



ORANGA TAMARIKI
Ministry for Children

Performance against Ministerial Priorities



Quarter One 2025/26

Purpose of this report

This report outlines Oranga Tamariki's progress against the four key Ministerial priorities for Oranga Tamariki in Quarter One of the 2025/26 fiscal year. The priorities are:

1. Ensuring the safety of children and young people
2. Supporting caregivers
3. Addressing child and youth offending
4. Improving complaint management and practice.

Ministerial Priority measures are interpreted as **ON TRACK** – when performance is meeting or exceeding standards or on track to meet desired result, and **OFF TRACK** – when performance is not meeting the standard.

This report should be read alongside the **Oranga Tamariki Performance Report – Quarter One 2025/26**.

2025/26 Quarter One highlights

We know our challenges, and we have improvement plans in place. But system limits mean pushing harder won't solve everything. Across our work, there are strong signs of progress. These results reflect progress, but also the reality that systemic pressures require more than simply working harder—they demand smarter, sustainable system-level solutions.

- **97% of children in care were visited every eight weeks by a social worker, demonstrating strong engagement.** However, meeting response timeframes for critical and very urgent Reports of Concern remains challenging due to high volumes and workforce pressures (see insert on page 4). Actions underway to strengthen child safety include the rollout of a new strategic workforce tool that will help us improve how we allocate and resource visits and complete timely assessments of new critical and very urgent Reports of Concern.
- **National Care Standards (NCS) lead performance indicators show improvements in how we support caregivers with compliance with caregiver support plans rising from 67% to 75%.** The Annual Caregiver Survey for 2025 was sent out in November 2025. We will report results in 2026. However, Oranga Tamariki also measures performance for supporting caregivers through the National Care Standard lead performance indicators – and these have shown positive improvement.
- **There has been a large reduction in children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour since June 2024 to 892 – 19% lower than the baseline of 1,100.** Oranga Tamariki is focusing on efforts to support this result. In Quarter One we published the final Military Style Academy Pilot evaluation which has highlighted positive change in the initial cohort and will inform the next phase of design. We are also continuing to see good results from Fast-Track. Positive signs in rangatahi engagement, stability, and whānau involvement from the Intensive Case Management Team (ICMT).
- **Sixty two percent of audited complaints met the Oranga Tamariki standard in Quarter One, exceeding the standard of 60%.** This reflects continuous improvement over the last 12-18 months from the 48% baseline and 58% result for 2024/25.

Ensuring the safety of children and young people

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in care is a core responsibility of Oranga Tamariki. We measure progress against this priority through regular and timely visits to children in care and how we respond to critical and very urgent reports of concern within operational timeframes (within 24 hours for critical and within 48 hours for very urgent reports of concern).

Measure	Standard	2024/25	Q1 result	Q1 status
The percentage of children in care who have been visited by their social worker at least once in the last eight weeks to ensure their ongoing safety and wellbeing. ¹	95%	96%	97%	ON TRACK
The percentage of critical or very urgent reports of concern, addressed within operational timeframes, will be at least 95%. ²	95%	86%	85%	OFF TRACK

97% of children in care were visited every eight weeks by a social worker

Visits to tamariki in care should occur regularly to ensure their ongoing safety and wellbeing. The majority (97%) of children in care during Quarter One were visited by their social worker at least once in the last eight weeks. Timely visits to children in care is also a measure under the National Care Standards Action Plan, and the Resolute About Safety initiative.

However, response time for critical and very urgent Reports of Concern remains below our expectations

Responding to critical and very urgent safety assessments is always an imperative priority for Oranga Tamariki, irrespective of set timeframes. Despite a focus on increasing response timeframes, even in high workload environments, performance, while consistent between 80% and 90%, has been decreasing since late 2024/early 2025.

Meeting report of concern timeframes has become more challenging due to the high volume of Reports of Concern and workforce pressures. Key contributing factors include a high number of Reports of Concern (see insert below) and the ease to which Oranga Tamariki can gather initial information quickly. Workforce pressures include the shortage of qualified and registered social workers, particularly in areas away from main population centres. This impedes social workers ability to respond to multiple ROCs in quick succession.³

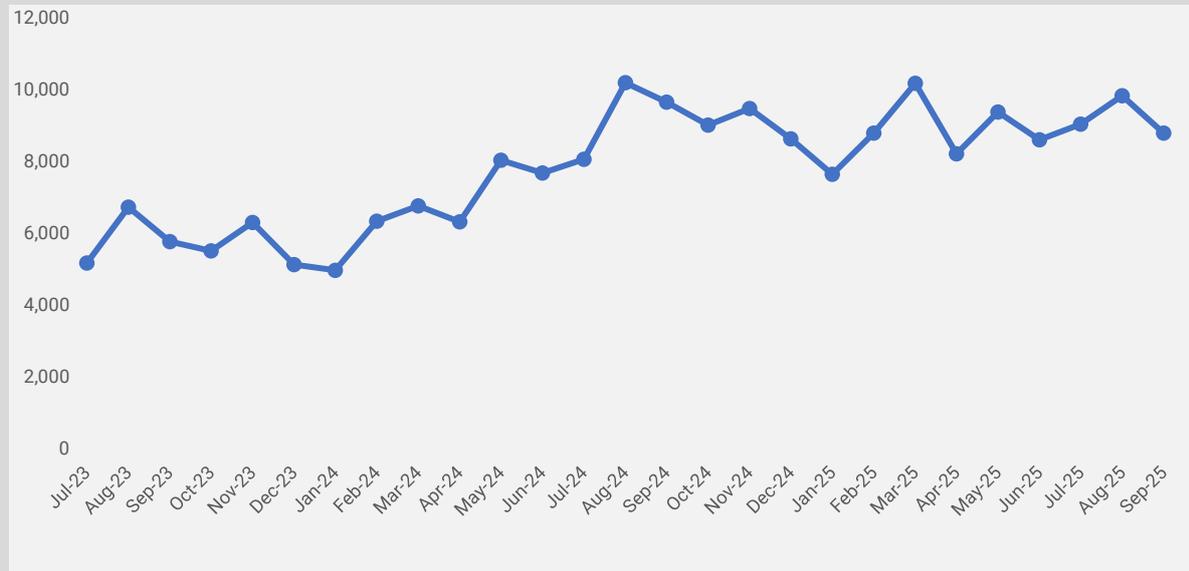
¹ This measure reports on social worker visits to all children in care and complements our appropriation measure 'The percentage of children in care with regular engagement with an Oranga Tamariki practitioner' that is reported in the Oranga Tamariki Quarterly Performance Report based on case file analysis of sampled case files.

² This is also an appropriation measure reported in our [Annual Report 2024/25](#).

³ The current impact of data and recording issues remains unclear.

Reports of Concern volumes remain very high

In Quarter One (July to September 2025) 27,718 reports of concern were received – 12 percent above the forecasted (24,692) but almost same as quarter one 2024/25 volumes (27,961). Seasonal trends persist – with August recording the second highest monthly volumes since Oranga Tamariki started (9849), following March 2025 (10,195).



Looking ahead we expect seasonal variations to impact Quarter Two. We also note that policy changes, including implementing recommendations from Dame Karen Poutasi’s review, may further influence these volumes.

For more detailed analysis on the drivers of report of concern volumes see: [Understanding the increase in reports of concern | Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children](#)

We have a range of actions underway to ensure the safety of children in care

Since July 2024, Oranga Tamariki has strengthened planning and preparation for visits through updated practice tools, enhanced operational oversight, and improved social worker allocations. Key initiatives, including the rollout of new practice models, resources, and the Frontline Technology Systems Upgrade, have improved social work confidence, whānau experiences, and the quality of assessment recording.

In 2024/25 Oranga Tamariki launched Resolute About Safety programme that puts continued emphasis on timeliness of social worker visits. As a result, we are seeing better and clearer responsiveness to child safety in social worker practice with safety needs addressed in most cases and social workers carrying out agreed-to follow-up actions most of the time. Oranga Tamariki is also working to develop recommendations and action plans based on insights work findings.

Oranga Tamariki has recently developed the first phase of a Strategic Workforce Analysis tool, and is setting up a system, including a temporary role to lead working with the tool to support efficiencies and flexibility within the current Oranga Tamariki workforce.

Safety of Children in Care and Section 78 Entry to Care reports released

Oranga Tamariki continues to review allegations of harm in care to strengthen safety and mitigate risks and remains dedicated to public reporting to ensure transparency within the children's system. We have published two key reports – the Safety of Children in Care and Section 78 entry to care reports are published in the 2024/25 Annual Report.⁴

The key insights from the Safety of Children in Care report are physical harm remains the most common type of harm, but the findings have dropped by eight percent compared from the previous year, harm in placements with family/ whānau caregivers is at its lowest levels over the last seven years and there is also reduction in harm within residential placements. There is also reduction in harm by staff, Child and Family Support Services (CFSS) and Oranga Tamariki staff. However, there has been an increase in harm by 23 percent in return/remain home placements when children return to the care of their parent and findings of sexual harm by non-related adults within the community. Oranga Tamariki continues to look for ways to promote safety and wellbeing and to keep responding to concerns for children at the earliest opportunity.

Section 78 Entry to Care Practice report presents first report on practice and decision-making for tamariki of all age groups, including unborn and newborn pēpi, entering care under section 78 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. Previous reports focused only on the specific cohort of unborn and newborn pēpi under 30 days old. The Section 78 entry to care review found strong compliance in areas such as engagement with tamariki, whānau, and professionals, as well as safety planning and support services to enhance tamariki safety.

Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence (Te Aorerekura) runs from 2025-2030

Oranga Tamariki is working alongside the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Justice, Department of Corrections, and New Zealand Police to review, redesign, and identify resources and supports needed for community-based services aimed at eliminating family and sexual violence for long-term change. Results of the review are expected to be communicated in early 2026.

The Government has accepted recommendations in the Dame Karen Poutasi review

Dame Karen Poutasi completed an independent review of the children's system response to abuse in 2022. It identified five critical gaps that can result in a child at risk becoming invisible to the system. On 9 October 2025, it was announced that the Government has agreed to accept all 14 recommendations made in the Review. Changes to implement the 14 recommendations will be completed in stages across multiple public agencies.

⁴ [Oranga Tamariki Annual Report 2024/25](#)

Supporting caregivers

Oranga Tamariki measures performance for supporting caregivers through the Annual Caregiver survey.

Caregiver Survey Results November 2024	2023	2024	Δ%
Percentage of caregivers satisfied with support from their social worker	76%	74%	-2%
Percentage of caregivers satisfied with overall support from Oranga Tamariki	52%	45%	-7%
Percentage of caregivers who would recommend becoming a caregiver to their family and friends	57%	47%	-10%
Percentage of caregivers who are thinking about stopping being a caregiver.	22%	22%	0%

There are a range of performance indicators that can help us improve support for caregivers

Oranga Tamariki assesses how well caregivers are supported through case file analysis.⁵ The National Care Standard lead indicators show improvement, with caregiver support plans compliance rising from 67% to 75% and implementation of support plan actions remaining stable at 77%.⁶

Oranga Tamariki is monitoring monthly caregiver visits in accordance with their Caregiver Support Plan and tracking placements of children in care to ensure placements align with quality care standards and compliance expectations. This regular oversight supports continuous improvement in caregiver engagement and helps identify areas where further support or intervention may be needed.

Oranga Tamariki is also actively exploring the development of more frequent and responsive performance measures to complement quarterly measures. This will provide timely insights into caregiver experiences throughout the year, enabling the organisation to identify emerging issues, monitor progress more closely, and respond with targeted improvements.

The 2025 Annual Caregiver Satisfaction Survey has been launched

The 2025 annual caregiver satisfaction survey went out in November 2025. The results help to better understand caregivers' experiences and needs, and their overall satisfaction with the support provided. The 2025 results will be published by April 2026, and we will compare results between the 2024 and 2025 surveys.

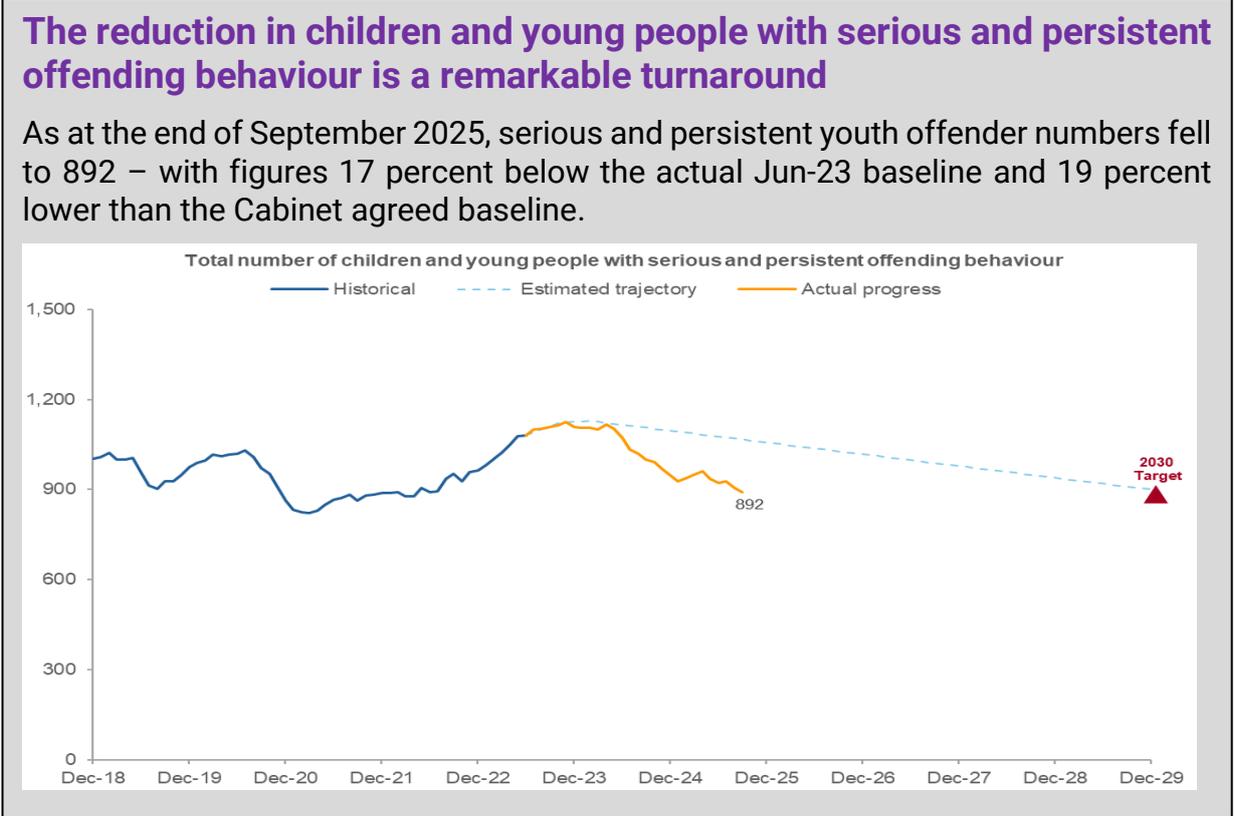
⁵ Case file analysis is the detailed, manual review of a random sample of cases. The analysis is conducted three times a year – surveying ~700 case files in total across the year. As more cases are surveyed, confidence in the analysis also increases. The results based on the first round of analysis for 2025/26 will be reported in quarter two reporting.

⁶ Compliance with the National Care Standards is published in the Oranga Tamariki Annual Report 2024/25.

Addressing child and youth offending

Oranga Tamariki is leading the Government’s Better Public Service Target 3 – reducing the number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour.⁷ We measure performance against this priority by monitoring the reduction in the number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour.

Measure	Standard	2024/25	Q1 result	Q1 status
An 18% reduction in the total number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour. [Jun 2023 Cabinet agreed baseline: 1,100]	<900 by 2030	923	892	ON TRACK



Oranga Tamariki remains focused on providing opportunities for young offenders to turn their lives around, while prioritising community and victims’ safety

Oranga Tamariki continues to closely monitor this measure given it is influenced by a wide range of societal, policy and economic factors. Greater investments in the facilities upgrade at youth justice residences, and transitional support for young serious offenders from Budget 2025 are expected to reduce both re-offending and the number of young people being held in police custody for an extended time.

⁷ Read more about the Government’s Target 3 and associated reporting at - [Factsheet - Target 3 - Reduced child and youth offending - June 2024](#).

We are continuing to see good results from Fast-Track

The Fast-Track programme works with partner agencies and communities to provide rapid interventions for children and young people repeatedly coming to Police attention. It takes a whānau-centric, holistic approach to address underlying causes and immediate wellbeing needs, aiming to prevent escalation into the youth justice or Oranga Tamariki systems. The programme has seen positive signs of success in preventing young people and children from coming to the attention of Police.

Positive signs in rangatahi engagement, stability, and whānau involvement from the Intensive Case Management Team (ICMT)

Oranga Tamariki piloted three Intensive Case Management Teams established in Hamilton, Rotorua and Christchurch to work intensively with tamariki, rangatahi, family and whānau. A monitoring framework was designed to monitor delivery consistency and to identify the effectiveness of the programme. Drawing on lessons learned, there is now an increased focus on building staff capability to work more holistically with serious young offenders. The topline findings suggest early positive trends in rangatahi engagement, stability, and whānau involvement.

Military-Style Academy (MSA) Pilot concludes with encouraging results for the next design phase

The MSA pilot concluded in July 2025, with eight young participants completing both the residential and community phases. Most participants embraced the opportunities presented during this programme and demonstrated a commitment to positive change, re-engaged with sport, employment, or health services. Oranga Tamariki acknowledges the tragic loss experienced during the pilot. Despite some reoffending, as anticipated due to the complex needs of the cohort, and one participant being transferred to Corrections custody, the overall trend showed a reduction in the severity and frequency of offending. Oranga Tamariki, alongside other partner agencies and community providers, will continue supporting these young men and their whānau beyond the pilot.

A final evaluation report published on our website shows encouraging results:

- 67% of participants reduced the frequency or severity of their offending
- violent offences dropped by two-thirds
- nearly 60% showed overall improvement compared to a matched group.

The evaluation is being used to inform the design and delivery of future MSAs, when the legislation is in place. Budget 2025 has announced the investment of \$33 million over four years to support the operation of future academies. This funding will also cover transitional support for young serious offenders to integrate back into community.

The final evaluation can be found here: [Final Evaluation Report MSA Pilot](#).

Oranga Tamariki (Responding to Serious Youth Offending) Amendment Bill and Regulations is expected to be enacted in early 2026

The Bill introduces new sentencing options, including the ability for the Youth Court judges to declare a young person a 'Young Serious Offender' with a Military Style Academy Order as one of the available options under this framework. The Bill allows the Youth Court and New Zealand Police to apply stronger measures relating to serious and persistent offending. This is about balancing public safety and rehabilitation, through new tools the Youth Court can use, and reduce the seriousness and frequency of offending through access to timely and enhanced rehabilitative responses.

Improving complaint management and practices

Oranga Tamariki is committed to responding to and working with people to resolve their concerns through our feedback and complaints process⁸. We measure success against this priority through how we respond to complaints.

Measure	Standard	2024/25	Q1 result	Q1 status
The proportion of complaints audited that were handled in a way that fully met Oranga Tamariki standards. [Baseline: 48% and target 25% increase from baseline]	60%	58%	62%	ON TRACK

Targeted efforts of Oranga Tamariki since mid-2024 have improved complaint management practice

In 2024/25 Oranga Tamariki implemented system upgrades to improve complaints management. Oranga Tamariki enabled regionally based monitoring to improve quality of complaint management. These internal reporting mechanisms have been strengthened, and work will continue as part of normal operations in 2025/26 to maintain the emphasis on the quality of complaints management.

The most common reason for not meeting standards for complaint practice remain timeliness and lack of engagement with complainants. There is continued follow up with individual sites and teams to resolve and close overdue and outstanding complaints, as well as responding to new complaints. Internal reporting mechanisms have been strengthened. Region-specific feedback and insights are shared with Regional Commissioners to support ongoing improvement.

⁸ Read about our feedback and complaints processes at: www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/contact-us/feedback/