

Office of the Minister for Children

Cabinet Committee

The Oranga Tamariki Action Plan Implementation Plan

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks your endorsement of the Implementation Plan for the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (the Action Plan).

Relation to government priorities

- 2 This proposal relates to the government's priority of *laying foundations for the future*. We are committed to ensuring that New Zealand is the best place in the world to be a child. We are also committed to ensuring Oranga Tamariki partners with iwi, hapū, and Māori organisations to find appropriate solutions for children in need and young people in need, and their families, whānau, hapū, and iwi.

Background

- 3 The Children's Act 2014 calls for children's agencies to produce an Action Plan to indicate how they are going to work together to improve the wellbeing of children and young people who are at risk of entering, have been involved in, or are currently involved in the care and protection or youth justice systems (the priority populations).
- 4 On 4 April 2022, Cabinet endorsed the Action Plan, and noted that it would be published alongside an accompanying Implementation Plan (CAB-22-MIN-0104.01 refers).

Oranga Tamariki has developed an Implementation Plan in consultation with other agencies

- 5 The Action Plan is a collective commitment to key pieces of work that will ensure that children, young people, and their families and whānau with the greatest needs receive the support and services they require to prevent harm and improve their wellbeing. It is deliberately high-level, to enable agencies to develop up actions that are currently at an early stage and to provide a platform on which future and more detailed actions can be built.
- 6 The Implementation Plan is an important companion to the Action Plan as it communicates:
 - 6.1 the commitment from children's agencies to collectively find solutions and do whatever it takes to ensure children, young people, families and whānau who need help get help (page one)
 - 6.2 the approach agencies will take to successfully deliver this change (pages one to two)

- 6.3 what children, young people, and their families and whānau should expect to see when engaging across the system (page two)
- 6.4 the practical steps that agencies have committed to take over the short and medium term (pages three to five).
- 7 The practical steps that agencies have committed to take over the short and medium term are grouped into:
- 7.1 **significant and measurable results** that will be prioritised for children and young people in care, youth justice, or receiving transitions support from Oranga Tamariki throughout 2022 and 2023 (page one).
- 7.2 **short term practical actions** that will be taken by December 2022 that demonstrate agencies' commitment to the priority populations. A small number of these actions will require ongoing work in 2023 (pages three and four).
- 7.3 **first steps** which include identifying specific needs of the priority populations through Oranga Tamariki undertaking a series of in-depth assessments of need in housing, education and health with agencies then required to make the changes necessary to ensure needs of the priority population are being met (page five).

Driving ambitious change through significant and measurable results

- 8 As a way of focusing and driving collective agency action, the Implementation Plan sets out four significant results that are specific, ambitious, measurable, and which will be worked on over 2022 and 2023.
- 9 These results have an initial focus on a subset of the priority population for the Action Plan¹ – the children and young people who are in the care or custody of Oranga Tamariki, or who are in the youth justice system, or receiving transitions support from Oranga Tamariki. Over time, and as agencies improve their ways of collective working, I expect to see agencies delivering on more results and focusing on achieving them for a greater percentage of the priority population for the Action Plan, including those with early risk factors for involvement in the Oranga Tamariki system.
- 10 Each of the significant results, which are discussed in more detail below, represent a meaningful shift in the children's system to meet the needs of the priority population. There is a focus on the areas of health and mental wellbeing, housing, education, as evidence has told us that these factors are fundamental to overall wellbeing. Supporting life transitions out of care is also a focus as it is a vulnerable period for young people. Achieving these results will prevent further harm by supporting

¹ As shown in the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (page 4) the total Action Plan population is estimated to be **119,470** children. Based on highest level of involvement, **45,000** of this group are children who have early risk factors for future involvement in statutory care, protection and youth justice systems. **56,500** are receiving assistance from Oranga Tamariki. **6,650** children are subject to a custody order. **2,020** are subject to youth justice proceedings. **1,300** are receiving transition support (not mutually exclusive from other groups), and **9,300** are under 21 years of age who have been in care.

positive outcomes and building protective factors for children, young people and their families and whānau. Agencies will report to Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Ministers on progress against the significant results every six months. The first report back will set out how these will be measured and tracked over time.

Good health including mental wellbeing: *Children and young people in care and youth justice have their health needs assessed, planned for, and met through an integrated service model by agencies working together to provide holistic and tailored care*

- 11 Children and young people in the care and youth justice systems (approximately 8,670 children) generally have higher levels of need than the general population. In addition, they also face significant barriers to having their health needs met, such as long waiting times and a lack of continuity of care.
- 12 Agencies, including the Ministry of Health, Health New Zealand, the Māori Health Authority and Oranga Tamariki, will work together to assess, plan for and meet the health needs of these children and young people. This will enable us to coordinate these processes and systemically better meet the needs of this cohort through the design of an integrated service model. This result will have a significant and enduring impact on how health services are arranged and accessed for those in care and youth justice custody, with agencies working together to ensure a cohesive and timely response to identified health needs.
- 13 This result is framed in a way that recognises the wider reforms that are taking place in the health system. The health system reforms create significant opportunities for substantial change. As the changes are embedded, agencies will work together to identify more significant and measurable steps that will deliver the shift that is set out in the significant result.

Positive housing conditions: *Every young person transitioning from the care and receiving the transition support service can access temporary accommodation or long-term housing*

- 14 Young people experience high rates of homelessness compared to the general population and are underserved by existing housing options. Approximately 1,300 young people are receiving the transitions support service and we know some of these young people have unstable accommodation. Accommodation plays a major role in supporting successful transitions to adulthood including other goals such as participation in education or employment.
- 15 This result includes reference to providing long-term housing as well as temporary accommodation such as suitable emergency housing, is an interim step that sits within broader system change that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is leading to provide more supported housing options for young people and support the delivery of more public and affordable rental housing.

Access to good education: *Following notification of a child or young person being placed in a care and protection residence or serving a sentence in a youth justice residence, local Ministry of Education staff will be engaged in transition planning for that child or young person no later than 30 days before their planned exit out of a residence*

- 16 This result focuses on a group of young people in residences because they are at very high risk of poor education outcomes. Upon being notified by Oranga Tamariki of a child's placement in a residence, Ministry of Education officials will, as part of a multi-disciplinary team, support earlier transition planning to enable young people in residences to continuously access the education and the supports they need engage with education.
- 17 The Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki will also work together to improve information-sharing systems so that information about a young person's achievements, interests and learning support needs follow them and is available in their new education setting.
- 18 This significant result will initially focus on improving outcomes for young people in residences while the Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki work to improve their data systems and data sharing on the broader care and protection cohort. The initial focus on children in residences will form the basis to improve education pathways for other children in the care and protection or youth justice system, including understanding what additional resource might be required to broaden the initial scope.

Support to grow, connect and be independent: *Every young person ageing out of care has a transition pathway into employment, education or training*

- 19 Young people ageing out of Oranga Tamariki care should be able to access adequate supports and opportunities to live independently. Often this means having pathways to employment, education and training and support to navigate these pathways.
- 20 Currently, these pathways are not always available and young people who are receiving Oranga Tamariki Transition Support Services tend to have lower rates of employment, enrolment in education, or training than their peers. The Just Sayin' 2021 survey indicated that 19% of young people were not in education, employment or training, a higher proportion than the national rate of 12% for 15–24-year-olds.

Short-term practical actions demonstrate agencies' commitment to the priority populations

- 21 In addition to the significant results, the Implementation Plan sets out **short term practical actions** (first steps) that agencies will take to meet the needs of priority populations, as required by action two of the Action Plan. These actions include some of the work that will enable and support the children's system to achieve the significant and measurable results and will be completed by the end of 2022. A small number of these actions will require ongoing work in 2023.
- 22 These first steps are also accompanied by overarching commitment statements by each agency or group of agencies towards the priority population for the Action Plan.

Building an evidenced based picture of need and a focus on prevention will drive medium-term collective action and change

- 23 The last section of the Implementation Plan includes next steps that agencies will take to progress the remaining three action categories in the Action Plan:

- 23.1 Building an evidence-based picture of need
 - 23.2 Meeting children's and young people's needs and building resilience
 - 23.3 Community led, regionally enabled, centrally supported prevention.
- 24 These actions will be crucial for supporting progress towards the significant results and will hold agencies accountable for maintaining momentum and working together to implement the Action Plan beyond immediate steps. The foundation of these steps will be identifying a strong evidence base through the in-depth assessments of need across the areas of health, education, and housing.
- 25 The third category of actions present an opportunity to galvanise cross-agency support for iwi and community-led approaches to prevention and early support. Iwi and communities are best placed to design and deliver the support and services that will cultivate resilient and healthy families, whānau, and communities so that children and young people are physically, mentally, and spiritually well, and whānau-centred responses are in place when needed.

Financial Implications

- 26 There are likely to be financial implications arising from the work that will be done to implement the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan. Options to prioritise the priority populations could have financial implications or lead to changes to service delivery to other populations. The full costs and implications of the Action Plan will be worked through as work is completed. Any funding requirements will need to be considered and prioritised through future budget bid processes.

Legislative Implications

- 27 At this stage there are no direct legislative implications associated with the Action Plan. Legislative options to address issues may be identified and will be assessed through the normal policy process.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi Implications

- 28 The Action Plan and this accompanying Implementation Plan both seek to reduce the disparities presented by the over-representation of tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the priority populations. The actions support a shift to a greater role, and increased resources, for iwi, hapū and whānau Māori to support the wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi Māori. This is consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, particularly the principles of active protection, partnership, and equity.

Population Implications

- 29 Within the priority populations, the Action Plan has a particular focus on tamariki and rangatahi Māori, Pacific children and young people, and disabled children and young people. This is consistent with the reviews of Oranga Tamariki in recent years, which identified these groups as at risk of worse outcomes within the care and protection and youth justice systems.

- 30 The in-depth assessments of need described in the Action Plan will investigate the needs of these groups in more detail, how the actions will impact these groups, and how they will be implemented to meet these needs.

Human Rights

- 31 This proposal is consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, the Human Rights Act 1993, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Consultation

- 32 The Implementation Plan has been created in consultation and/or collaboration with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury, the Ministry for Women, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, the New Zealand Police, the Public Service Commission, Te Puni Kōkiri, the Accident Compensation Corporation, the Social Wellbeing Agency, Statistics New Zealand, and the Ministries of Social Development, Youth Development, Housing and Urban Development, Health, Corrections, Justice, Education, and the Joint Business Venture Unit.

Communications

- 33 The Implementation Plan will be published alongside the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan on the Oranga Tamariki website and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet website before the end of July 2022.

Recommendations

The Minister for Children recommends that the Committee:

- 1 **endorse** the attached Oranga Tamariki Action Plan Implementation Plan
- 2 **note** that, if endorsed, the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan and Implementation Plan will be published before the end of July 2022 on the Oranga Tamariki, and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet websites.

Authorised for lodgement