

# Oranga Tamariki response to findings of the Engagement Survey with Partners Providing Social Services 2020

May 2021

## Contents

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Key opportunities for improvement and our response.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Variation in relationships between National and Regional/Local offices .....	5
Our response:.....	5
Systemic inequities impacting on practice of Māori partners .....	6
Our response:.....	6
A need for equitable partnerships in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi .....	7
Our response:.....	7
Clarity, timeliness of communication and staff responsiveness .....	8
Our response:.....	8
There are pockets of good practice and these need to be transferred .....	9
Our response:.....	9
There is lack of funding to achieve desired outcomes .....	10
Our response:.....	10

# Overview



Oranga Tamariki is working with some 500 partner organisations providing social services (partners) who play a vital role in improving outcomes for New Zealand young people and their whānau. To better understand and measure the relationship with these partners, and to understand how these relationships can be strengthened, Oranga Tamariki commissioned a survey to seek their views. This survey took place in November 2020.

The Engagement Survey with Partners Providing Social Services report outlined strengths and opportunities for improvement in the way Oranga Tamariki engages and communicates with its partners. This document outlines the key themes that came through in the survey and our response.

This is the first time this survey has been run and so it reflects our journey over the past four years since Oranga Tamariki was established. It provides us with baseline information that will enable us to assess improvements over time in how we work with our partners.

It is important to acknowledge that the findings of this survey align with some of the issues that have been raised in the recent reviews into how Oranga Tamariki operates and works with its partners. As we respond to those reviews, Oranga Tamariki will make additional changes and commitments that also respond to the findings of this survey. You can [find out more about these reviews and our response to them on our website](#).

We have been working in a more partnered way with iwi, Māori and other organisations in certain areas of what we do, for example in the development of partnerships related to Whānau Care and Intensive Response services. It is heartening to see in responses to the survey that people are pointing to these as examples of things that we are doing well. At the same time, we realise that not all of our partners will have experienced this new way of working as yet.

Peter Galvin  
General Manager – Partnering for Outcomes, Oranga Tamariki.

# Key opportunities for improvement and our response



## Variation in relationships between National and Regional/Local offices

For iwi and Māori partners, National Office was generally seen as accessible, supportive and more responsive than Regional/Local offices. Site offices saw the most variance in satisfaction with iwi and Māori participants generally dissatisfied with their interactions with Regional offices.

For partners overall, there were differing levels of satisfaction with their interactions between National and Local/Regional office.

### Our response:

To improve how we work with iwi, Māori and other organisations, we have been applying the section 7AA expectations of the Oranga Tamariki Act to our policies, practices and procedures. We have also been applying the [Te Arawhiti guidelines](#) and broader partnering approaches to how we work.

Examples of how we are doing this can be seen in the way we are working with iwi and other Māori partners in key programmes such as [Whānau Care](#) and [Intensive Response](#) (you can follow these links to learn more about these programmes on our website).

We are now finalising a set of ‘partnership principles’ that we will apply across our work alongside the other changes we are making in response to the recent reviews.

## Systemic inequities impacting on practice of Māori partners

Practice issues were highlighted by most Māori partners, with positive outcomes reported when Oranga Tamariki recognises and makes a commitment to supporting kaupapa Māori practices and models. Barriers to satisfaction were expressed in terms of a lack of understanding by some staff of mātauranga Māori, Māori practices and institutionalised racism; all of which result in inconsistent practice across sites.

### Our response:

Since 1989, our legislative framework has recognised the unique place of whānau, hapū and iwi. At the same time, our care and protection system has drawn from child protection models created by western influences, which focus purposefully on child safety and risk. The piece not always engaged fully in this positioning is whānau.

We are now in the process of shifting to a Māori-centred approach to our practice that always sees tamariki in the context of the whānau. This will require significant change across Oranga Tamariki and will include an increased focus on local solutions developed with and delivered by partners.

You can read our [current guidance around working effectively with Māori on the Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre](#).

## A need for equitable partnerships in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Concerns were raised by most iwi partners about what true partnership means within the relationship between Oranga Tamariki and iwi. Some suggested that this partnership needed to be improved and more aligned to the Treaty of Waitangi.

All participants expressed a need for Oranga Tamariki to acknowledge iwi partners as equal partners in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Participants stressed that equitable partnership requires the sharing of power, vision, purpose, funding and decision-making. Most participants suggested that this is not happening. Most partners suggested that institutionalised racism is the biggest barrier to true partnership.

### Our response:

Oranga Tamariki has set up a Treaty Response Unit, which is supporting Oranga Tamariki to ensure its policies, practices and services meets [7AA Quality Assurance Standards](#). These standards set out our commitments under section 7AA and The Treaty of Waitangi. You can follow these website links to [read about the Quality Assurance Standards](#) and the [progress we are making to improve outcomes](#) for tamariki Māori, their whānau, hapū and iwi

We continue to embrace strategic partnerships and enhanced relationships with iwi and Māori organisations, which enable us to develop new ways of working to better support tamariki Māori and their whānau. You can [read about our current Strategic Partnerships](#) on our website.

We have also changed our procurement approach to provide for early discussions with iwi and Māori organisations to understand their interests ahead of procurement exercises that are consistent with the Public Finance Act.

Oranga Tamariki has recently established a new Pou Tikanga role within the Ministry to be the organisation's cultural leader. This role is responsible for supporting the organisation to lift its cultural competence and confidence.



## **Clarity, timeliness of communication and staff responsiveness**

Consistency of information received can be improved. Messages coming from National Office can be contradictory to the advice received from Local/Regional offices.

Some partners also struggled at times with overwhelming amounts of communication, that can be repetitive and difficult to unpack in terms of what is relevant to them.

### **Our response:**

As part of the shift Oranga Tamariki is making, we are taking a more 'regionally-led, nationally supported' approach to how we work. Through this approach we expect that what we focus on, and how we work, will be better informed by the needs of local communities and the aspirations of our partners. To enable this, our regional teams will be increasingly focused on developing and supporting relationships with our partners.

To do this effectively, we know we need to be more joined up and coordinated in how we work internally. We have a programme of work underway that will improve the consistency of how we engage with partners and provide clarity around who leads and who supports relationships.

## **There are pockets of good practice and these need to be transferred**

Partners mentioned how variable the engagement with Oranga Tamariki can be, with some mentioning that there are pockets of professional and respectful interaction alongside extreme opposite.

### **Our response:**

These responses echo what we have heard through the reviews that have been undertaken into Oranga Tamariki. In response, we are developing a new strategy with a bold, transformative vision and action plan to enable all tamariki and their whānau to thrive with the support of their communities, iwi and hapū.

Engagement on this strategy will provide opportunities for partners to influence the vision and direction ahead for Oranga Tamariki. When finalised, it will encapsulate our commitment to change and the steps we will take.

We have been looking to learn from sites where things are going well, and to understand how that can be adapted for other places in a way that's appropriate to local circumstances.

## There is lack of funding to achieve desired outcomes

Only 3 in 10 partners agreed the amount of funding is sufficient to meet their contractual obligations including relevant overheads.

### Our response:

We have been working since Oranga Tamariki was formed to address issues around the way we commission services and the level of funding. This has included increasing the proportion of long-term contracts, increasing the proportion of funding that goes to iwi and Māori service providers, increasing the baseline funding for services, and adjusting our costing models for new services to better reflect the full cost of providing social services.

To inform the development of our costing models, the Workforce Working Group has commissioned a piece of research into the workforce related cost of kaupapa Māori and Pacific models of service delivery. You can [read about this group on our website](#).

At a whole of sector level, Oranga Tamariki is co-leading the social sector commissioning programme with the Ministry of Social Development, which is an important vehicle for the Government to address funding issues across social services funded by its different agencies. You can follow this [link to the MSD website for more information on this programme](#).

We are also continuing to provide support to the parties involved in the pay equity claims raised by the Public Service Association with five social service providers.