s about trying to find fault and it’s a deficit model. It just creates a distrust [with Oranga Tamariki].” NGO LEADER

Several social service providers noted that the way funding decisions were made reduced confidence in Oranga Tamariki as a long-term partner and affected the quality of relationships with communities.

“It’s really tricky when we, as an organisation, are pushing our values and our partner [Oranga Tamariki] is not working with the same values. Our kaimahi are asking how can we continue to work with Oranga Tamariki when they’re not upholding the values. We can’t afford to not have a relationship with Oranga Tamariki, but they’re not working in good faith.”

NGO LEADER

We also heard from Oranga Tamariki kaimahi in the Bay of Plenty and Wellington how funding cuts have damaged relationships

“Valued services locally that have been working for us for years were taken by surprise, but those decisions are made nationally and it’s the local [Oranga Tamariki kaimahi] who have to deal with the fallback. I was down in [region] last week because a provider said they don’t trust us.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI NATIONAL OFFICE LEADER

“Our community partners are losing faith in us, and the relationship with them is getting strained.” ORANGA TAMARIKI SITE LEADER

We heard that funding clawbacks and tighter controls have removed flexibility for providers to deliver services in ways that can address the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and whānau they are working with.

“We went through a hardline reconciliation process with the contracts last year whereas we used to be more flexible [in the past]. If funding was underutilised in one contract, [organisations] would use it in a different way. The money was being spent in the right places, it’s just the contracts didn’t match.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI NATIONAL OFFICE LEADER

In Greater Wellington, we heard from two iwi and Māori providers about the competitive environment that has been created following cuts. They told us about a fragmented community provider landscape, particularly post-COVID-19, where providers are having to compete against one another for funding.

The 2024/25 reporting year was the first time in six years that Oranga Tamariki had reduced its funding for iwi and Māori providers. Before this, funding for iwi and Māori providers had been steadily increasing year on year.

We heard that the competitive nature of government contracting means that a provider may try to remain involved in providing services identified, in things like FGCs plans, even when another provider is a better fit.

“There are great partnerships, but as soon as money is on the table, everyone is going to compete, it’s unhealthy.”

MĀORI SOCIAL SERVICE LEADER

We also heard about the impact of this on tamariki and rangatahi.

“If a rangatahi says I don’t want to be with you, I want be with [another service], we say that’s okay, that’s a good idea and help them get there, but now maybe it’s a bit more competitive cos it’s all about the funding.”

MĀORI SOCIAL SERVICE LEADER

Funding cuts worsened service availability and increased waitlists for tamariki and rangatahi

Oranga Tamariki cuts to funding and contracts worsened the already limited availability of services. We were told about the reduced availability of mentors, disability services, youth justice intervention programmes, and drug and alcohol counselling. We also heard that increased demand on remaining services contributed to longer waitlists and less ability to respond early to needs.

“Functional Family Therapy, [Triple P parenting programme] and Kia Puāwai now have a 12-week wait list and it’s likely to increase. In the email, it said it’s because [Oranga Tamariki] cut our contracts. We lean on [providers] and they have done a fabulous job for whānau and working with kids with high and complex needs.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

“Families are affected. Mum was off meth and she didn’t have support. We were going to work with her. Then the plug was pulled.”

NGO LEADER

In the Bay of Plenty, rangatahi and their whānau, Oranga Tamariki kaimahi, NZ Police kaimahi and community agencies spoke with us about the positive impact of mentors. However, cuts to funding and contracts have reduced the capacity and availability of mentors.

One Oranga Tamariki site leader told us that, while Gateway assessments can be done, Gateway plans cannot be fulfilled by services in the community because of reduced funding.

“In the past, Gateway used to be good, and there was lots of money [attached to it] before. Now there is nothing, no funding attached to it. [Gateway] has got to a point of becoming a bottleneck. Even if we do an assessment, we don’t get the money, so we don’t do any assessment here.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI SITE LEADER

Community providers and Oranga Tamariki kaimahi told us the impacts of funding cuts and constrained contracts on their ability to support tamariki, rangatahi and whānau and gaps in relevant service provision are ongoing.

“All the programmes got dropped in [region]. No explanations or anything just dropped, and nothing replaced them. There is this awkward silence for someone to pick up the slack ... the social workers start asking is there anything else you can do because their funding [for tamariki or rangatahi] has gone.” NGO KAIMAHI

Oranga Tamariki kaimahi told us they are making referrals and “hoping for the best”.

“The effects of the loss of funding are that contracts and supports that once were there aren't there now ... I can't just go find someone to do something that is needed ... you have to go outside the box for them because services are limited.” ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

“Cutting contracts has a huge impact and there just aren't the services around any more.” ORANGA TAMARIKI KAIMAHI

Despite funding cuts, some providers were going above and beyond – and there was an expectation that they accept referrals

Most of the community organisations we spoke with told us that, even though their funding has been reduced and demand for their service has increased, there continues to be an expectation from Oranga Tamariki kaimahi that services are delivered.

“Funding has been cut across programmes and personnel have been cut in [Oranga Tamariki] but they still expect our kaimahi to still pick up the referrals to our services.” IWI SOCIAL SERVICE LEADER

“There have been a couple of times like – ‘can you just deliver it?’” NGO LEADER

Oranga Tamariki kaimahi and leadership in the Bay of Plenty and Te Tai Tokerau recognise the burden they are placing on community organisations by expecting them to provide services despite a loss of funding.

“Te Kooti Rangatahi [Māori Youth Court] is good but what we find it's the difficulties in contracts that's the issue and their trust in us is dwindling, yet we are asking for more and more [from the community] with less [funding].” ORANGA TAMARIKI REGIONAL LEADER

“A lot of our community agencies are doing it on goodwill [keeping services running, despite funding cuts] as they've got good relationships with the sites, but they can't do that forever.” ORANGA TAMARIKI SITE LEADER

Social service providers told us they are doing their best to minimise the impact on tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau, but it can mean they are not getting enough support to meet their needs.

“Budgets only allowed for a certain number of counselling sessions or equine therapy sessions or family access sessions.”

NGO LEADER

Some social service providers told us that, despite funding pressures, they remain focused on meeting the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and whānau and rely on strong community connections and kaupapa-based practice to offer support where possible. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi agreed.

“We have always made a commitment to whānau to look after them regardless of a drop in funding.” IWI SOCIAL SERVICE KAIMAHI

“Yeah, the cuts have had an impact. We have some services that often will be helping from the heart because there is not enough funding for the service. [The service] will continue with a young person they were helping when it was funded.”

ORANGA TAMARIKI SOCIAL WORKER

Some social service providers told us they were getting “creative” to continue to meet needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. Providers also told us that continuing to absorb cost pressure is not sustainable over the longer term.

“[Oranga Tamariki] know we have wiggle room, they know that, and at some point, that will be a catastrophe.” NGO LEADER

“We definitely make sure a young person doesn't miss out and sometimes it's at our own expense.” NGO LEADER

We continued to hear that many organisations are going above and beyond what they are contracted for to meet tamariki, rangatahi and whānau needs.

“No government contract allows you to do what you need to do with a young person. No. Every organisation you'll talk to, it's going to be doing more than what the government provides in order to provide a quality service.” NGO LEADER

Funding cuts caused unintended outcomes for rangatahi in youth justice and may be pushing costs downstream

We heard about how cuts to funding for prevention services contributed to additional – and potentially avoidable – costs when reoffending occurred. We heard that some rangatahi were left in breach of their youth justice orders because services lost funding.

In Te Tai Tokerau, we heard from a whānau member that, when a court-ordered supported bail programme lost its funding, their rangatahi was left without support.

“ [Rangatahi] was in a facility, and when released, he was referred to [supported bail service]. Then just one day, they didn’t show up. They just bailed [rangatahi] cos they didn’t get funding for the next round even though the judge had ordered him to be on the supported bail programme. So there were no more options, it was on me to keep him occupied. Then he reoffends again, then you get all this wraparound after he offends.” WHĀNAU MEMBER

One kaimahi from a Māori social service said they do not have enough funding to support youth justice intervention programmes, which limits the services they can offer to rangatahi who have offended.

“ Funding and resourcing [are barriers to youth justice programmes] because a lot of that [funding] stops our kaimahi being able to do more stuff for our rangatahi because of [lack of] funding. If there was better funding, there would be better opportunities. Doors would open up for [youth justice] boys.” MĀORI SOCIAL SERVICE KAIMAHI

Lost opportunities for prevention and transition support may have a long-term impact on rangatahi

We heard about lost opportunities at both ends of the system – for prevention and for transition to adulthood. As we highlighted in our 2023 *Returning Home from Care* report,¹⁴¹ returning home is a high-risk time and families need to be well supported.

“ [Community organisations] can’t take on the work now. We’ve come so far and we might return children home where there is still risk and they might come back into care [because there is no longer any support for whānau].” ORANGA TAMARIKI SITE LEADER

One whānau member told us that their child was unexpectedly returned to their care due to funding cuts.

Oranga Tamariki site leaders told us that much of their work relies on community relationships and community-based contracts. They note that some whānau prefer to work with community agencies because they lack trust in government services.

Oranga Tamariki site leaders explained that community-led support can prevent tamariki and rangatahi from entering care and help address issues earlier. They also raised concerns about who will be able to continue this work in the context of funding cuts.

¹⁴¹ Aroturuki Tamariki. (2023). *Returning home from care: An in-depth look at the experiences and practices surrounding tamariki and rangatahi cared for at home while in state custody*. aroturuki.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Returning-Home-From-Care-ACCESSIBLE-August2023.pdf

Oranga Tamariki started to address the funding and contracting situation in 2025

In January 2025, the Minister for Children told Oranga Tamariki to pause its review of social service contracts, and in April 2025, Cabinet agreed to a range of changes to its contracts in the social services sector.¹⁴² These changes included Oranga Tamariki working with the Social Investment Agency (SIA) with a view to moving funding and some services to SIA.

The true extent of loss after the Oranga Tamariki funding cuts is difficult to ascertain

Going into 2024/25, the plan for Oranga Tamariki was to reduce funding for services and supports delivered by contracted social service providers. Its mismanagement of the process meant funding reductions were much less than initially envisioned and were mainly for early intervention and prevention services.

The impacts cannot just be thought of in terms of funding and contracts. The changes in 2024/25 disrupted access to services for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. They also resulted in loss of expertise and resource that is likely to have long-term impacts on the social service sector.

Oranga Tamariki acknowledged deficiencies and reversed some decisions

In early 2025, Oranga Tamariki acknowledged the deficiencies in the 2024/25 contracting round and the lack of communication and engagement. Apologies were made to social sector providers. Oranga Tamariki signalled changes to come and a way forward. As part of this, Oranga Tamariki reversed some decisions about contracts that were to end in June 2025 and extended all existing contracts until 31 December 2025.

Oranga Tamariki told us that almost 200 social service providers had services discontinued over three years, some of which were due to finish. Of these providers, approximately 80 no longer have contracts with Oranga Tamariki.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Oranga Tamariki. (2026, April 13). *External social services and contracts funding*. orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/information-releases/cabinet-papers/fund-request-for-extended-social-services-and-contracts

¹⁴³ These figures are approximate as there are limitations to the data. For example, providers may have changed legal entity status during the period and be counted twice.

Oranga Tamariki started to make changes in response to the OAG

At the end of the 2024/25 reporting year, we were hearing about changes Oranga Tamariki was planning to respond to the OAG report and regain trust from social service providers.

Oranga Tamariki began to address issues as part of a rolling programme of improvements to its funding and contracting processes. In brief, the changes were as follows (noting that they were made after the 2024/25 reporting year).

In mid to late 2025, Oranga Tamariki:

- gave social service providers certainty about the future of their contracts, with most continuing with contracted delivery until March 2027
- held two series of regional engagement hui with social service providers, started providing regular communications and opportunities for providers to give feedback and established feedback loops so providers could see how their feedback was incorporated
- made changes to process payments and contract extensions and variations faster.

A new Commissioning and Investment Plan outlines future funding and contracting

During 2025, Oranga Tamariki, alongside the SIA, developed a new Commissioning and Investment Plan¹⁴⁴ to ensure that “decisions are transparent and consider the impacts on children and the [social service] sector”. The plan responds to the OAG report and other recommendations made by external reviews.

The plan emphasises the need for decisions to be based on evidence and focused on service delivery outcomes. It outlines five priority cohorts for investment as:

- youth justice
- care population
- family group conferences
- transitioning from custody to adulthood
- targeted early risk (early support and prevention), particularly tamariki and rangatahi who have had interactions with Oranga Tamariki:
 - as an infant aged under 1
 - with multiple investigations and reports of concern
 - with high and complex needs.

Oranga Tamariki has begun regional needs assessment

Regional needs assessment, planned for the first half of 2026, aims to summarise what tamariki, rangatahi and whānau in a region most need, combining key data with local insights.

Oranga Tamariki intends to use data, analytics and regional insights to understand who needs what, who currently gets what and where the gaps and overlaps are. It also intends to identify ineffective programmes to be discontinued.

We anticipate the regional needs assessment will consider and respond to the OAG’s finding about the need to take account of the likely impact on tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau.

¹⁴⁴ Oranga Tamariki. (2026, April 10). *Our approach to commissioning services*. orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/information-releases/cabinet-papers/new-approach-to-commissioning-service-for-children-and-young-people

Oranga Tamariki intends to have new contracts in place by early 2027

Over 2026, Oranga Tamariki will report to the Minister for Children about:

- the work with SIA for early support and prevention programmes
- regional needs assessments
- services and programmes to be continued, repurposed or decommissioned
- services and funding proposed to move to the SIA or other agencies.

Oranga Tamariki told us it intends to have changes in place for the contracting round that will begin on 1 July 2027. At that time, it will be clearer whether Oranga Tamariki still intends to reduce its overall funding for social services as well as its intentions for the number of providers or contracts.

It is not yet clear whether funding for tamariki and rangatahi will be reduced

During 2026 and 2027 and beyond, we anticipate that there will be changes for social service providers and to the programmes they deliver. We will continue to monitor whether and how any funding is reduced. Our focus will be on monitoring the impact on tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau and whether agencies with funding and contracting roles, current or new, are meeting their responsibilities in the oranga tamariki system.

Stability for tamariki and rangatahi and their whānau during this time is critical – and any changes require a focus on their needs. We will watch whether future arrangements address this and support a strong social services sector.

Embargoed until official publication



Data practices

Data practices prevent the full extent of disparities being known and effectiveness being measured

Poor and disjointed data practices limit understanding of disparities for Māori in the oranga tamariki system.

Agencies responsible for delivering services and supports in the oranga tamariki system need good data at a population level, including about ethnicity and disparities. Without this, they have limited ability to assess, on an ongoing basis, whether services and supports meet the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau. Data and analysis are needed for agencies to also understand where and what adjustments to make and to track impacts.

The absence of data and analysis means agencies cannot assess whether and to what extent services and supports are making

a difference to outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.

It also makes it difficult to assess whether Oranga Tamariki is meeting its duties relating to prevention and early intervention or whether the benefits of its partnerships with iwi and Māori providers are being realised in practice.

Disparities for Māori in the oranga tamariki system are compounded by over-representation. Clear data on this can make visible structural issues such as bias, discrimination, racism and historical patterns and ways they can be addressed.

It may provide insights into why Māori escalate through the oranga tamariki system more than non-Māori and how to address some of their poorer outcomes.

NZ Police collection and recording of ethnicity data does not meet Stats NZ guidelines

NZ Police records one ethnicity for each individual, despite guidance from Stats NZ that individuals should be able to identify with multiple ethnicities. In contrast, Oranga Tamariki records multiple ethnicities and follows the Stats NZ ethnicity classifications and standards.¹⁴⁵

There are also many tamariki and rangatahi with unknown ethnicity in NZ Police data. We note this throughout our report where ethnicity is unknown for 10 percent or more of a group. For example, NZ Police data shows that ethnicity was only recorded for 68 percent of tamariki and rangatahi proceeded against by NZ Police in 2024/25.

Not being able to report on a significant proportion of tamariki and rangatahi subject to police proceedings makes it difficult to see the full picture of disparities and to understand how it is changing over time.

Oranga Tamariki is producing less analysis of disparities

In the past, using data that was available, Oranga Tamariki produced several publicly available reports and factsheets about over-representation and disparities for tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the oranga tamariki system.¹⁴⁶ This work helped with understanding the system and disparities within it. More recently, Oranga Tamariki has completed less in-depth analysis and produced less information and fewer insights on disparities for Māori.

For example, following the repeal of section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act in April 2025, Oranga Tamariki discontinued annual reports on measures of disparity and disproportionality for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.¹⁴⁷ This gap is not fully addressed by the information it produces about over-representation and disproportionality for Māori in its *Strategic intentions 2024/25 – 2029/30*¹⁴⁸ or in its annual reports.

It is difficult to see how Oranga Tamariki can identify and respond to the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau in the oranga tamariki system without regular in-depth analysis about disparities.

¹⁴⁵ Information about NZ Police's approach to ethnicity data collection can be found in *Ethnicity data collection by justice sector agencies: Prepared for Te Rau o te Tika – the Justice System Kaupapa Inquiry (WAI 3060) – June 2024*.

¹⁴⁶ For example, see ot.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Report-on-disparities-and-disproportionality-experienced-by-tamariki-Maori/A3-disparities-and-disproportionality-measurement-2023.pdf

¹⁴⁷ orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/performance-and-monitoring/section-7aa/section-7aa-report

¹⁴⁸ Oranga Tamariki. (2024). *Strategic intentions 2024/25–2029/30*. orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Corporate-reports/Strategic-intentions/Strategic-Intentions-2024-2029.pdf

Current data practices prevent a full view of system effectiveness

Some data practices by NZ Police and Oranga Tamariki make it hard to see what is making a difference for tamariki and rangatahi Māori, and what the gaps are.

Data on proceedings does not show how NZ Police responses impact on reoffending

The way NZ Police records which response (method of proceeding) was used for tamariki and rangatahi who come to its attention for offending makes it difficult to see how tamariki and rangatahi progress through the youth justice system. This means NZ Police cannot easily track whether its interventions are reducing reoffending.

For example, in the last quarter of 2024/25, NZ Police started combining four distinct youth justice responses into one reporting line,¹⁴⁹ making it impossible to tell, at a system level, which of the four responses have been used.

NZ Police also only records the initial method of proceeding. Its system-level data does not track subsequent, more intensive, responses to tamariki and rangatahi offending.¹⁵⁰

It is critical for NZ Police to address gaps in its data practices so it can understand whether its responses are reducing harm and whether its responses are contributing to over-representation of Māori involved in youth justice.

Data from Oranga Tamariki does not show whether FGCs result in agreed plans or provision of services and supports

Data from Oranga Tamariki does not show how many FGCs result in agreed plans. It also does not show whether services that would help tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau were offered or provided.

At a system level, it is therefore not clear whether tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau are getting access to the services and supports they need.

Lack of data from Oranga Tamariki on referrals to services following a report of concern means effectiveness cannot be assessed

Oranga Tamariki has again been unable to provide reliable data on how many tamariki and rangatahi are referred to community services after a decision to take no further action has been made about a report of concern. The lack of oversight by Oranga Tamariki of these referrals is a significant issue – one we have been pointing to since 2024.

Oranga Tamariki does not know whether support was provided as a result of the referral or whether it addressed the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau.

¹⁴⁹ Warnings/cautions, alternative actions, FGCs and Te Pae Oranga Rangatahi were grouped together under one proceeding type – youth justice intervention.

¹⁵⁰ For example, if a rangatahi is referred to Oranga Tamariki to attend a pre-charge youth justice FGC but NZ Police later decides to charge the rangatahi in relation to the offending, only the referral to FGC is recorded in the method of proceeding data.

It also does not know if a community referral prevented further reports of concern being made or if the community organisation it was referred to was sufficiently concerned about the safety of tamariki that it made a further report of concern to Oranga Tamariki.

With community organisations playing an increasingly vital role in triaging and addressing risks at the earliest possible stage, this gap is particularly important.

We hear from whānau that they have good experiences with community organisations, particularly where support is relationship-based, culturally grounded and focused on strengthening whānau capability.

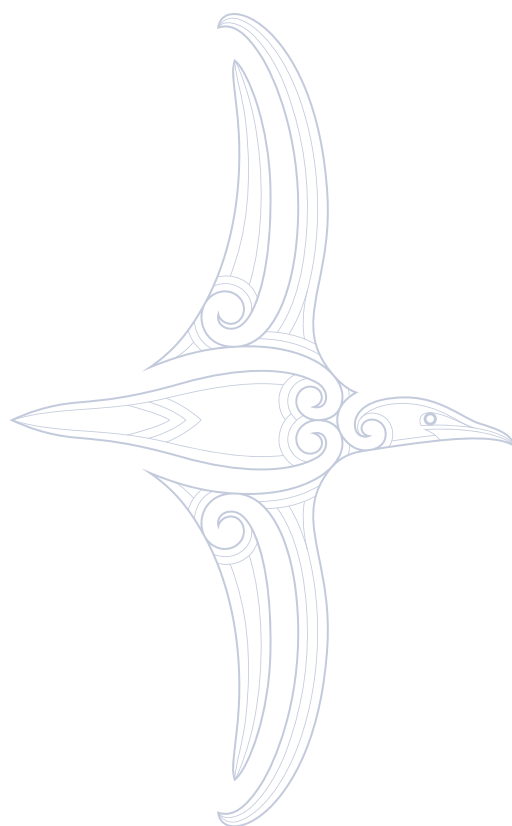
We understand that in November 2025 Oranga Tamariki started to reinforce the importance of social workers recording referral to services as an outcome of an assessment following a report of concern. It may take some time for this change to be embedded in practice, but we are hopeful that better data will be available in the future as a result of this change.

Better data about referrals, action taken as a result and the rate of renotification would help show the difference being made by these organisations and services, including if they are preventing deeper involvement in the system. Given Māori are already more likely to have deeper involvement in the system, data and information that can identify what works for them is crucial.

Data gaps are a lost opportunity

The impact of poor data practices is a lack of visibility of how both statutory and non-statutory services can make a difference to the outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau.

Improved data would inform how the oranga tamariki system could better meet the needs of tamariki and rangatahi Māori and their whānau, prevent escalation in the system and support them to achieve their future aspirations.



Future aspirations

What tamariki and rangatahi Māori say about their future aspirations

We asked tamariki and rangatahi Māori who are or have been involved in the oranga tamariki system what they think about their future aspirations.

Regardless of how tamariki or rangatahi Māori were involved in the oranga tamariki system, almost all¹⁵¹ of the tamariki and rangatahi Māori who talked about their future aspirations in our 2024/25 regional engagements were positive about their future.

“

I want to be the first kid in my family to graduate. I'm Year 11 but got put up to Year 12, which I'm proud of. If I finish school next year, I'll be the first to graduate. I want to get [university entrance] and save for a car. I'm enrolled in school and a mentor at course. I'm slowly getting my licence. My long-term plan is to be a lawyer and own a car. In the meantime, I want to finish school, save money and get [university entrance] to study a Bachelor of Laws.”

“

I want to be a flight attendant so I can travel the world.”

“

[I want to be] someone who can make a difference in the world and perhaps have a role in any country and any place – just walk in and have an opinion, it matters.”

¹⁵¹ In our 2024/25 regional engagements, we heard from 130 tamariki and rangatahi Māori. Of those, we heard from 75 about their future aspirations. Of the 75 tamariki and rangatahi Māori, very few were not positive about their futures, and this number met our threshold to be suppressed (see our website for our methodology). In our regional engagements, we do not specifically ask all tamariki and rangatahi about their future aspirations. In engagements where tamariki and rangatahi are asked for, or offer, information about their future aspirations, it is recorded as part of our monitoring approach.

66

"I want to do bone carving next."

66

"I want to be a fashion designer. I want to go to get a degree in fashion. When I get older, I am going to go to university and study business. I can slowly and steadily build up my business once I have become a fashion designer."

66

"I want to go out a lot to the gym. I wanna travel, go to the South Island for a trip. I have only ever been to Auckland."

66

"[I want] to get money. Not to be homeless."

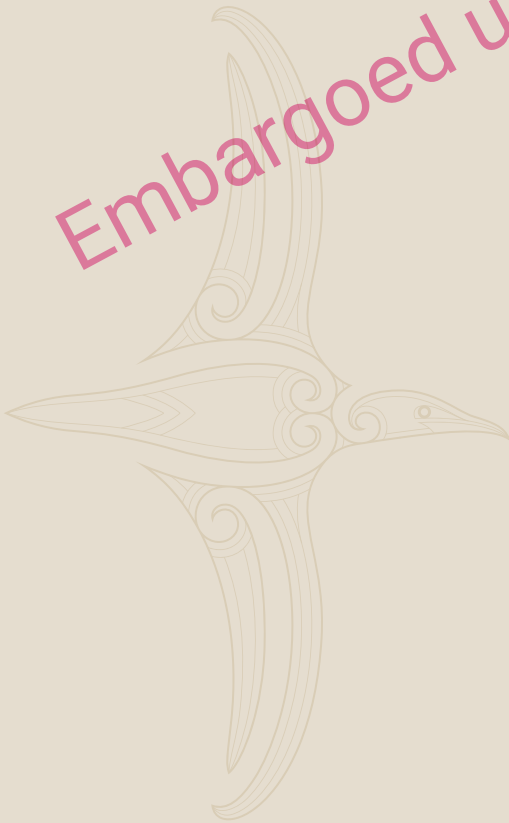
66

"I plan to do something like a barista course."

66

"I want to be a pilot. I love seeing different countries and speaking new languages. I'm learning on [language learning app]."

Embargoed until official publication



Glossary

Care or custody	In relation to tamariki and rangatahi, being subject to an order for custody or sole guardianship or to a care agreement, in favour of the chief executive of Oranga Tamariki, an iwi social service, a cultural social service or the director of a child and family support service. This includes being in youth justice custody.
Caregivers	People who provide day-to-day care to tamariki and rangatahi in care or custody. Caregivers can be whānau or non-whānau. They provide a range of care options, including respite, short-term or permanent care. Caregivers are sometimes referred to as foster parents or carers.
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)/Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (ICAMHS)	CAMHS and ICAMHS provide specialist mental health services for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau.
Community organisations	Iwi and Māori organisations, care partners and organisations providing services to the community.
Core assessment	An assessment of tamariki and rangatahi safety and wellbeing within their whānau. A core assessment follows an initial assessment to identify specific needs, strengths and risks and determines what further action is required.
CYRAS	Oranga Tamariki administrative database. CYRAS stands for Care and Protection, Youth Justice, Residential and Adoption Services System.
Enabling Communities	An Oranga Tamariki initiative to better support tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau. Oranga Tamariki is working with iwi, Māori and communities to develop prototypes to shift decision making and resources to communities.
Family group conference (FGC)	A legislated process under the Oranga Tamariki Act. Its purpose is to support and enable informed whānau or family-led decision making following a report of concern or youth offending or in relation to other concerns raised by government agencies.
GP	General practitioner.
Hapori	Community. In this report, we also refer to the Hapori initiative in Porirua, delivered in partnership by Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira, Oranga Tamariki and community providers.

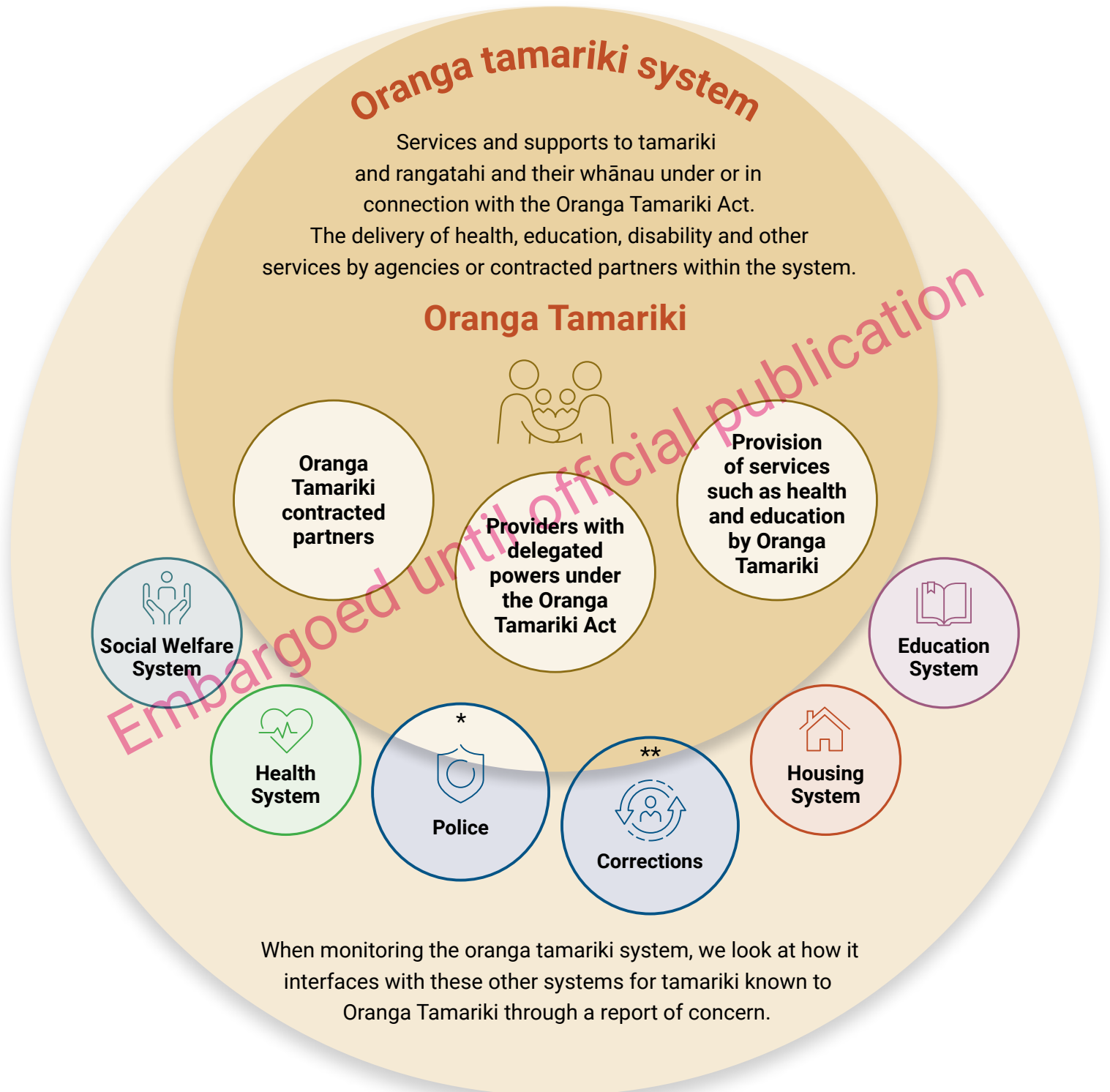
Hapū	Subtribe.
Hui ā-whānau	A whānau meeting facilitated using Māori methods of engagement and protocols. Hui ā-whānau can be facilitated by whānau or Oranga Tamariki kaimahi.
Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI)	A large research database, maintained by Stats NZ that holds de-identified data about people and households in Aotearoa. Results from IDI analysis are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the IDI stats.govt.nz/integrated-data
Intervention	Services and supports designed to strengthen whānau in order to keep tamariki and rangatahi safe and in the community. Intervention can respond to care and protection concerns and/or youth offending. See also 'youth justice intervention'.
Iwi	Tribe.
Kai	Food.
Kaimahi	Staff.
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Face to face.
Kaupapa Māori	An approach underpinned by Māori values.
Kōrero	Conversation or discussion.
Mana	Authority, control, power, influence, status.
Marae	The land and buildings associated with a marae ātea (an area where formal greetings and discussions take place).
Mātua atawhai	Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services uses mātua atawhai to refer to the caregivers who support its Mahuru youth remand programme.
Mauri	Life force.
Motu	Country.
National Care Standards Action Plan	A plan developed by Oranga Tamariki in March 2025 to focus on areas where it wants to lift its performance against the NCS Regulations. A summary of what is included in this plan can be found in Appendix B of our <i>2024/25 Experiences of Care in Aotearoa</i> report.
National Care Standards Regulations (NCS Regulations)	The Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018, which came into effect on 1 July 2019, set out the standard of care tamariki and rangatahi can expect to receive when they are in the care or custody of one of the agencies.

NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement.
NGO	Non-government organisation.
NISS	Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services.
NZQCF	New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework.
OAG	Office of the Auditor-General.
Oversight Act	Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022.
Police proceeding	A decision made by NZ Police in relation to offending behaviour. Police proceedings can have a wide range of outcomes, including no further action, a warning, a referral to specific services, prosecution and custody admission.
Pou	The use of pou in this report is a metaphoric post or pillar that strongly supports a cause.
Rangatahi	A young person or young people aged 14 or older.
Rangatahi Māori	Young people of Māori descent aged 14 or older.
Report of concern	Contact with Oranga Tamariki to raise a concern about the safety and/or wellbeing of a child. Anyone can make a report of concern about a child.
Residence/secure residence	A locked facility that can be either for care and protection or youth justice and must adhere to the Oranga Tamariki (Residential Care) Regulations 1996. Residences are established by the chief executive of Oranga Tamariki (with the approval of the Minister for Children) under section 364 of the Oranga Tamariki Act.
Strategic partnership	A formal partnership between Oranga Tamariki and an iwi or Māori organisation.
Taitamariki	Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services uses taitamariki to refer to rangatahi who attend its Mahuru youth remand programme.
Tamariki	Children aged under 14.
Tamariki Māori	Children of Māori descent aged under 14.
Tāne	Man, men.
Taonga	Treasures.
Te ao Māori	The Māori worldview.
Tauīwi	People who do not identify as Māori.

Tikanga	Correct procedures, practices, protocols. The customary system of values.
Transition Support Services	A range of services provided by Oranga Tamariki to meet its transition to adulthood obligations by supporting rangatahi to prepare for leaving care or custody. Oranga Tamariki contracts transition workers through community providers to deliver parts of the service.
Wahine/Wāhine	Woman, women.
Whakapapa	Genealogy that connects a person to their identity and tūrangawaewae/place of belonging. In the context of this report, we also refer to the Oranga Tamariki Act definition: whakapapa, in relation to a person, means the multi-generational kinship relationships that help to describe who the person is in terms of their mātua (parents), and tūpuna (ancestors), from whom they descend.
Whānau	People who are biologically linked or share whakapapa. For Aroturuki Tamariki monitoring purposes, whānau includes parents, whānau members living with tamariki at the point they have come into care (this does not include whānau caregivers) or whānau who are close to and/or involved with tamariki on a day-to-day basis (this does not include whānau caregivers) and who have been involved in decision making about their care.
Whenua	Land, country.
Youth justice intervention	Services and supports to prevent further offending for tamariki and rangatahi who are not in custody (for example, a youth justice FGC).

Appendix One: The oranga tamariki system

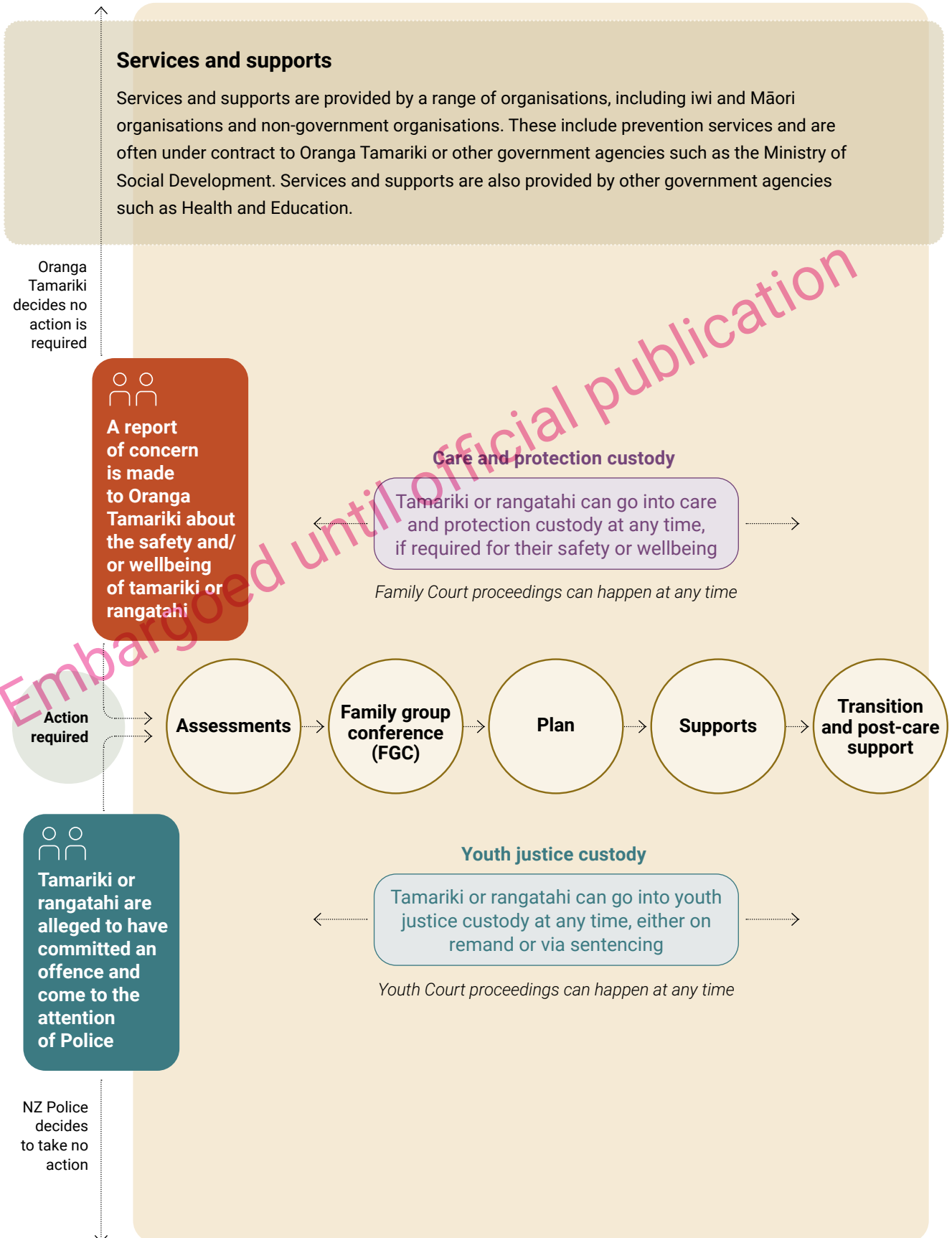
Aroturuki Tamariki monitors the oranga tamariki system



* We monitor NZ Police to the extent NZ Police operate under the Oranga Tamariki Act.

** We monitor Corrections to the extent that a young person is remanded to detention in a prison under the Oranga Tamariki Act and obligations to provide advice and support for those young people detained on remand in prison or serving a sentence in prison for more than three months prior to turning 18.

How tamariki and rangatahi enter and move through the oranga tamariki system



Appendix Two: Using data from the IDI and What About Me? survey

The IDI

The IDI is a large research database that holds de-identified data about people and households. This includes data that government agencies and NGOs use to manage the services they provide to the public (administrative data) and data from surveys run by Stats NZ.

We used IDI data because:

- it links de-identified data from different sources about individuals and households so we can see the range of services that individuals and whānau receive
- it means we can follow a range of outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi both while they are involved in the oraanga tamariki system and later after they have left the system and move into adulthood.

Stats NZ has strict criteria for using the IDI so people's information is protected. You can find more detail about how Stats NZ keeps data safe on its website.¹⁵²

Stats NZ disclaimers about using the IDI

We are also required to make the following disclaimers about data from the IDI.

Access to the data used in this study was provided by Stats NZ under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Data and Statistics Act 2022. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Stats NZ or individual data suppliers.

These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI please visit: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/>

The results are based in part on tax data supplied by Inland Revenue to Stats NZ under the Tax Administration Act 1994 for statistical purposes. Any discussion of data limitations or weaknesses is in the context of using the IDI for statistical purposes and is not related to the data's ability to support Inland Revenue's core operational requirements.

¹⁵² [stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/how-we-keep-integrated-data-safe/](https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/how-we-keep-integrated-data-safe/)

Technical definitions of IDI indicators

Our analysis considered people who were living in Aotearoa during 2023. We grouped this population based on their age at the end of 2023:

- Tamariki and rangatahi aged 0–17 during 2023.
- Young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30 during 2023.

We also made comparisons with results from our analysis for people who were living in Aotearoa during 2022.

We also grouped the population by level of involvement with Oranga Tamariki. We used these age groupings because:

- tamariki and rangatahi aged 0–17 may be currently involved in the oranga tamariki system
- young adults aged 18–25 who were in care or custody may be eligible for Transition Support Services during the year
- we wanted to understand what life outcomes are like for adults aged 27–30 who were involved in the oranga tamariki system as children.

We show the framework for classifying interaction with the oranga tamariki system below.

Grouping the population for this report

No Oranga Tamariki involvement	Involved with Oranga Tamariki			
No Oranga Tamariki involvement	Care and protection and/or youth justice intervention		Care or custody	
No Oranga Tamariki involvement	Care and protection and/or youth justice intervention		Care or custody (ineligible for Transition Support Services) ¹⁵³	Care or custody (eligible for Transition Support Services)
No Oranga Tamariki involvement	Care and protection intervention	Youth justice intervention	Care and protection custody	Youth justice custody

¹⁵³ Eligibility for Transition Support Services from Oranga Tamariki is based on how old tamariki and rangatahi were when they left custody or care and how long they were in care or custody. To be eligible for Transition Support Services, rangatahi must have been in care or custody for at least three months continuously after the age of 14 years and 9 months. For eligible rangatahi, Transition Support Services can continue to support a transition into adult life between 15 to 25 years of age. orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/transition-support-service

Definition of population groups

	No Oranga Tamariki involvement	Care and protection intervention	Youth justice intervention	Care and protection custody	Youth justice custody
Aged 27–30	Never had a report of concern or received a youth justice intervention as a child	Had a report of concern, a child and family assessment or an FGC in their lifetime but never received youth justice intervention or came into care or custody	Received youth justice intervention (FGC, supervision order) in their lifetime but no care or custody placement	Spent time in a care and protection custody placement in their lifetime but not in youth justice custody	Spent time in youth justice custody in their lifetime
Aged 0–17	Did not have a report of concern or receive care and protection or youth justice intervention or spend time in care or custody in 2023	Had a report of concern, a child and family assessment or an FGC in 2023 but did not come into care or custody or receive youth justice intervention	Received youth justice intervention in 2023 but no care or custody placement	Spent time in a care and protection custody placement in 2023 but not in youth justice custody	Spent time in youth justice custody in 2023
	No Oranga Tamariki involvement	Care and protection and/or youth justice intervention	Care or custody (ineligible for Transition Support Services)	Care or custody (eligible for Transition Support Services)	
Aged 18–25	Never had a report of concern, never received care and protection or youth justice intervention and never entered care or custody as a child	Had a report of concern, a child and family assessment or an FGC in their lifetime and/or received youth justice intervention but never came into care or custody	Spent time in a care and protection custody placement or in youth justice custody and ineligible for Transition Support Services	Spent time in a care and protection custody placement or in youth justice custody and eligible for Transition Support Services	

Defining disability

For this work, a person was defined as disabled if they did any of these things.

- Responded to questions¹⁵⁴ in Census 2023, Census 2018 or a social survey as experiencing disability.
- Received a Disability Allowance or was a child whose parent received a Child Disability Allowance on their behalf.
- Received an Invalid's Benefit or Supported Living Payment (excluding carers).
- Received Ongoing Resourcing Scheme support or School High Health Needs funding.
- Was a Disability Support Services client.

Definitions of measures

The table below contains definitions for the measures we used in this report. You can find full technical definitions for measures and the software code we used to produce the measures on our repository site with a summary of measure definitions.¹⁵⁵

Measures marked with an asterisk * used a code module. The code modules initiative is an effort backed by government agencies and non-government users of the IDI to make the integrated data assets easier to use and understandable for everyone, including non-technical people.¹⁵⁶ Code modules contain high-quality code and documentation for foundational measures needed by researchers.

Intergenerational measures

Measure	Definition
Intergenerational Oranga Tamariki involvement	For young adults aged 27–30. We looked at young adults who were recorded as parents for registered births. This includes both children born in New Zealand or born overseas but legally adopted in New Zealand. One or more of their tamariki are recorded as having involvement with Oranga Tamariki at some point within their lives until the end of the relevant year. We looked at both where: • one or more tamariki have had at least one spell in the care or custody of Oranga Tamariki. • one or more tamariki had an interaction with Oranga Tamariki but did not enter care of custody – for example, a report of concern was received, a child and family assessment was made or an FGC was held.

¹⁵⁴ Washington Group Short Set questions on functional disability. washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss

¹⁵⁵ github.com/nz-social-investment-agency/Children-interacting-with-the-OT-system

¹⁵⁶ For more detail about code modules, see stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/code-modules-initiative

Health measures

Measure	Definition
GP visit	For tamariki and rangatahi aged 0–17 or for young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30. An individual has consulted a GP at their registered practice at least once within the relevant year. This measure is limited to those enrolled with a PHO¹⁵⁷ as it does not include consultations with GPs made as a casual patient.
Mental health and addiction service use	For tamariki and rangatahi aged 0–17 or for young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30. An individual accessed secondary public inpatient or community mental health and addiction services at least once in the relevant year. Note this measure does not include primary healthcare settings such as GP consults, which may also be used to address mental health or addiction issues.
Self-harm hospitalisation	For tamariki and rangatahi aged 0–17 or for young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30. An individual was hospitalised at least once during the relevant year with a diagnosis that indicated intentional self-harm or self-injury with undetermined intention.

Education measures

Measure	Definition
School attendance*	For tamariki and rangatahi aged 0–17. Grouped into primary/intermediate and secondary school attendance. For students enrolled at state or state-integrated schools, their attendance in term 1 within the relevant year. For each student, attendance is recorded for each half-day as attending, justified absence or unjustified absence. The half-days a student was recorded as attending were divided by the total of half-days and ranked into bands of: - regular attendance (present for 90% or more of the term) - irregular absence (present for 80% or more of the term but less than 90%) - moderate absence (present for 70% or more of the term but less than 80%) - chronic absence (present for less than 70% of the term).
NZQCF level 2+ attainment*	For rangatahi aged 18. An individual has attained a level 2 qualification or above from the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) by the end of the year in which they turn 18. This is limited to rangatahi who were enrolled in school at some point after turning 15. For many individuals, the qualification will be NCEA level 2 or 3 attained at secondary school. For others, the qualification may be a certificate or diploma from other education providers.

¹⁵⁷ For more details on PHOs, see tewhatauora.govt.nz/for-health-providers/primary-care-sector/primary-health-organisations

Highest qualification*	For young adults aged 27–30. The highest level of qualification an individual attained by the end of the relevant year. Qualifications are grouped by NZQCF levels as secondary (level 1–3), tertiary (level 4–6) or university (level 7–10). Note that qualifications attained outside of New Zealand may not be included in this measure unless an individual recorded them through Census 2013 or 2018.
------------------------	---

Social support measures

Measure	Definition
Supported by main benefit*	For young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30. An individual received a main benefit for the whole year, for example the individual has been continuously receiving a main benefit for a spell of 365 days or more during the year (counting only days within the year). Main benefits include Sole Parent Support, Jobseeker Support, Supported Living Payment, Young Parent Payment and Youth Payment.¹⁵⁸
Emergency housing spell	For young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30. An individual was the principal applicant for an Emergency Housing Special Needs Grant at least once within the relevant year or within their adult lifetime.

Other measures

Measure	Definition
Driver licence*	For young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30. An individual held a current New Zealand restricted licence or class 1 full licence (car licence) or class 6 full licence (motorcycle licence) at the end of the relevant year. This excludes licences that are not current, for example, licences that are expired or suspended, and excludes people who only hold overseas licences.
In employment	For young adults aged 27–30. An individual received income from wages, salary or paid parental leave during the month. The proportion of each group who were employed each month was measured across the year. For simplicity, we present the average taken across the year.
Prison/home detention	For young adults aged 18–25 or 27–30. An individual experienced a prison spell (including remand) or home detention at least once since they turned 18. Note this only includes incarceration or home detention in New Zealand.

¹⁵⁸ Our measure used the Ministry for Social Development Income Support Payments code module and all benefits included in the main benefit portion.

Numbers of Māori in each age group and level of involvement with Oranga Tamariki

Number of Māori aged 0–17 in each group in 2023

No involvement with Oranga Tamariki in their lifetime	214,500
Involvement with Oranga Tamariki in their lifetime but not within the last year	76,710
Had a report of concern in the last year but no further involvement with Oranga Tamariki	9,279
Had a child and family assessment made within the last year but no further involvement with Oranga Tamariki	12,765
Had an FGC held for them but did not enter care	2,664
Received youth justice intervention in the last year but no care or custody placement	717
Spent time in a care and protection custody placement in the last year but not in youth justice custody	2,802
Spent time in youth justice custody in the last year	192
Spent time in both care and protection and youth justice custody in the last year	129

Number of Māori aged 18–25 in each group in 2023

No involvement with Oranga Tamariki in their lifetime	68,418
Had a report of concern or received care and protection or youth justice intervention as a child (child and family assessment, FGC, youth justice supervision order) but never in care or custody (ineligible for Transition Support Services)	47,184
Spent time in care and protection and or youth justice custody (in eligible for Transition Support Services)	5,850
Spent time in care and protection or youth justice custody (eligible for Transition Support Services)	2,268

Number of Māori aged 27–30 in each group in 2023

No involvement with Oranga Tamariki in their lifetime	34,251
Had a report of concern in their lifetime but no further involvement with Oranga Tamariki	2,760
Had a child and family assessment made in their lifetime but no further involvement with Oranga Tamariki	9,279
Had an FGC held for them in their lifetime but did not enter care	2,760
Received youth justice intervention (FGC, supervision order) in their lifetime but no care or custody placement	3,501
Spent time in a care and protection custody placement in their lifetime but not in youth justice custody	3,252
Spent time in youth justice custody in their lifetime	375
Spent time in both care and protection and youth justice custody in their lifetime	564

Embargoed until official publication

What About Me? survey

What About Me? was a nationwide survey of rangatahi aged 13–18. It was done on behalf of the Ministry of Social Development in 2021.

Just under 8,000 rangatahi responded to questions about their health, wellbeing, whānau and community. This included just over 7,000 rangatahi in years 9–13 at school and a further 500 rangatahi of the same age in the community.

We were only able to access the 2021 dataset from Stats NZ for those rangatahi who completed the survey in schools. This means the measures are not representative of rangatahi who do not regularly attend school. This is an unfortunate limitation because IDI measures show that some groups of rangatahi in the oranga tamariki system are less likely to regularly attend school and are therefore less likely to have their views represented in the school sample.

The survey included questions about ethnicity and involvement with Oranga Tamariki. This enabled us to understand:

- how tamariki and rangatahi Māori who had been involved with Oranga Tamariki¹⁵⁹ felt about many aspects of their life
- how this compared to those who had never been involved with Oranga Tamariki.¹⁶⁰

Subjective wellbeing measures are particularly important because most administrative data comes from people's interactions with government agencies and services – they don't tell us anything about people's views on their own lives.

The questionnaires for the What About Me? and Youth2000 surveys were merged for the 2025 Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey.¹⁶¹

The Ministry of Social Development conducted this round of the survey in early 2025 and intends to repeat it every three years. At the time of writing, only a summary report of the 2025 results has been made available. We will refer to detailed data from this survey in our future reports.

¹⁵⁹ The group of What About Me? survey respondents involved with Oranga Tamariki includes any tamariki and rangatahi who answered 'yes' to 'have you or anyone in your family ever been involved with Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS) or Oranga Tamariki?' This includes those who have had a social worker visit them or their family, had an FGC or been in care.

¹⁶⁰ The survey sample included responses from 1,395 Māori with no involvement with Oranga Tamariki and 606 Māori with had been involved with Oranga Tamariki.

¹⁶¹ See footnote 5.

Appendix Three: Unknown ethnicity data

When ethnicity is recorded as ‘unknown’ in Oranga Tamariki or NZ Police data, we exclude these records when making comparisons between Māori and non-Māori in this report.

When the proportion of unknown ethnicity is above 10 percent and is therefore likely to affect the quality of data analysis, we have drawn attention to this in the report.

The data below shows the number and proportion of tamariki and rangatahi with an unknown ethnicity, by level of system involvement.

Number and proportion of tamariki and rangatahi with an unknown ethnicity by level of system involvement in 2024/25

	Māori	Non-Māori	Unknown ethnicity
Tamariki and rangatahi in Aotearoa	338,000 (27%)	918,000 (73%)	
Had a report of concern about their safety or wellbeing	30,600 (49%)	22,900 (36%)	9,150 (15%)
Had a report of concern that progressed to a core assessment	17,700 (55%)	11,900 (37%)	2,770 (8%)
Had a police proceeding	2,960 (40%)	2,070 (28%)	2,400 (32%)
Were in care	3,440 (68%)	1,590 (31%)	45 (1%)
Were in youth justice custody	490 (80%)	120 (20%)	



Embargoed until official publication

Embargoed until official publication

**Aroturuki
Tamariki** | Independent
Children's Monitor

aroturuki.govt.nz

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government