EVIDENCE CENTRE
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

Practice Approach evaluation

FINAL REPORT (STAGE 1)
JUNE 2024

Acknowledgements

The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people and their whānau.

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Published: June 2024

ISBN: 978-1-7386280-5-6

If you need this material in a different version, please email us at research@ot.govt.nz and we will provide it for you.

Citation guidance:

This report can be referenced as Malatest International (2024). *Practice Approach evaluation*. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children.

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Executive Summary

Practice Approach: Why was it designed and what are the expected outcomes?

Oranga Tamariki are making a fundamental shift in their approach to social work practice. At the heart of this shift are the relationships Oranga Tamariki build with tamariki, whānau, communities and partners. This will require Oranga Tamariki to make changes, as an organisation and as individual practitioners. The new Practice Approach offers relational, inclusive, and restorative practice that benefits all tamariki and whānau. It is framed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, supported by a mana-enhancing paradigm for practice, and draws from Te Ao Māori principles of oranga. Practice is arranged and delivered through a new Practice Framework and a suite of new tools, models, and resources.

Oranga Tamariki trialled the Practice Approach at six of its sites in Tāmaki Makaurau and Ōtautahi, including the National Contact Centre (NCC). A collaborative evaluation sits alongside the trial with the aim of providing early learnings to strengthen the national rollout of a selection of tools, models, and resources.

This report summarises emerging themes early in trial sites implementation. Themes are based on interviews at the trial sites and site visits as well as interviews with national stakeholders. Interviews are complemented by a survey of kaimahi at the trial sites carried out by the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre.

Is there evidence of an emerging paradigm shift?

Most of the Oranga Tamariki kaimahi we interviewed, including social workers, supervisors, practice leads, and managers, agreed the Practice Approach was important and the right thing to do.

Kaimahi and trial site leadership described the changes in practice they had observed. They had seen kaimahi start applying the Practice Approach naturally, leading to a shift from a risk-averse stance to a more collaborative approach. Description of practice changes often referenced Oranga Framing application. Social workers have included different activities within their Family Group Conference (FGC) plans that they might not have considered previously. Some kaimahi described feeling more confident in their own reasoning and their ability to hold space for their voice as a social worker.

There was general agreement among kaimahi that changes in practice arising from the Practice Approach had positively impacted the whānau, tamariki, and rangatahi with whom they were engaging. Social workers attributed the shifts they described for whānau to the shift from a risk-focused approach to a more holistic, whānau-centred one.

Leaders acknowledged that creating a conscious connection between their practice and the learning introduced by the Oranga Framing tool takes time. Once this progressed, there was a recognisable shift in social work practice, and this was linked to kaimahi confidence using the Oranga Framing.

How do kaimahi apply and use the Practice Approach, including the various tools, models, and resources?

The Practice Approach tools, models, and resources have supported implementation. The Practice Framework and Oranga Framing connected with the way kaimahi wanted to work. The Practice Approach affirmed social workers' professional practice and supported a more relational approach.

Nearly two-thirds of kaimahi found the Practice Approach useful (65%) and had been able to put it into everyday use (60%). Kaimahi confidence in working with the Practice Approach was still developing, with only one-third (36%) rating their confidence a four or five. The difference between kaimahi views on the usefulness and the application of the Practice Approach in their day-to-day practice appeared to reflect a difference between the Practice Framework and Oranga Framing compared to the other Practice Approach tools, models, and resources.

Kaimahi across various sites noted that it took some time for them to understand how the tools, models, and resources fitted together to support the Practice Approach. Connecting the tools, models, and resources to the overall Practice Approach resulted in a deeper understanding by kaimahi and helped their understanding of the overall Practice Approach and its importance and value to their social work practice.

How effective was the implementation delivery, including the orientation and on-site coaching?

Rollout of the Practice Approach comprised introduction and orientation sessions followed by learning cycles. This introduced the Practice Framework and the other Practice Approach tools, models, and resources. Kaimahi described participating in a range of different learning opportunities, including regular wānanga, training sessions, forums, reflection sessions, online learning, and receiving information by email.

There was enthusiasm and excitement for the Practice Approach following the introductory sessions. Most leaders and kaimahi recognised and valued the reason for the Practice Approach and the Practice Framework. Many saw the way they worked align with the Practice Framework, formalising aspects of social work practice and facilitating consistency.

The learning sessions were most valuable when kaimahi could discuss the circumstances of their work. Kaimahi with specific roles or special functions found many of the training examples were not applicable to the specific circumstances of their day-to-day work, leading to a lack of clarity around how to apply learning.

While many kaimahi were excited by the Practice Approach, they were hindered in understanding the Practice Approach and applying it in their work by the high demand nature of their jobs and their workloads. Kaimahi wanted access to coaching and support as they built their understanding of how to apply the Practice Approach to their practice.

The Practice Approach is in the early phases of rollout. Kaimahi understand the Approach and the reasons for it. Effective implementation now relies on consistent and effective guidance for kaimahi about how to apply the learnings to their social work practice.

Opportunities to strengthen learning and understanding

A timing gap between the orientation and introductory sessions resulted in some loss of enthusiasm and awareness of the Practice Approach. Continuous learning opportunities and mentorship on-site have been important in reinvigorating enthusiasm.

A general theme across all sites was the challenges kaimahi encountered in putting the learnings into social work practice. While feedback about the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources was positive, kaimahi needed more readily available guidance about how to apply them to their practice. On-site or easily accessible people to provide that 'just in time' conversation and guidance are important to support the site with the Practice Approach and to facilitate consistent implementation. In the absence of a 'go-to' person or site mentor, additional burden is being placed on kaimahi Māori to provide advice.

Implementation worked best where kaimahi had support from site leaders and when ongoing information about how to implement the Practice Approach was integrated within existing professional learning and development programmes.

Protected time for learning is essential, as many kaimahi noted challenges in implementing new processes while already working at capacity. Training within working hours valued kaimahi time.

A challenge with all trials is that the systems and contexts are not set up to accommodate the trial as they would be for national level changes. Existing Oranga Tamariki systems such as CYRAS are not set up for changes. Advice and guidance to kaimahi about how to manage reporting within existing systems would help kaimahi. In the trial locations there is also need for communication with external stakeholders about the changes to remove barriers kaimahi may encounter, such as push-back from the Courts.

Practice Approach evaluation background

The Practice Approach

Oranga Tamariki are making a fundamental shift in their approach to social work practice. At the heart of this shift are the relationships Oranga Tamariki build with tamariki, whānau, communities, and partners. This will require Oranga Tamariki to make changes, as an organisation and as individual practitioners.

The new Practice Approach offers relational, inclusive, and restorative practice that benefits all tamariki and whānau. It is framed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, supported by a mana-enhancing paradigm for practice, and draws from Te Ao Māori principles of oranga. Practice is arranged and delivered through a new Practice Framework and a suite of new tools, models, and resources.

A trial of the Practice Approach is underway at six trial sites, including the National Contact Centre (NCC), three other Tāmaki Makaurau sites, and two Ōtautahi sites.

The purpose of the Practice Approach is summarised in Figure 1.

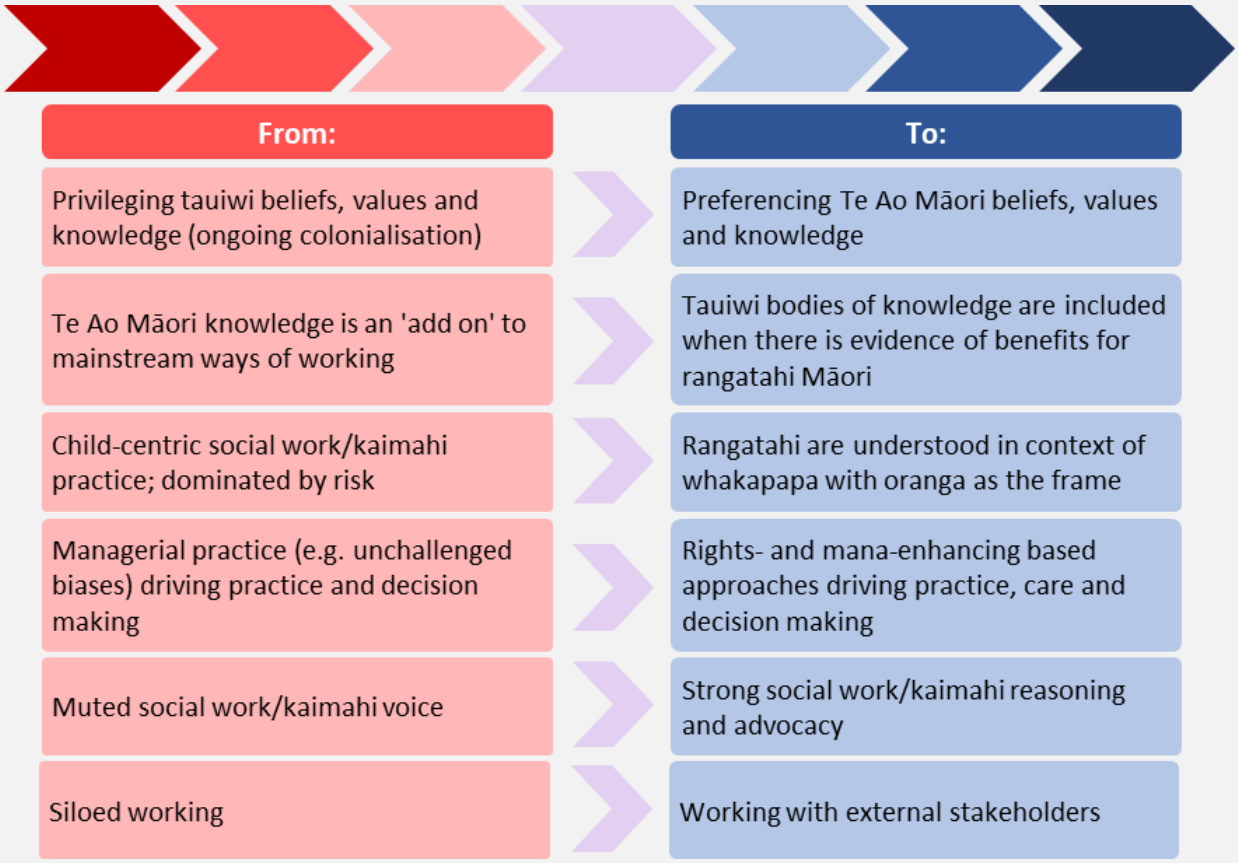

Figure 1. Practice Approach purpose

Content of the Practice Approach trial

The Practice Approach is operationalised through the Practice Framework and several tools, models, and resources that aim to support social workers and other kaimahi to make practice changes (Figure 2).

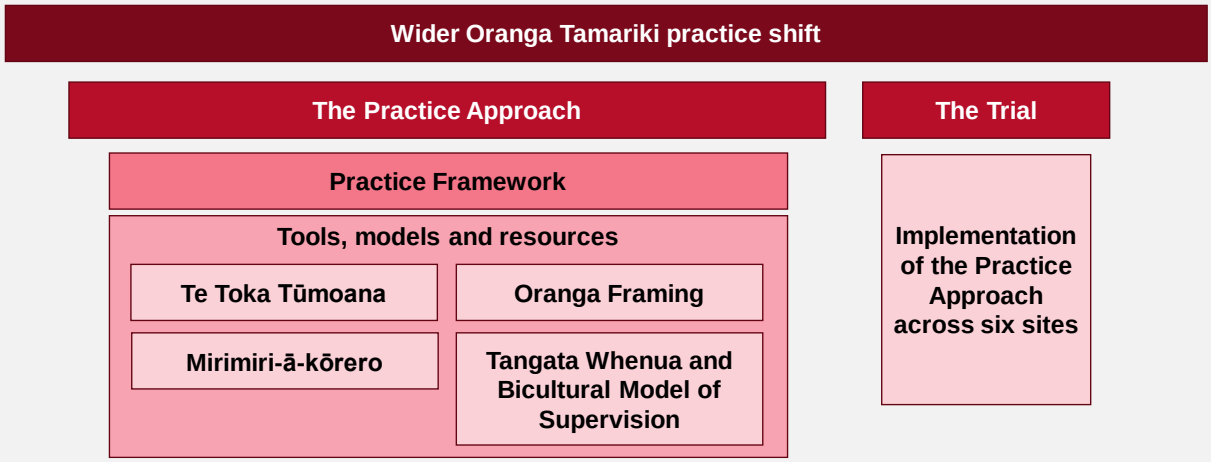

Figure 2: Diagram explaining the language used within the report and its connection to the Oranga Tamariki practice shift

The Practice Framework and the tools, models, and resources are summarised below:

Practice Framework: The Practice Framework is a key enabler inside the Practice Approach. It helps kaimahi and leaders make sense of and articulate professional practice and grounds the tools, models, and resources being trialled to reinforce good social work practice alongside the other tools, models, and resources that make up the Practice Approach.

- **Oranga Framing**: An approach to be used across service lines to ensure kaimahi consistently hold an Oranga focus when working with harm and risk and build relationships, develop understanding, plan, act, and reflect with Tamariki and whānau.
- **Tangata Whenua and Bicultural Supervision Model**: Aims to conceptualise, contextualise, and communicate the modes, model, and professional standards guiding the delivery of supervision.
- **Mirimiri-ā-kōrero**: A tool to be used across service lines that enables kaimahi to sense make, continue to understand, and critically think, to plan their continuing mahi with Tamariki and whānau.
- **Te Toka Tūmoana Practice Model**: The objective of Te Toka Tūmoana Practice Model is to provide a tool to be used across service lines that enables kaimahi to relate with in a professional way, to build and develop an understanding with, to plan with, to act with and to reflect with tamariki and whānau Māori to restore and/or support the enhancement of their mana and oranga.

The tools, models, and resources connect to the Practice Approach (Figure 3). While they are each located within one domain of the Practice Framework, applying them accurately and meaningfully, draws on all domains of the Practice Framework.

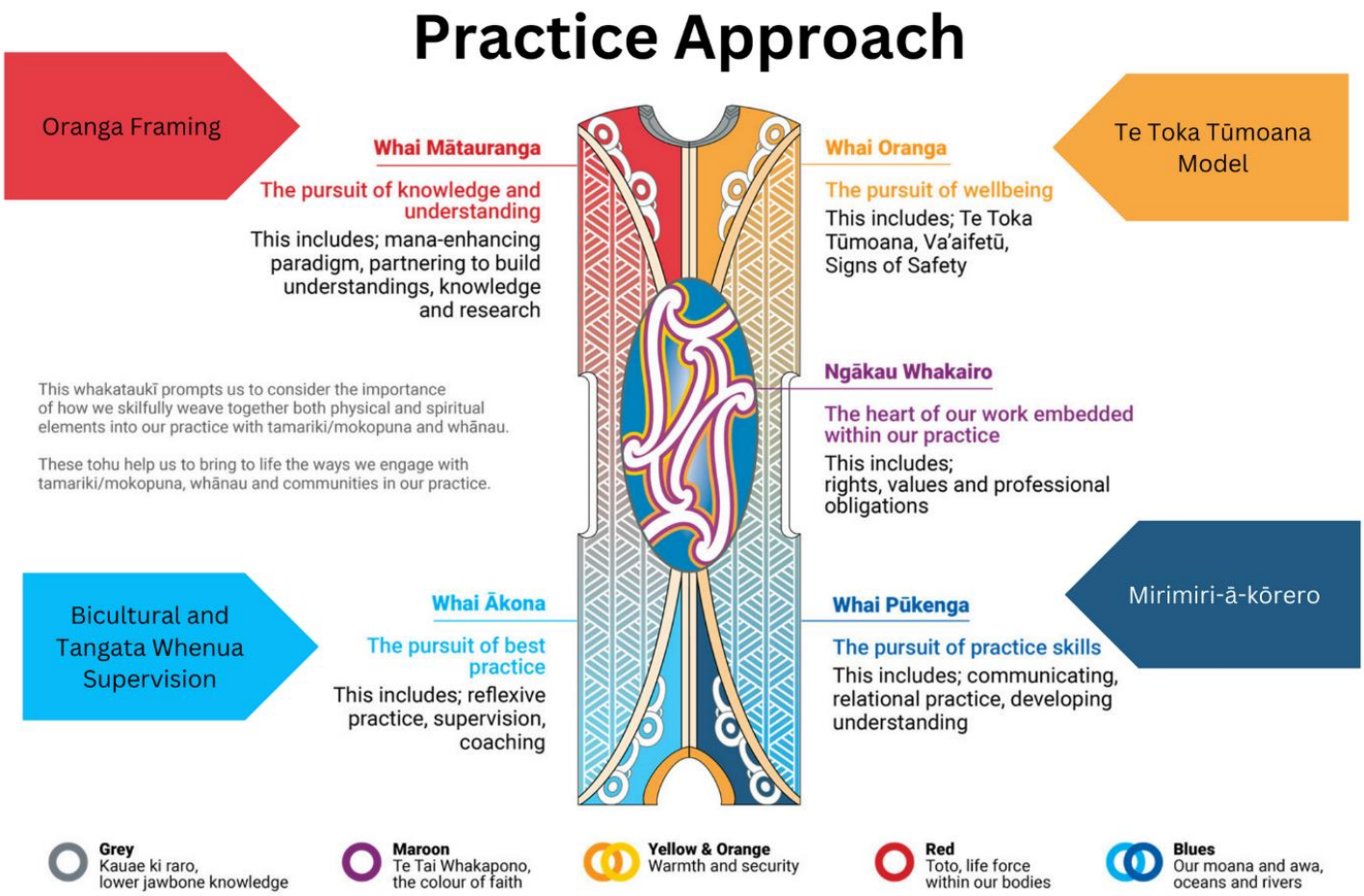

Figure 3: Illustration of Practice Approach and where each component connects to the overall Practice Framework

The trial sites

Oranga Tamariki chose six trial sites in Tāmaki Makaurau and Ōtautahi. Tāmaki Makaurau was included because the sites had available resource to support kaimahi to engage in the trial. The Practice Framework and three of the four Practice Approach tools, models, and resources were delivered at all sites. Te Toka Tūmoana Practice Model, was introduced to two sites.

Oranga Tamariki invited the Ōtautahi sites to participate in the trial as an acknowledgement of the origin of the Mirimiri-ā-kōrero tool. Both Ōtautahi sites only trailed the Practice Framework, the new version of Mirimiri-ā-kōrero, and Oranga Framing.

Each site had its own geographical, community and kaimahi context. Contextual factors that influenced the trial sites' experiences implementing the Practice Approach are summarised in Table 1 below. Full summaries are included in separate site summaries.

Table 1. Summary of trial site factors affecting the implementation of the Practice Approach

Christchurch West	Christchurch West is the newest of the five Christchurch metropolitan area sites. It covers a broad geographical area, 'most of the way to the West Coast'. The office is in the high-growth Christchurch suburb of Halswell. Social workers spend a lot of time travelling to cover the wide geographical area, serving a community with very diverse experiences and needs. All but one of the social workers was female. Some social workers had whakapapa Māori – limited cultural support was available to kaimahi.
Rangiora	The Rangiora site also covers a wide geographical area extending West and North. The geographical placement gives it a special relationship with the river. After the earthquakes in Christchurch, the dynamics of the community shifted as people moved from other areas, often from Selwyn. Rangiora became the second biggest growth area in Ōtautahi. Rangiora has a low Māori population. It is a predominantly Pākehā farming community, however, the site covers high Māori populated areas. Despite the low Māori population overall, site cases are made up of 35% Māori. Many of the kaimahi have worked for Oranga Tamariki in Rangiora for a long time and have a strong history with local whānau. This site no longer has access to a kairaranga and kaimahi have noticed the absence of this role particularly in reflecting on their cultural support needs to implement the Practice Approach.
Panmure	The Panmure site is in Central/East Auckland and covers communities with significant Māori, Pacific, and Asian populations. This site is home to over 30 social workers and includes busy Care and Protection and Youth Justice teams who often work together closely. The Panmure site has built close relationships with the local iwi and mana whenua of this area (Ngāti Pāoa) and some of the kaimahi live in their community.
Te Pūmanawa (Westgate)	The Westgate site, Te Pūmanawa, is in West Auckland. This community has a diverse population and has grown steadily over time. The cultural diversity of the kaimahi reflects their community. Shared events and activities encourage kaimahi to share each other's cultures and build a strong team. Te Pūmanawa has a rōpū Māori that meets fortnightly to discuss work and support each other. The rōpū have upheld Te Tiriti o Waitangi and maintained a Te Ao Māori focus across their mahi.

Ōtara	The Ōtara site is one of five Oranga Tamariki offices in South Auckland. Care and Protection and Youth Justice teams work out of this site. Many of the kaimahi have worked for Oranga Tamariki for ten or more years. The social workers are predominantly Pacific, although there is a range of ethnic groups in the team. Kaimahi said they brought a lot of cultural strength into this mahi and prided themselves on working with their own Pacific people and relating to the Ōtara community.
NCC	The NCC in Grey Lynn was unique in that 150 kaimahi receive phone and email reports of concerns for children 24-hours, seven days a week. Their role was different to social workers at other sites because they did not have any direct engagement with tamariki and whānau. They collect information from the reporter and triangulate this with information held within Oranga Tamariki and other agency partners. If risks are confirmed, their reports are transitioned to site kaimahi for further exploration and direct contact with the child and their whānau. The initial Practice Approach was introduced to two teams within NCC; however, rollout has now begun across the wider NCC kaimahi.

The evaluation

The Practice Approach trial is accompanied by an evaluation. The evaluation is a partnership between the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, the Quality Practice and Experiences team, and the Malatest International team.

The case studies of the trial sites are part of the broader Practice Approach formative evaluation, which aims to better understand its implementation and delivery. The Malatest component of the evaluation centred on case studies of progress in implementing the Practice Approach at the trial sites.

The evaluation focused on the following questions:

- How effective was the implementation delivery, including the orientation and on-site coaching?
- Are the Practice Framework and tools, models, and resources fit for purpose?
- How do kaimahi apply and use the Practice Approach, including the various tools, models, and resources?
- Is there evidence of an emerging paradigm shift – in each of the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources and the Practice Framework?

These evaluation questions were developed into sub-questions and linked to information sources in the evaluation framework, included in full in Appendix one.

Evaluation model

We offered a kaupapa Māori approach to the evaluation using Te Rapunga, a traditional navigation model introduced by Papa Rereata Makiha. It provides an Indigenous approach to evaluation that aligns with the Māori-centred Practice Approach. Te Rapunga supports an iterative evaluation process. During the journey from Te Rapunga to Te Rawenga, we reflect on the information, knowledge, and

insights gathered to reinforce the current approach or return to Te Rapunga to build on opportunities for improvement. Figure 4 provides an overview of the model.

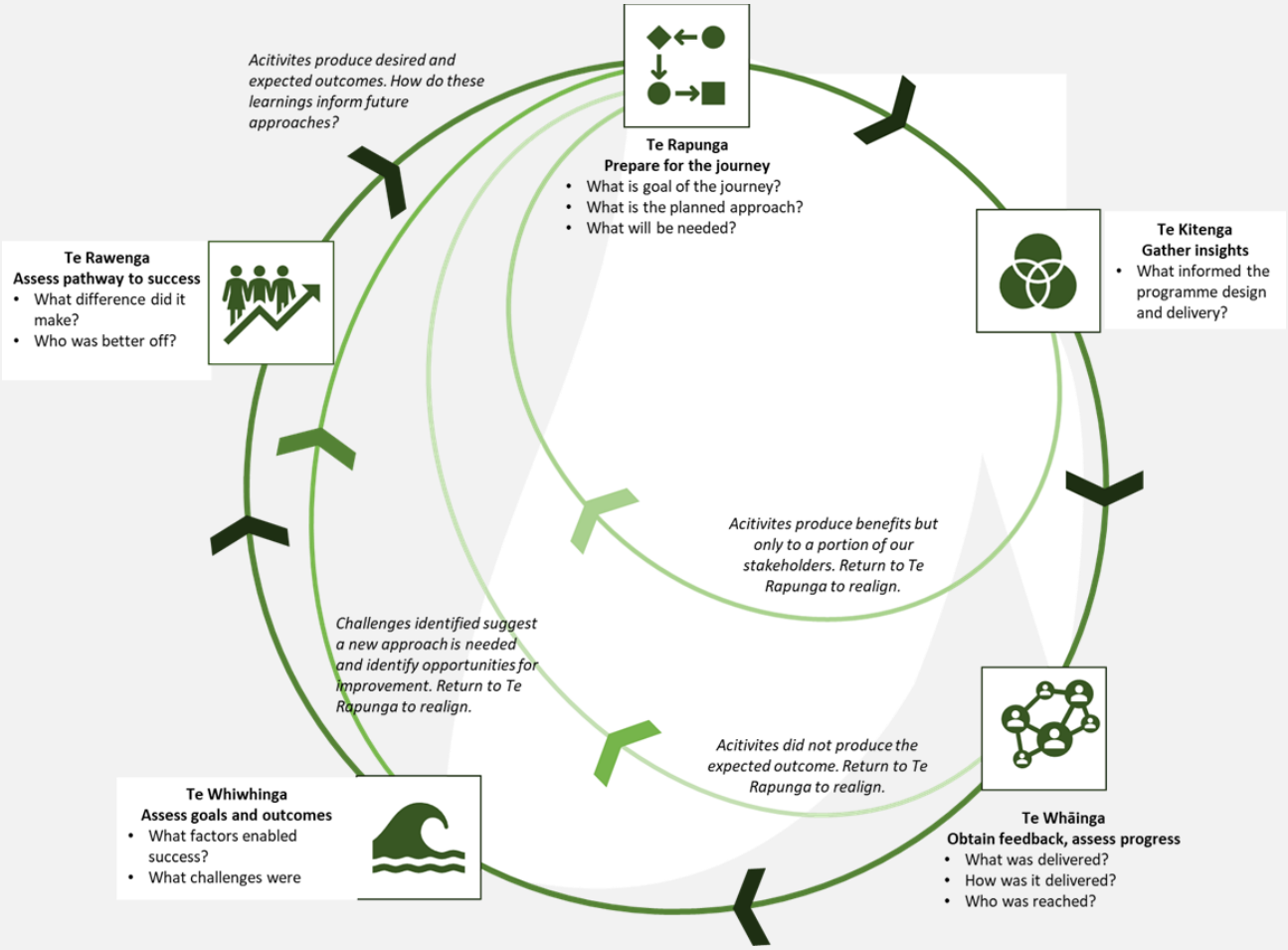

Figure 4. Te Rapunga model used for the Practice Approach evaluation.

Information sources

We worked closely with Oranga Tamariki kaimahi at the six Practice Approach trial sites. Information collected through interviews and focus groups with site kaimahi was complemented by review of documentation and interviews with Oranga Tamariki national stakeholders. We have also incorporated findings from the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre's survey of trial site kaimahi.

Table 2. Summary of evaluation insights gathering

	Review and analysis of Practice Approach documentation including descriptions of the Practice Framework and other tools, models, and resources, and the trial approach.
	Three visits to each of the Practice Approach trial sites. The first visit in early-2023 focused on whakawhanaungatanga. The two follow-up visits in May and September 2023 involved interviews and focus groups with kaimahi available on the day. Across all visits, we interviewed: – Social workers – two to three focus groups during each site visit, reaching approximately 15-30 social workers at each site – Kairaranga – Four across the trial sites – Site managers, supervisors, and practice leads – 5-10 kaimahi in leadership roles per site per visit.
	The evaluation team interviewed the Quality Practice and Experiences (QPE) team, Office of the Chief Social Worker team, Kaupapa Māori team, the Evidence Centre, trial teams, and other teams involved in or affected by the development/implementation of the Practice Approach. We interviewed 14 National Office stakeholders either individually or in small groups.
	The Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre surveyed Practice Approach trial site kaimahi. There were 127 respondents to the survey across the six trial sites.

Our team thematically analysed interview data using a coding framework based on the evaluation framework. We identified high-level themes and sub-themes aligned to the evaluation questions.

This Report

This report concludes the formative component of the Practice Approach evaluation. It is part of the wider evaluation of the Practice Approach trial conducted by the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre.

We have used the following words in this report to describe how commonly themes came through in the qualitative data:

All	Every participant interviewed
Almost all	The theme came through from almost all participants with a small number of outliers
Most	More than half of the participants, but not enough to say almost all or all
Many	Around half of the participants
Some	Fewer than half of the participants

Specific or less common themes are attributed to one participant or a small number of participants. We have included quotes from evaluation participants where they illustrate the theme identified in the evaluation data, expressing findings in the voice of Oranga Tamariki kaimahi.

Strengths and limitations of the evaluation

Close collaboration between our team, the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre, and Project team underpinned the evaluation approach and supported Te Rapunga.

The evaluation was also strengthened by engagement across all trial sites:

- Kaupapa Māori evaluation: We implemented a kaupapa Māori evaluation approach supported by Māori, Pacific, and Pākehā kaimahi.
- A focus on whanaungatanga: Building relationships within each site provided the team with access to social workers, supervisors, practice leads, and site managers throughout our data collection phases.
- Flexibility in qualitative data collection: In-person interviews and focus groups across multiple visits created a range of opportunities for kaimahi to engage in a way that suited them.
- Repeat visits: Building on relationships with kaimahi to explore experiences with the Practice Approach trial and how it developed over time.

The evaluation was limited by the following:

- We did not speak with all kaimahi at all the trial sites. While we aimed to reach as many kaimahi as possible, some did not take part.
- The survey findings included in this report come from the survey carried out by the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre. There is a risk that kaimahi may have been concerned about the anonymity of results, though it is important to note survey invitations reassured kaimahi of anonymity.

Early indications of Practice Approach outcomes

Key messages

- Most of the Oranga Tamariki kaimahi we interviewed, including social workers, supervisors, practice leads, and managers agreed the Practice Approach was important and the right thing to do.
- Nearly two-thirds of kaimahi found the Practice Approach useful (65%) and had been able to put it into everyday use (60%). Staff confidence in working with the Practice Approach was still developing.
- Staff and trial site leadership described changes in practice. Some kaimahi described feeling more confident in their own reasoning and their ability to hold space for their voice as a social worker.
- There was consensus across kaimahi that the Practice Approach had positively impacted the whānau, tamariki, and rangatahi with whom they were engaging. Social workers attributed the shifts they described for whānau to the shift to a more holistic, whānau-centred methodology.

Support for the Practice Approach purpose

The Practice Approach is framed on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, based on a mana-enhancing paradigm, and draws from Te Ao Māori principles of Oranga. Most of the Oranga Tamariki kaimahi we interviewed, including social workers, supervisors, practice leads, and managers agreed the Practice Approach was important and the right thing to do. Many kaimahi described how the Practice Approach conceptually aligned with their practice, the reasons they became social workers, and their values. They also saw the approach as consistent with the core competencies of the social work profession. They took pride in the work they did and saw social work as more than a job.

National Office stakeholders also wanted to support kaimahi to reflect on their personal and professional values and beliefs in the introduction of the Practice Approach.

> *They'll have a Practice Approach … We have a kawa and a tikanga element that we follow that draws on Te Ao Māori principles. In essence, Te Ao Māori principles are ko wai koe or no hea koe. There's always a way to find some common ground if you are using the same baseline principles. (National Office stakeholder)*

Most kaimahi felt that the introduction of the Practice Framework and the tools, models, and resources provided a way of expressing these concepts in the way they worked, how they interacted with tamariki and whānau, how they viewed risk, and how they assessed the needs and aspirations of whānau. Kaimahi described how implementing the Practice Approach in their practice shifted their focus from risk and safety to also incorporate tamariki, rangatahi and whānau perspectives. This allowed them to view risk alongside the strength and resilience factors within whānau to enable more informed decision-making when determining how to manage risk. Kaimahi described feeling reinvigorated in their practice.

> *This is how we should be working as social workers. (Kaimahi)*

> *This practice shift was new, the social workers seemed enthusiastic about implementing the shift within their practice and regarded this practice shift as natural in how they had been*

> *working in the past, it wasn't hard to adapt. It was seeing how we could implement the practice shift in a collaborative way learning together to support the social workers and to elevate what barriers could prevent them from moving forward with this practice shift. (Site leadership)*

Almost all social workers we spoke with supported the need for a Māori-centred approach. Most saw the Practice Approach as fit for purpose for all, and not belonging just to Māori.

> *They now see the approach as how they will work with everybody. This isn't just for whānau Māori, it's a way in which you engage with everybody regardless of where they are from. (National Office stakeholder)*

However, a small number of kaimahi were reluctant or even refused to engage with the Practice Approach and had not participated in learning. The common themes for these kaimahi were:

- Negative past experiences with practice changes. They were wary of the Practice Approach's authenticity and the Oranga Tamariki commitment to change based on experience with past practice changes.
- Fearfulness and/or resistance to the shift to a Māori-centred approach.
- Worry that the changes could compromise their management of risk and safety for tamariki and rangatahi.

Changes in kaimahi practice

The themes identified in interviews were reflected in the ratings kaimahi provided in response to the survey. The Oranga Tamariki kaimahi survey found that two-thirds (65%) of kaimahi thought the Practice Approach overall was very or extremely useful (Figure 5).

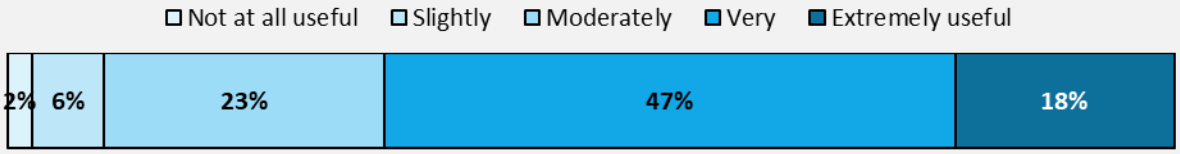

Figure 5. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi ratings for the usefulness of the Practice Approach overall, including the Practice Framework, models, and components (n = 121).

Nearly two-thirds (60%) of Oranga Tamariki kaimahi said they had been able to put the Practice Approach learnings into everyday use often or a great deal (Figure 6).

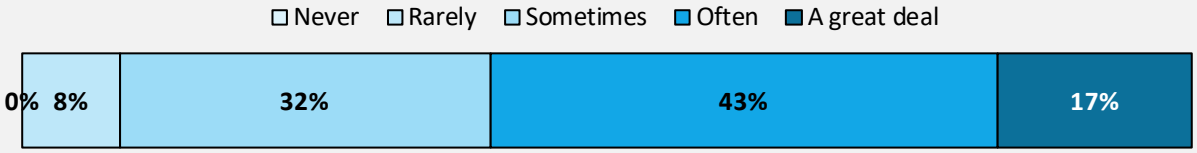

Figure 6. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi ratings for how often they had been able to put Practice Approach learning into everyday use (n = 120).

Staff confidence using the Practice Approach in their day-to-day work was still developing. Only around one-third (36%) rated their confidence as four or five on a

five-point scale (Figure 7). The highest proportion (47%) of kaimahi rated their confidence in the middle of the scale, a three out of five.

Figure 7. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi ratings for their overall confidence working with the new Practice Approach (n = 121)

The difference between kaimahi views on the usefulness and the application of the tools, models, and resources in their day-to-day practice appeared to reflect a difference between them and the Practice Framework and Oranga Framing. The Practice Framework and Oranga Framing provided broadly applicable ways of practicing that were easier for kaimahi to apply to their work.

The impact on tamariki and whānau of decisions made by social workers highlights the need for consistent practice. One site described increased consistency in the way kaimahi worked because of the Practice Approach trial. Oranga Tamariki expected kaimahi would offer a consistent practice that is mana-enhancing, relational, and intentional. Stakeholders thought in the past some social workers had not understood the value of reconnecting whānau, tamariki, and rangatahi with whakapapa. Engaging closer with iwi can broaden support for tamariki and ensure whānau are involved in decision-making. The Practice Approach supported different relationships with whānau because it supported a more inclusive, relational, and purposeful practice.

> *The Practice Approach and the shift from a Western lens to a Te Ao Māori lens positioning tamariki in their whānau and their whakapapa, the old way of practicing is organisation would target risk. The solution was to remove children. Oranga Tamariki were not good at managing risk. New Practice Approach is taking a step back and assessing how to identify if there is harm or risk, how to support tamariki and their whānau to address the harm. (National Office stakeholder)*

Interviewed stakeholders described a shift from a rigid risk-averse stance to a more collaborative approach, emphasising walking alongside whānau and engaging in managing risks together. This shift was facilitated by a strong team commitment, supported by supervisors and management. The Practice Approach encouraged more creativity when developing plans and responses, as social workers said they thought more about what they could do to support whānau and what they could ask for.

> *We've been quite creative, I did a family group conference withdrawal the other day and talked to my supervisor. And we use kind of the Oranga Framing to paint the picture of the family to present to the concept that this is what's going on, which was amazing. So that's been really exciting as a trial site, to be able to be a bit flexible and have a go at those things. (Kaimahi)*
>
> *But the Oranga dimensions are fantastic. But they are an organisation of wellbeing when we're talking about risk and working in a space of risk and wellbeing. (Kaimahi)*

Site leaders (managers, supervisors, and practice leads) also described changes in practice at the trial sites. They described shifts in overall practice towards more relational, reflective, and critical practice across the Oranga Tamariki mahi. Leaders described seeing teams shift to applying the Practice Approach naturally rather than consciously. In some cases, managers were pointing it out to the team to highlight where it was being applied in their practice.

> *We are not [the] state looking down on people anymore. We are actually standing side-by-side [with] people and I don't think that we have maintained that authoritative statutory mirror, we have actually got down beside people and actually talked with them rather than at them. (Site leadership)*

Description of practice changes often referenced application of Oranga Framing to work with whānau and case notes. Te Puna Oranga allowed them to collate more relevant and meaningful information that resulted in more thorough and accurate recommendations. Examples included social workers thinking about the child within their whānau, the existing strengths and supports, and the community supports able to wrap around the tamariki/rangatahi and whānau.

> *Oranga Framing for me as a social worker has been good in terms of replacing assessment tools. Instead of using something like a HEEADSSS assessment or something like that, which is quite a Western worldview. But I can see the transformation [in my practice] of prioritising a Te Ao Māori view – that's really telling for me. (Kaimahi)*

Differences in case notes from using Oranga Framing were not as visible to whānau, but some kaimahi thought they would notice the difference.

> *…something that I think [whānau] would understand more if you went out to present it to them. (Site leadership)*

Social workers have included different activities within their FGC plans that they might not have considered previously, for example, going on bush walks as a coping strategy and to strengthen whānau taha tinana and taha hinengaro. Another example provided was a young person who had begun living independently felt it was important to have fortnightly dinners with their whānau. This was built into the FGC plan and the social worker thought they would not have considered it under previous approaches.

Some kaimahi described feeling more confident in their own reasoning and their ability to hold space for their voice as a social worker.

> *I'm really clear that – and it's a huge shift in the voice of the social worker – and you have the ability to stay up to date and strong than say, in previous times when there's six people in a consult, and a social worker has one voice in sharing their perspective. (Kaimahi)*

> *Definitely the social workers, being able to step forward more and have more confidence in their analysis and being able to step out, step up and talk the talk, not lawyers talking for them. To be a little more confident when addressing or having some robust conversations with professionals that don't necessarily agree. (Site leadership)*

At one site supervisors and practice leads have implemented several practices to support the Practice Approach. For example, they have implemented karakia, waiata, kiwaha, and ko wai au in the morning meetings. They now go around the room and ask social workers what they have done in their work that week to reflect

Ngakau whakairo and give examples. Kaimahi contributing to the meetings have become confident in the learning, and the supervisors are continuing to support social workers to roll out their training.

Indications of outcomes for whānau, tamariki, and rangatahi

There was consensus across kaimahi that the Practice Approach had positively impacted the whānau, tamariki, and rangatahi with whom they were engaging.

> *I definitely think during that [core intake] space there's a lot more of whānau voice in that and that partnership within the decisions around Okay, well, are we involved? Are we not involved? Are family confident that they've got it? What does that look like? (Site leadership)*

> *[In one case] we're getting that dad, who was right up the chain to everybody is now laughing with the social worker. The social worker was able to say, 'Hey dad, don't be a keyboard warrior. Ring me, we've had this conversation'. And he's laughing. He's laughing. And so he'd even made contact and said, look it's okay. And we're making the steps about he may or may not get the kids home, but actually, it's feeling better for him. (Site leadership)*

Social workers attributed the shifts they described for whānau to the shift from a risk-focused approach to a more holistic, whānau-centred methodology. The changes had started to lead to positive feedback from whānau.

> *We've had some feedback from families, I don't know whether it's with our new Practice Framework but like in the last 12 months, we've had people say, 'oh, I didn't know that Oranga Tamariki was like this' or 'this was so different to my experience historically' and we have feedback from some professionals as well, as to how well we've engaged with families. Just recently. (Kaimahi)*

One social worker shared how a greater understanding of the importance of waiora has made her encourage whānau to reconnect with their marae, their tūrangawaewae. To support this, she now ensures whānau know that Oranga Tamariki can provide support to access marae. The Practice Approach, particularly Oranga Framing, has made her more aware of the importance of this for whānau and more thoughtful about how Oranga Tamariki can support whānau.

Progress in understanding and implementing the Practice Approach

Key messages:

- Kaimahi across the trial sites reported it took time to understand how all the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources fit together.
- Overall, half (52%) had a good or very good understanding of the Practice Approach.
- Offering multiple tools, models, and resources alongside the Practice Framework gave kaimahi ways to apply their Practice Approach learning but could also make the overall package harder for kaimahi to understand.

Practice Framework:

- Kaimahi were enthusiastic that the Practice Framework allowed kaimahi to return to a relational way of working. For many, this approach aligned more closely with their preferred way of working with tamariki and whānau.
- Kaimahi could apply the Practice Framework to different areas of their work, and it was the connection point for the other Practice Approach tools, models, and resources.

Oranga Framing:

- Kaimahi saw Oranga Framing as foundational to the Practice Approach.
- It supported relational ways of working with whānau, and many of the examples kaimahi gave of changes to their practice involved applying Oranga Framing.
- Through Oranga Framing, Social Workers were able to identify the strength and resilience factors of whānau and draw on these to provide solutions for mitigating risks surrounding tamariki.

Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision:

- Social workers were unclear about the differences between the tangata whenua and bicultural supervision and other forms of supervision available to them. Some acknowledged the inclusion of mahi ora, kaimahi ora, and whānau ora within the approach, but were not sure if this was the full extent of the changes.
- Barriers to taking part in this new supervision approach were a result of previous negative experiences with supervision and lack of internal skills and capacity to provide effective tangata whenua and bicultural supervision.
- Other kaimahi and supervisors who had experienced bicultural supervision (outside of the Practice Approach rollout) spoke highly of it, valuing the structure it provided for supervision sessions.
- Māori social workers wanted greater access to Māori supervisors, suggesting staff would value the move towards tangata whenua supervision.

Mirimiri-ā-kōrero:

- Most sites didn't feel the implementation of this tool aligned with its intended purpose and reported mixed experiences.
- Sites had tried various applications of the tool, including handover, problem-solving, reflective practice, and social worker voice.

– Social workers preferred the original purpose of Mirimiri-ā-kōrero being a whānau voice tool to the current application.

Te Toka Tūmoana Practice Model:

– The model was the part of the Practice Approach implemented earliest in the evaluation period.
– Kaimahi were unsure how Te Toka Tūmoana sat alongside Oranga Framing and wanted more clarity about when to use it.

Understanding and implementing the Practice Approach

Kaimahi across the trial sites reported it took time to understand how all the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources fitted together to support the Practice Approach. For kaimahi, a theoretical understanding of each was a first step that needed to be followed by support to understand how to implement the tools, models, and resources in their areas of practice. Feedback from the trial sites showed they were at different stages in moving to understanding and implementation. Connecting each one to the overall Practice Approach helped kaimahi understand its importance and value to their social work practice.

At the time of the survey of Oranga Tamariki kaimahi, more than half (52%) of kaimahi rated their understanding of the Practice Approach as good or very good, far higher than the proportion (10%) who had no or slight understanding (Figure 8).

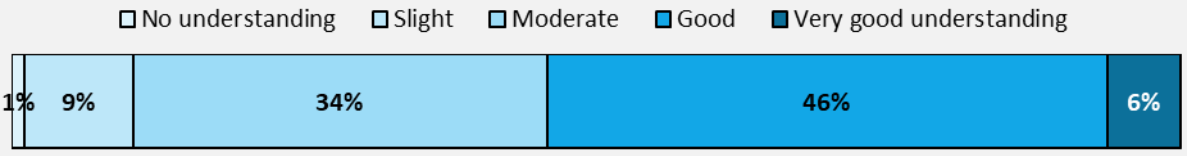

Figure 8. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi ratings for their understanding of the new Practice Approach overall (n = 120 excluding not applicable)

Kaimahi and some stakeholders discussed the impact of the complexity of the Practice Approach package. Striking a balance between introducing too few and too many tools, models, and resources to operationalise the Practice Approach was necessary. Offering multiple tools, models, and resources alongside the Practice Framework gave kaimahi ways to apply their Practice Approach learning in different areas of their work. But it could also make the overall package harder for kaimahi to understand, and risk tools driving practice rather than the underlying concepts embodied by the Practice Framework and Oranga Framing.

> *We've replaced a messy complex practice system with another potentially more complex system. (National Office stakeholder)*

The most common theme from kaimahi interviews was uncertainty about when and how to use the tools, models, and resources. Kaimahi from different teams received the same introductory training, then encountered challenges applying the tools, models, and resources to the circumstances of their team's work (e.g., Youth

Justice, SCAF, Intake and Assessment) and contexts (e.g., NCC versus site kaimahi). This applied most to tools, models, and resources for use in specific circumstances and least to the Practice Framework and Oranga Framing. Kaimahi found their own ways to use the tools, models, and resources so they were implemented consistently.

> *We understand what the Practice Approach is but its not consistent on-site because of the way the practice shift was rolled out. It allows for each team to be creative on how they introduce it and produce and work within the framework. (Site leadership)*

Kaimahi across the trial sites wanted more opportunities to hear how other kaimahi were using the tools, models, and resources. Most sites had established opportunities to share practice internally but were concerned they were working differently to other sites. Hearing about other sites would provide kaimahi with opportunities to share experiences and reassurance they were on the right track or that they were not alone in encountering challenges.

Awareness and support from partners

Working with and communicating with partner agencies and community stakeholders (for example, the Courts, Police, Te Whatu Ora, and other Oranga Tamariki sites) was an important part of everyday work for Oranga Tamariki social workers. The trial approach involving a limited number of sites meant partners were often unaware of the Practice Approach changes. They were not prepared to receive information using the new tools, models, and resources, creating extra challenges for kaimahi wanting to use the Practice Approach.

Some partners responded positively. One social worker described a very positive response to an assessment prepared using their Practice Approach learning. But other kaimahi experienced pushback from external stakeholders. Across all sites, kaimahi recommended introducing the Practice Approach to external stakeholders to pre-empt any issues.

> *I don't think the Courts are on the same page as us. Some judges just want to see exactly what they want to see. I've had an experience where we have Māori tamariki that are coming through. The judges don't want to hear about how their wairua is. They just want to hear that they're in school. (Kaimahi)*

Friction with existing Oranga Tamariki systems

The trial approach also meant some system changes that could support transformation had not yet been made. Kaimahi across all sites described frustration trying to apply the Practice Approach with IT systems expecting them to work in the old way. Kaimahi tried to develop workarounds and at times could not input the information they wanted to into CYRAS. This was a particular issue for Mirimiri-ā-Kōrero and Oranga Framing. Kaimahi described struggling to fit the Mirimiri-ā-Kōrero information into the existing case consult tool. Working with systems that did not support the Practice Approach was a barrier to applying learnings to everyday work.

Progress with the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources

Practice Framework

The Practice Framework aims to enable the shifts required to embed the Practice Approach. It provides guidance to social workers on working relationally, to be inclusive and restorative in enacting and fulfilling statutory obligations and functions in the pursuit of oranga for whānau and tamariki. The Practice Framework aims to encourage advocacy, facilitate best practice, and hold social workers to account for their professional obligations.

The Practice Framework is made up of five domains intended to support social workers to organise their thinking and making sure social workers consider all areas of oranga when they engage with tamariki/mokopuna, whānau, and communities through their practice. The five domains were:

- Whai Mātauranga: The pursuit of knowledge and understanding
- Whai Ākona: The pursuit of best practice
- Whai Oranga: The pursuit of wellbeing
- Whai Pūkenga: The pursuit of practice skills
- Ngākau Whakairo: The heart of Oranga Tamariki work embedded within Oranga Tamariki practice.

The Practice Framework also aims to provide the basis for consistency in practice with tamariki and whānau.

> *The Practice Framework organises how we work because there was no consistency in our practice with tamariki and whānau. The Practice Framework cuts across that and organises our practice and the way we offer that. When you come into Oranga Tamariki with a Practice Approach, you can expect to have consistent practice offer[ed] up and down the motu, doesn't matter where you go, and ethically, that is what's right for tamariki and whānau. (National Office stakeholder)*

Kaimahi rated their understanding of the Practice Framework more highly than they rated the tools, models, and resources and the Practice Approach overall. Just over half (55%) were very or extremely positive that training and learning had improved their understanding. Around two-thirds said they had a good or very good current understanding of the framework (68%) and found it helpful (60%) (Figure 9).

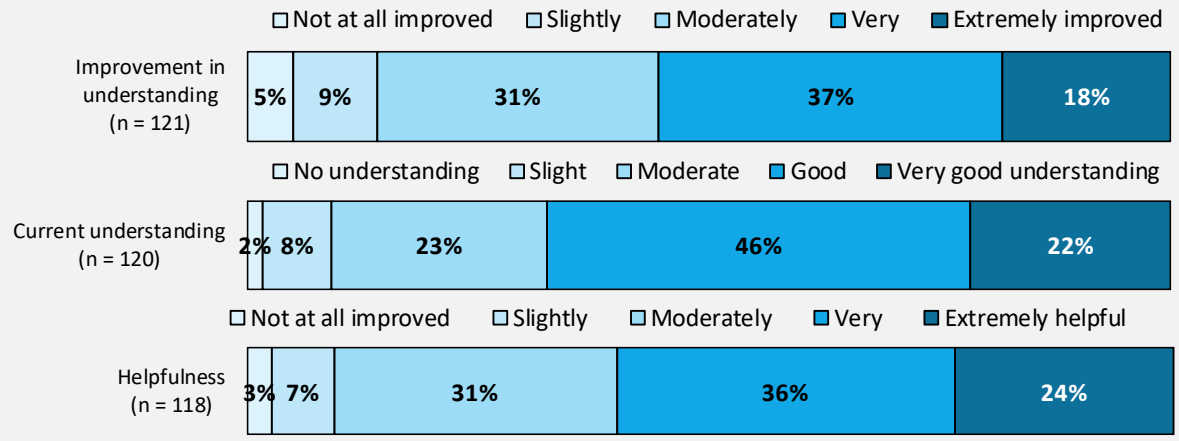

Figure 9. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi improvement in understanding, current understanding, and views on the helpfulness of the Practice Framework (excluding not applicable).

Those at trial sites who spoke about the framework were enthusiastic about its relevance and applicability to their practice. Sites felt the framework formalised how kaimahi, teams, and sites worked already.

> *I wholeheartedly believe our [team] practice is very much like what we're trying to implement … [the] majority of the team do that. They practice from that perspective… We haven't actually officially rolled out any tools in our team, but I bet if you talk to us, we technically have. (Kaimahi)*

At other sites, the Practice Framework was less prominent for kaimahi. These sites tended to have a greater focus on the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources. Other kaimahi were enthusiastic about the Practice Framework but did not have a clear understanding of the link between the Practice Framework and each of the tools, models, and resources.

Kaimahi confidence in their understanding of the Practice Framework was essential to connecting the different tools, models, and resources to the bigger concepts of the Practice Approach. Without this understanding, kaimahi felt the approach was disconnected and lacked clarity.

Oranga Framing

The Oranga Framing is an ecological framework offering dimensions of lived experience. It is organised into three states and provides a model for sense-making and planning to support social workers to work relationally toward oranga. Oranga Framing ensures Oranga Tamariki kaimahi understand risk, harm, and worries in the context of whānau and family life.

Oranga Framing was intended to be used across service lines to ensure kaimahi consistently hold an oranga focus when working with harm and risk, and build relationships, develop understanding, plan, act, and reflect with tamariki and whānau.

> *Oranga Framing enables practitioners to move beyond a risk frame. If practitioners practice social work in true fashion, none of this would be necessary because there's a way that a*

person will position themselves to engage and connect with tamariki and whānau that would enable these things to come out anyway. We've got decades of history to tell us that it's not working, so the Practice Approach is important. (National Office stakeholder)

Oranga Framing helps to move practitioners, I think, from a heavy risk focus to considering wider context of wellbeing. Aside from looking at deficit, because it's important to look at the things that aren't working to what are the strengths here? What is working? (National Office stakeholder)

Alongside the Practice Framework, kaimahi saw Oranga Framing as foundational to the Practice Approach. It captured the relational way of working with whānau, which many kaimahi described as how they already practiced.

[Site] invested in the framework and in ecological thinking – that is social work. Rather than picking up the tools. Their reports of concern are deeper, and their analysis is growing. (National Office stakeholder)

Kaimahi were very positive about Oranga Framing (Figure 10). Nearly three-quarters (73%) said they had a good or very good understanding, and just under two-thirds (64%) said it was helpful or very helpful. Like the Practice Framework, a smaller percentage said the training and learning cycles had been helpful in improving their understanding.

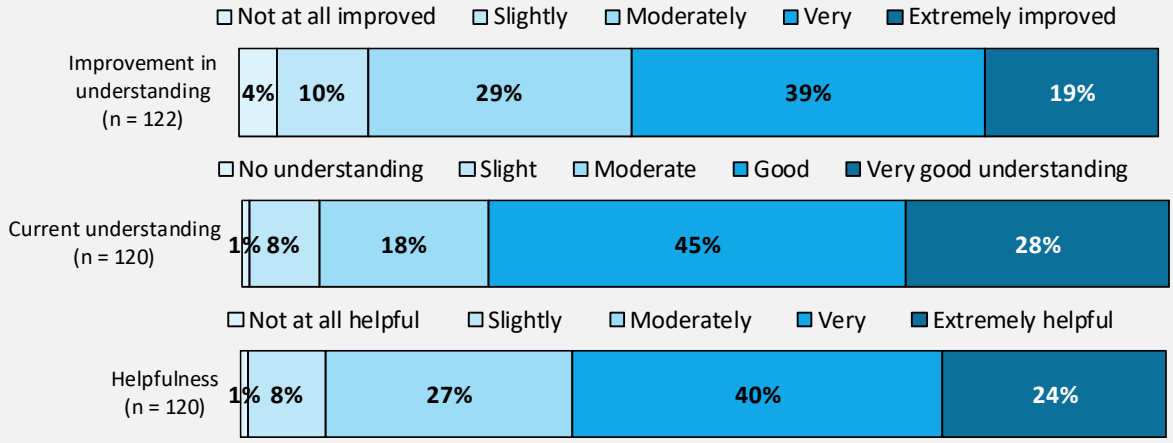

Figure 10. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi improvement in understanding, current understanding, and views on the helpfulness of Oranga Framing (excluding not applicable).

The Oranga Framing domain language and the concepts they represented were an area where kaimahi wanted more cultural support. As for other areas of the Practice Approach, a small number of kaimahi worried about using te reo Māori words for the oranga dimensions, reflecting their own comfort with te reo. They understood that using Oranga Framing in case notes would better enable whānau to understand what was written about them. These concerns were expressed in relation to the ability for Māori and non-Māori to understand their case notes.

Initial engagements with kaimahi indicated early adoption of Oranga Framing by Youth Justice teams. These teams encountered challenges from Police and judges who expected kaimahi to use the old approach, and incongruence of templates in the Oranga Tamariki IT system (CYRAS).

Oranga Framing is Puna Oranga, the values, there are mana tamaiti principles, there's many layers or parts to it. Oranga Framing is about the dimensions that come into it from the

> *understanding that being a pākeha we will never be in the Te Ao Māori perspective. Oranga Framing has lots of elements that come in the practice standards. Oranga Framing is about the the ngakau, the wairua, the understanding, the dimensions that make-up well being. (Site leadership)*

Although many kaimahi supported Oranga Framing, initially they struggled to apply it to their everyday practice. For example, when and how to use the Oranga Framing recording template is unclear. One site found it helpful to see how a kairaranga had used the template.

During follow up engagements, most sites had scheduled weekly meetings to discuss each of the Oranga dimensions in a work setting, within their cases, and even within themselves. This focus allowed kaimahi to think more deeply about each of the domains and embedded a more thorough knowledge of the tool for use with whānau. This focus has been attributed as one of the reasons that Oranga Framing has been successful across all sites.

After almost a year since the Practice Framework was introduced, all social workers felt that they were slowly gaining momentum in using the Oranga Framing tool and having it more clearly embedded in their practice. Social workers reflected on their early applications of the tool, and how far they have come in understanding the tool, it's application within their work, and the benefits that come from working in this way.

Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision

Previous work carried out by Oranga Tamariki found that few kaimahi were accessing supervision. Those who were, did not find the experience mana-enhancing.[1] Feedback from kaimahi highlighted it as an area of need, so Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision became part of the Practice Approach. The model aimed to bring the Practice Approach into the delivery of supervision by considering kaimahi ora, mahi ora, and whānau ora within the Oranga Tamariki statutory setting.

Kaimahi provided feedback about their participation in and access to different types of supervision, including social work and cultural supervision. They were unclear about how Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision differed from the historical supervision offerings. Many of the kaimahi we spoke with wanted clearer definition of Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision and how it was different from the historical approach to supervision.

> *What is supervision first, and what is bicultural supervision? We don't even have supervision. How [do] we differentiate the supervision that we're supposed to have from the cultural supervision?... (Kaimahi)*

Some kaimahi recommended introducing tangata whenua and bicultural supervision before the other tools, models, and resources so that kaimahi had established channels in place to discuss how to apply them as they were introduced.

> *Our model, Oranga, is at the centre. The development of the supervision model is three components of Oranga, kaimahi oranga, mahi ora and whānau ora, they have been separated out. (National Office stakeholder)*

[1] Social Work Supervision survey – carried out in 2021. Findings reported in correspondence.

More than two-thirds (68%) of kaimahi said they had a good or very good understanding of the supervision (Figure 11). Respondents were less positive about training having improved their understanding (31%) or the supervision's helpfulness (37%) compared to other tools, models, and resources. Nevertheless, some of the sites that did not have the supervision model thought it would have helped the implementation by helping them to understand how the tools, models, and resources related to the Practice Framework.

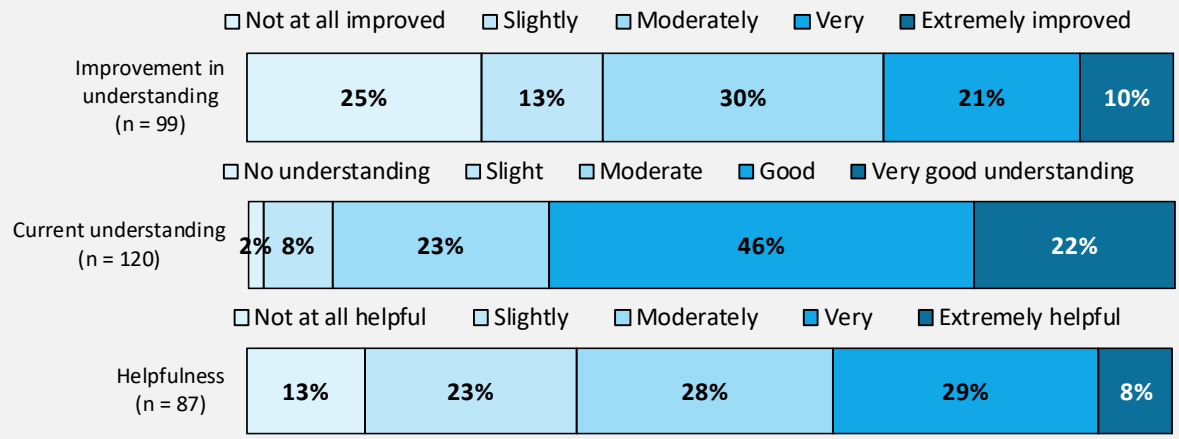

Figure 11. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi improvement in understanding, current understanding, and views on the helpfulness of Tangata Whenua and Bicultural Supervision Model (excluding not applicable).

Some kaimahi and supervisors who had experienced bicultural supervision (outside of the Practice Approach rollout) spoke highly of it, valuing the structure it provided for supervision sessions. The supervisors' own experiences with supervision informed how they supported kaimahi.

> *Our manager supports for our supervisors to have external supervision, with a focus on reflective stuff, and I found that really helpful alongside that because it helped me think about, okay, they don't want to talk about kaimahi ora, that's fine but we can explore kaimahi ora in terms of mahi or their wellbeing. (Site Leadership)*

Sites with the model described the barriers they had encountered in accessing supervision:

- Lack of clarity about how to access Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision and/or how it differed from other supervision. Supervisors had received the training and were incorporating it into their practice, but social workers had not been trained in the approach so possibly did not realise the practice was being implemented.
- Negative past supervision experiences have eroded trust, particularly concerning confidentiality and privacy matters.
- Lack of internal kaimahi with the skills necessary for effective bicultural supervision.

Most social workers were not confident that the current supervision resource was adequate to deliver Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision, and kaimahi felt it was an unfair expectation to place on tauiwi supervisors. Kaimahi did not feel like tauiwi supervisors had the required cultural competency to engage in the Tangata

Whenua and Bicultural Supervision Model of delivery. This was based on their assumption that this new supervision approach was designed to support them to embed the Practice Approach and enable them to critically reflect on their own cultural competency within their practice. The lack of social worker understanding of the Tangata Whenua and Bicultural Supervision Model means that they have made assumptions about what this might include, and their feedback likely reflects these expectations rather than the purpose of the new model.

Some kaimahi suggested external clinical supervisors could offer Tangata whenua and bicultural supervision, which would also reassure staff of the confidentiality of their discussions. Kaimahi gave iwi services as an example of an organisation that could bring Te Ao Māori perspectives into social workers' practice. They could also be a valuable support for internal supervisors to build their Te Ao Māori knowledge and competency. A few kaimahi also suggested developing an accreditation programme to give kaimahi confidence that their supervisors were well equipped to apply a bicultural model of supervision.

Mirimiri-ā-kōrero

The name Mirimiri ā-kōrero speaks to the aim of enabling mirimiri (to massage, deepen, widen) of the kōrero to facilitate kaimahi understanding and sense-making of whānau oranga (wellbeing). Mirimiri-ā-kōrero was a tool to be used across service lines to enable kaimahi to sense make and critically think about continuing mahi with tamariki and whānau. The planning documented in the ara (pathway) recorded next steps for kaimahi to engage with tamariki and whānau. Kaimahi engaging in Mirimiri ā-kōrero take time to build understanding and facilitate tamariki and whānau decision-making.

> *Mirirmiri-ā-kōrero offers the opportunity for a social worker consultation with the supervisor, to look at a potential sticking point in practice with a particular whānau and agree that perhaps more people should be brought around the conversation to enable the social worker to understand how to engage next and best with whānau. It's designed, with a facilitator, to enable a social worker to have space to ask questions, to help shape their understanding of where the case is at, to determine a way forward that includes engaging with the family, having the right considerations in mind and understanding how best to do that. And it's designed to enable that space with a facilitator for the social workers' reasoning and questioning, to centre, with everyone else supporting that. It's driven by the social worker as a way to strengthen the voice of kaimahi that has been muted over the years. Mirirmiri-ā-kōrero as a process that enables, a strong premise of the programme to help strengthen social work,and the social workers' voice. (National Office stakeholder)*

Mirimiri ā-kōrero was intended to replace the child/young person and family consult tool. Mirimiri-ā-kōrero is a group approach that includes: a kaimirimiri (facilitator), kaimahi (responsible social worker), supervisor, scribe (senior and experienced practitioner), and key people and partners (as appropriate for the purpose of the Mirimiri-ā-kōrero).

In the Oranga Tamariki kaimahi survey, more than one-third (39%) of kaimahi said they had a good or very good understanding of Mirimiri-ā-kōrero (Figure 12), lower than for the Practice Approach overall. One-third (33%) said their understanding was very or extremely improved by the training but less than one-quarter (23%) thought it was very or extremely helpful.

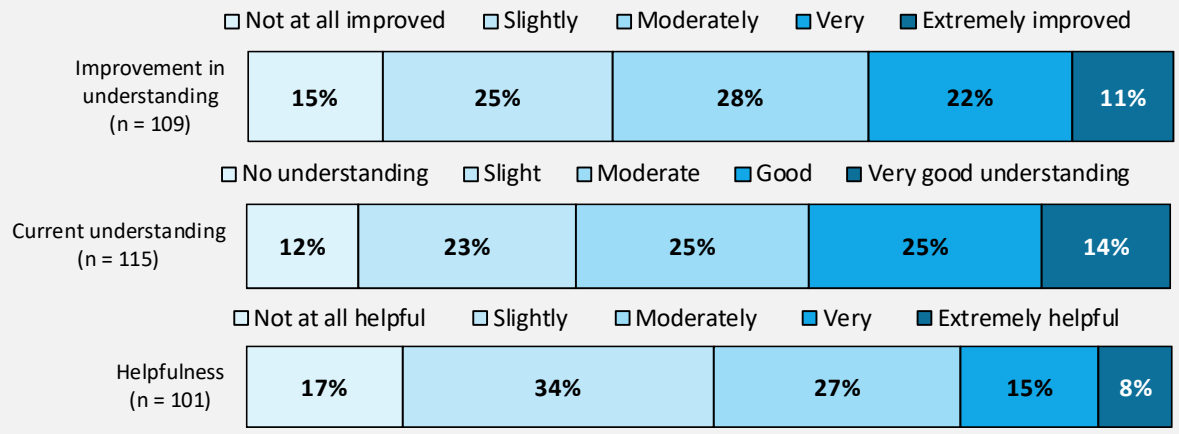

Figure 12. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi improvement in understanding, current understanding, and views on the helpfulness of Mirimiri-ā-kōrero (excluding not applicable).

Social workers described seeing Mirimiri-ā-kōrero tool as an approach to review cases with other kaimahi able to share different perspectives. It was an opportunity to look at a case a different way, test the social workers' thinking and offer alternative suggestions and approaches. Some kaimahi thought Mirimiri-ā-kōrero was about taking thinking to a deeper level when considering the needs of whānau and the Oranga Tamariki response.

Feedback in interviews with kaimahi provided accounts of mixed experiences with the tool. There was some positive feedback from kaimahi who had completed a Mirimiri-ā-kōrero who had felt nervous before going in but had found it really helpful. They had found it useful to talk through the issues and seek feedback from their colleagues. They found it helpful to have someone there to take note of the actions and way forward. One social worker suggested that it would also be helpful to have someone check in after the Mirimiri-ā-kōrero session to see how things were progressing and if the actions were being implemented. This feedback loop could help social workers develop a clearer understanding of the tool and build their confidence in applying it.

Some social workers said they did not come out of Mirimiri-ā-kōrero feeling they had changed their thinking or heard new ideas about their cases. Without that, they thought Mirimiri-ā-kōrero had not been beneficial. Some sites had initially tested the approach but had discontinued it due to negative first experiences, kaimahi reluctance, and the logistical challenges of getting groups of kaimahi together. For example, early in the implementation, some social workers did a Mirimiri-ā-kōrero and felt belittled by the process so had not continued. At another site, few social workers had completed a Mirimiri-ā-kōrero and of those who had completed one, most described negative experiences.

Both Christchurch sites involved in the trial had previously used Mirimiri-ā-kōrero as a tool for enhancing whānau voice within their social work processes. They thought the earlier version of Mirimiri-ā-kōrero was very clear and found it difficult to adjust to the new version. Late in the evaluation, kaimahi still felt more confident and comfortable with the original version than the version introduced through the Practice Approach. Kaimahi considered the adaptations to Mirimiri-ā-kōrero had made it less clear and took away from its original purpose.

Other kaimahi feedback focused on wanting more support with learning and applying Mirimiri-ā-kōrero. Most commonly though kaimahi were unclear about its purpose and how to use it, so they were not applying it in their mahi. Kaimahi felt hesitant about trying to use Mirimiri-ā-kōrero and did not feel confident they were using it correctly. Some described negative first experiences using Mirimiri-ā-kōrero in their work which discouraged further attempts.

- Many kaimahi felt they still did not have a good sense for what a 'good enough' purpose would be.
- Kaimahi had participated in initial training but felt uncertain about how to apply Mirimiri-ā-kōrero in practice. They wanted more learning time and more ongoing coaching.
- They wanted an expert to support them in using the approach. Some kaimahi did share experiences of Mirimiri-ā-kōrero working when they were focused on using the tool last year when they had access to trained kaimirimiri. Another difference identified in the successful delivery of these early attempts was the on-site access to support from the trial team.
- Kaimahi found Mirimiri-ā-kōrero difficult when there was a supervisor in the facilitator role. The hierarchical positions made it harder for kaimahi to contribute openly. For the tool to be successful, kaimahi felt there was a need to balance the voices. Other sites spoke about not having access to a trained kaimirimiri and reinforced the notion that the facilitator role in this process was critical to the successful outcome of the tool.

Some teams provided specific feedback. The Youth Justice team's work was mandated and late intervention, so kaimahi did not see a space for it. The intake team found it more useful because there was a lot more unknown in the intake space. In Care and Protection, all information was already known, so many kaimahi felt it was less likely their Mirimiri-ā-kōrero would contribute new thinking.

At one site, kaimahi struggled to identify an appropriate purpose for the mirimiri-ā-kōrero.

> *I'm not clear on what the purpose of Mirirmiri-ā-kōrero is. I know it's to put out the information that you have and identify the missed, which is great but what I guess the framework has put in my head, to be really purposeful around why are we doing this? What are we hoping to get out of it? and I'm just not clear on the purpose. (Kaimahi)*

By the end of data collection, the site had pivoted to using Mirimiri-ā-kōrero as a handover tool, even though that was not its intended purpose. All kaimahi described that it worked very well in providing the depth of information not always available or clear in case notes.

Overall, kaimahi identified a need for more training and ongoing support for facilitators to understand the tool and how to apply it in their day-to-day work.

SITE CASE STUDY: SITE PUTTING MIRIMIRI-Ā-KŌRERO INTO PRACTICE

Oranga Tamariki trial sites were introduced to the Practice approach and its components through an orientation and on-site coaching. Kaimahi discussed the highs and lows of implementation and how this impacted each site and what the challenges and barriers were to getting the training across so that front line social workers would be equipped with the tools to make a practice shift.

The challenge has been using it on a day-to-day basis because I think the originality of your own practice gets pushed aside ... It has opened up a new way of practicing but how does this continue as part of my learning style if no one hits me up about how the practice is I'm afraid that it could be lost, my fault of neglecting it and in what way will success be shown? How are we measuring success, if we measure is it reduction in child abuse or reduction in recidivism youth offending. (Social worker)

Our site is complex ... everything has to be scheduled. We have to balance that with the operational need. Not all our social workers have gone through orientation, because of the operational demand more than anything. (Practice lead)

I feel resistant to using certain tools until I get the information down. I want to record things that make me feel comfortable, that's my default, and if I'm stressed about a case I want to be doing all my things properly within a certain timeframe. It takes a lot more effort because it's a shift in thinking and in a high pressure situation, the Practice Approach is not your default. (Social worker)

The challenge for kaimahi in the site was to concentrate on being purposeful and intentional within their practice. The expectation was that social workers demonstrate self-awareness and critically reflect on their own personal values, cultures, knowledge and beliefs to manage the influences of personal biases when practicing. The Practice Approach enabled social workers to be competent and confident in decision making, it underpins practice and empowers social work voice.

Te Toka Tūmoana Practice Model

Te Toka Tūmoana aimed to guide Oranga Tamariki kaimahi in their relational mahi. The tool was intended to be used across service lines to enable kaimahi to build relationships, develop understanding, sense make, analyse, and plan their continuing mahi with tamariki and whānau Māori to restore oranga.

> *When we started the Practice Shift, the values of Te Toka Tūmoana, the mana tamaiti principles. There was a lot of components that staff became overwhelmed, confused with questions on what are we talking about here? What are we talking about where they all kind of intersect. (Site Leadership)*

Te Toka Tūmoana was only implemented in Panmure and Te Pūmanawa in Tāmaki. Early feedback was limited because kaimahi were still working to understand when and how to use Te Toka Tūmoana. The Oranga Tamariki kaimahi survey found more than half (55%) of kaimahi thought their current understanding of Te Toka Tūmoana was good or very good but just under half (46%) thought it was a helpful or very helpful tool.

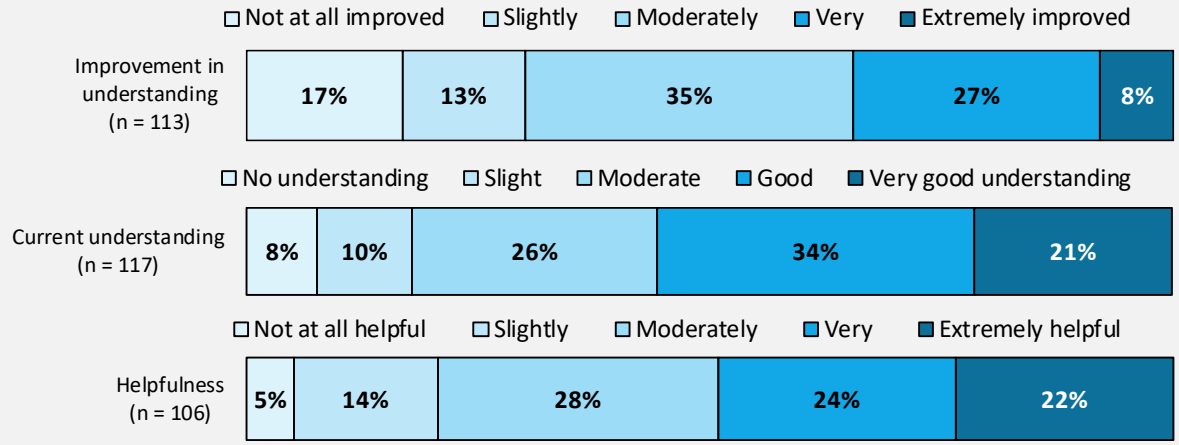

Figure 13. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi improvement in understanding, current understanding, and views on the helpfulness of Te Toka Tūmoana (excluding not applicable).

By the second round of data collection, kaimahi were more aware of Te Toka Tūmoana but said it was still not widely used or well-understood. One of the most common challenges in understanding was seeing a place for Te Toka Tūmoana when Oranga Framing appeared to fulfil a very similar purpose.

Many kaimahi expected to increase their engagement with Te Toka Tūmoana in the next learning cycle.

Training and learning cycles

Key messages

- Rollout of the Practice Approach comprised introduction and orientation sessions followed by learning cycles that included regular wānanga, training sessions, forums, reflection sessions, online learning, receiving information by email, and on-site coaching from staff with a deep understanding of the material.
- There was enthusiasm and excitement for the Practice Approach following the introductory sessions.
- The learning sessions were most valuable when kaimahi could discuss the circumstances of their work.
- While many kaimahi were excited by the Practice Approach, they were hindered in implementation by the high demand nature of their jobs and their workloads. Kaimahi wanted access to ongoing coaching and support as they built their understanding of how to apply the Practice Approach and the tools, models, and resources to their practice.
- The Practice Approach is in the early phases of rollout. Kaimahi understand the Approach and the reasons for it. Effective implementation now relies on consistent and effective guidance for kaimahi about how to apply the learnings to their social work practice.

Orientation and training activities summary

The orientation, education, and training opportunities delivered for kaimahi through the trial changed over time and varied across sites (Table 3).

Table 3. Range of orientation and training activities delivered for kaimahi through the trial.

Training Support	Description
Introduction and orientation	In the Auckland region, a two-day orientation training was hosted at a local marae. In Christchurch, orientation training was delivered over a three-week period. Orientation training introduced the Practice Approach concept and each of the four tools, models, and resources.
Learning Cycles	Learning cycles offered a range of different learning opportunities including regular wānanga, training sessions, forums, reflection sessions, online learning, and receiving information by email. Learning cycles were offered directly to kaimahi on-site. They aimed to help kaimahi understand how the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources applied to their work.
Ongoing coaching Support	The QPE team spent time at each site to provide ongoing coaching and support. Kaimahi also accessed supervisors, practice leads, and other kaimahi for additional support.

Introduction and orientation training experience

Oranga Tamariki introduced the Practice Approach to kaimahi in regional hui. In Tāmaki, kaimahi attended a two-day hui for orientation. In Ōtautahi, kaimahi participated in the orientation over a three-week period. Both approaches created enthusiasm about the changes among kaimahi. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Oranga Tamariki kaimahi surveyed thought they had been able to participate almost every time or every time (Figure 14).

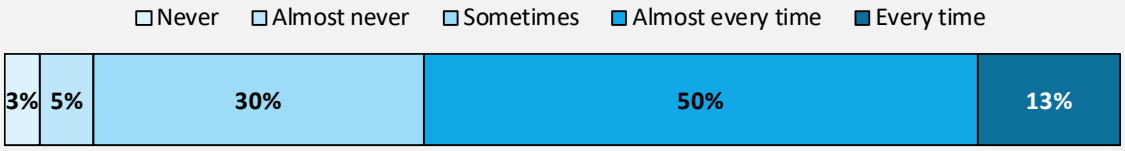

Figure 14. How often kaimahi were able to participate in Practice Approach trial orientations, including the initial Practice Approach orientation and following Practice Framework, models, and tools orientations? (n = 125)

Orientation and training for the Practice Approach needed to be well coordinated and resourced. Delays between orientation and training risked losing kaimahi attention and momentum. But in both regions, there was a long gap before the Learning in Practice cycles began. The initial enthusiasm waned for some kaimahi over the waiting time and increased concern about the commitment to the Practice Approach.

> *We were shown all the different bits of the [Practice Framework]. And at that time, I remember thinking, that's amazing that I've got all that detail. It's incredible. It's great. All that. I walked out the building and promptly forgot everything. (Kaimahi)*

NCC kaimahi felt the initial training was more focused on applying the Practice Approach within more typical sites. Examples provided regarding the use of each of the tools, models, and resources were not as applicable to the NCC context and way of working. NCC kaimahi felt like they had to reinvent the wheel to adapt the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources to the NCC context.

Trial education and training activity effectiveness

The introduction and orientation sessions were followed by learning cycles that introduced the Practice Framework and the other Practice Approach tools, models, and resources. Kaimahi described participating in a range of different learning opportunities, including regular wānanga, training sessions, forums, reflection sessions, online learning, and receiving information by email. Some sites had a strong learning culture embedded, so ongoing Practice Approach learning was incorporated into existing compulsory weekly professional learning and development sessions or daily morning sessions.

There was a balance to be struck between introducing too much too quickly and slowing down the pace to prevent kaimahi disengagement. Kaimahi found the early pace of the learning difficult alongside their existing workloads. Some kaimahi felt overwhelmed by the complexity of the Practice Approach and the number of tools, models, and resources introduced to embed and enable the Practice shift. They described not having time to fully grasp and adapt to each tool before beginning to

learn the next one. Furthermore, kaimahi did not feel adequately prepared by the training to adopt the Practice Approach within their practice.

> *There were lots of things introduced in terms of the practice. I found this really overwhelming because lots were happening at the same time. There is an information overload…, and at the same time, hand in hand, we have to do the work that we have to do … (Kaimahi)*

Kaimahi were most positive about the learning sessions when they found them interesting and engaging. Kaimahi would have liked more trainers on-site to bring different perspectives and keep the teaching engaging. Other kaimahi wanted a Māori trainer to sit alongside to help them understand the richness of the kupu and tools, models, and resources. Some kaimahi expressed a desire to hear about the intention and background of the tools, models, and resources from the kaimahi who had developed them.

Challenges described by kaimahi included:

- Teams working irregular schedules limited their ability to actively engage in the training and implementation, resulting in their exclusion or falling behind.
- The need for more information about the practical application of theoretical concepts.
- Most sites spoke about having to create their own tools to support implementation across the different workstreams within their site. Sites with particular roles, or special functions also found that training examples were not relevant or applicable to their contexts and this often resulted in further confusion regarding implementation within their contexts.

  > *… all these frameworks and tools are presented, or they're created in a way that automatically suits care and protection work. So YJ [is] having to adapt it themselves to our timeframes, our processes, our arrests, our courts, our types of reports because there's no templates that have come out for YJ reports…YJ have to do additional work to make it fit. (Kaimahi)*

- Some sites felt disadvantaged in their training because it was interrupted by the Christmas/New Year break and some by not having the same access to support as other sites.

Coaching and support

Kaimahi wanted access to coaching and support as they built their understanding of how to apply the Practice Approach to their practice. Overall, more than half (54%) of Oranga Tamariki kaimahi said they had been able to attend on-site coaching almost every time or every time. The proportion who said they had been able to attend never or almost never was higher than for the orientation (16% compared to 8%).

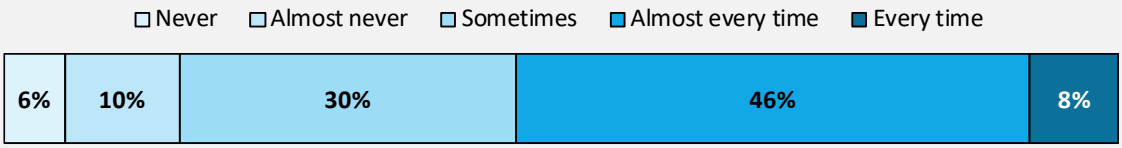

Figure 15. How often kaimahi were able to attend on-site coaching support, for the Practice Approach, the Practice Framework, Practice Approach models, and tools (n = 126)

The learning sessions were valuable, but kaimahi wanted to discuss the specific circumstances of their work. Kaimahi required guidance on how to implement the tools, models, and resources into the different variations of social work practice that exists across the different teams and sites. Kaimahi spoke about wanting access to coaching support that helped them identify how their current practice connected to the new Practice Approach tools, models, and resources and what specific areas required strengthening or changing. Most felt that much of their application of the tools, models, and resources was based on their understanding and interpretation, but queried whether this was correct.

> *You can't just roll this out in two days. You need to revisit and revisit; you need coaching. Coaching is a big one for very competent people. Confidence is a big one, and I think the nervousness is purely because of that: The not knowing and wanting to know…. (Site leadership)*

Sites reported minimal engagement from the Professional Development kaimahi outside the learning cycles. Kaimahi wanted go-to people they could approach for advice and guidance. Kaimahi therefore, sought day-to-day support from supervisors and practice leads within their sites. However, some spoke of the challenges in accessing the appropriate level of support when supervisors and practice leads were also new to learning the practice approach and the various tools, models, and resources.

> *I think that's the biggest downfall – it's a lot of learning [and there is a] lack of support to really implement it and build each other up in learning the principles… It's not consistent, even with the team, even under leadership. It's very difficult because the concept and the theories are fantastic, but translating it is a fight. (Kaimahi)*

Some sites had more involvement with coaching and training than others and some sites felt that if they had more training, learning would have been a smoother process. Some thought not knowing all the tools, models and resources disadvantaged their team and as a result, the whānau and tamariki they worked with.

> *… We have not been fortunate like other sites, where they get somebody from the Practice Approach team physically, [we don't have someone] here all the time to tautoko us. (Kaimahi)*

Lack of time to learn and expectations to continue to manage high workloads limited time to engage with the Practice Approach. Social workers wanted more time to train, having the same opportunities and space to do that without pressing business as usual demands. Kaimahi needed time to engage with the context and background to the Practice Approach to deepen their understanding of the Practice Approach and apply learning to their everyday work.

> *And that's how it was actually sold, so "you can take your lunch and participate while eating". I know this morning I made it today, and I felt embarrassed. You want the balance of being*

able to feel that you can take a lunch break that you're valued enough to take a break. (Site leadership)

That's our challenge here, to figure out how to enable busy practitioners, personal lives, caseloads, placements, challenges with colleagues, managers, living life, how do we drop learning into that space to the point that it sticks and they become it. (National Office stakeholder)

The huge backlogs here has definitely an impact on how people work and the time that they can put into each piece of work. One of the things with the practice shift and the practice programme is that it does require time and space and we don't provide that to our kaimahi necessarily because of the fact that there's a pressure. (Site leadership)

The style and skills of the coaches and facilitators also affected kaimahi experiences of the training. Skilled trainers could bring the material to life and make learning engaging and rewarding if they delivered the material in a way that suited what kaimahi wanted to get out of the sessions.

It's definitely a beautiful way of looking at understanding realities. I found the way that it was delivered frustrating. I felt that it was inefficient and verbose and not to the point. And I felt like we, as a site, developed our own tools. In some ways it's been cool to develop ourselves, but potentially, when you're time poor in this kind of job, it would have been nicer to have had that kind of handed [to us]. (Kaimahi)

Support from leadership

The Practice Approach aimed for learning to start in the sites. Leaders were offered initial training so they could understand the Practice Approach and support kaimahi.

The introduction was under cycle one where the sites were brought together to have sessions with Leadership … the learning and capability team from National and Regional office, guided through a structure of learning, it was delivered to leadership, which included the supervisory leadership level. (Site leadership)

Leadership could also then be committed to holding their kaimahi accountable for their engagement with the Practice Approach. However, the effectiveness of this approach varied between sites. One site attributed its success in implementing the Practice Approach to the early training of people in leadership roles so kaimahi could see their support for the change. In sites that utilised site leadership as their main source of support, leaders created regular opportunities for Practice Approach implementation to be discussed and shared across teams. These sites also spoke about having a strong culture of learning and development and access to cultural expertise and knowledge from members within their team such as Māori kaimahi and kairaranga. Confidence in leadership gave kaimahi confidence to be creative in their use of the Practice Approach resources.

Many kaimahi from other sites described a lack of support from leadership, often related to lack guidance about using the Practice Approach in their roles.

At the start, it was like heading into it blind, with the people trying to roll it out. Because we had these practice change leads right at the start, those roles have sort of disappeared. I didn't really know the point. (Kaimahi)

Where kaimahi encountered challenges with the Practice Approach changes or tension between the Practice Approach and their former practice, they looked to their

leadership for clarity. Social workers wanted their leadership to have a strong understanding of the Practice Approach and its tools, models, and resources. They also wanted to see their leaders passionate about implementing the Practice Approach.

> *You go back to your sites where your manager hasn't really fully embraced the practice shift, so you're going back to hit a ceiling. When you're starting to justify things that are within the practice shift, that's when you know something's wrong. You almost think, are the managers prepared for the practice shift because you can prepare the kaimahi, your kaimahi can flog the horse all day but you end up hitting those brick walls. (Kaimahi)*

Social workers spoke about their knowledge and understanding often being further ahead than that of their leadership. Some said they felt like they were leading the Practice Approach more than their practice leads. Experiencing uncertainty from leadership undermined kaimahi perceptions of the Oranga Tamariki commitment to the Practice Approach.

Time and capacity were issues for leadership as well as for other kaimahi. Just like other social workers, supervisors struggled to make time to learn the Practice Approach tools, models, and resources when they were already having difficulty managing their existing workloads.

Understanding before application

Social workers needed clarity to move forward with the Practice Approach. One of the most important points was recognising a Māori-centred approach worked for all. For example, one supervisor described how the Māori-centred approach was Western ideology and Māori ideology meeting in the middle and leaning in, consistent with Te Tiriti. Implementing the approach meant bringing all kaimahi into a space that recognised that Western knowledge and mātauranga Māori can work alongside each other as intended by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In sharing their experiences of implementation, some social workers felt they were asked by site leadership and supervisors to use the new language within the Practice Framework and other tools, models, and resources before they understood the meaning. Social workers wanted to understand the concepts behind kupu before using them. Incorporating new language into their case notes and court reports felt inauthentic when they had not yet grasped the concepts in their entirety. Social workers felt focusing on the purpose and application of the Practice Approach first gave them a greater understanding of how it could be applied, where it could be adapted to fit different contexts, and where their practice needed to change or be strengthened.

Some social workers did not understand why they had to learn the Māori-centred approach when a small proportion of their tamariki and whānau were Māori.

Cultural support for the Practice Approach

Implementation of the Practice Approach built on the trial sites' existing foundation of kaimahi knowledge of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori and the support they could access. The foundations were supported by knowledge and experience across team members and/or Māori leaders whose own knowledge, experience, and upbringing

within Te Ao Māori supported their wider teams. Some sites had been on a journey to build the cultural competencies of their kaimahi and increase their relationship and engagement with mana whenua.

A strong cultural foundation supported kaimahi understanding and confidence with the Practice Approach. Some kaimahi noted that engagement with the Practice Approach was enhanced by an understanding of te reo Māori and particularly the kupu used in the Practice Approach.

Each component had different language for kaimahi to learn. For some, this was a barrier to understanding the Practice Approach. Most kaimahi were not deterred by the challenge and were eager to learn and embraced te reo within their practice but needed support to pronounce the new kupu correctly.

One site offered te reo Māori lessons to their kaimahi to increase their knowledge capability. Other sites accessed additional cultural competency training from external experts. Strong relationships with mana whenua and strong cultural competency was an enabler for one site who had already begun working in a more culturally informed way. This laid a positive foundation for the introduction of the Practice Approach.

> *The implementation approach is bringing in all aspects, bringing the values, bringing the messaging, the engagement with partners, it's bringing that practice. (Site leadership)*

A common theme in feedback from kaimahi was the need for a dedicated role to provide kaimahi with support for their development of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori alongside the Practice Approach implementation.

Many kaimahi spoke of wanting better access to cultural support so they could do it well. Some non-Māori kaimahi felt self-conscious or felt it was superficial to apply Māori concepts in their practice without feeling confident in their understanding of the underlying concepts. Many wanted to ensure their application of the Practice Approach reflected the underlying values of the concepts beyond translation of the kupu.

Lack of iwi relationships and access to cultural support led to pressure on Māori kaimahi to pick up the responsibility for supporting their colleagues. In some cases, Māori kaimahi were identified as subject matter experts, entitling them to be part of key conversations but without recognition of the new responsibilities over and above current workloads. Not all Māori kaimahi felt confident contributing in this way or wanted to offer that support. This was especially true for kaimahi who were not confident in their knowledge and expertise in Te Ao Māori.

Some Māori and non-Māori kaimahi expressed a preference for Māori facilitators addressing Māori topics to support that learning. Some kaimahi challenged the assumption that Māori and Pacific kaimahi would grasp the Practice Approach due to their cultural background. They highlighted the need to recognise the diversity in their experiences and connections to their culture. Some may have grown up fully immersed, while others were beginning to explore their own cultures. This diversity should be considered more when deciding what cultural support is required at sites.

> *It needs to be presented by people who know what the true meaning of that word [is] because it's not being presented from the top in a way that it's totally being embraced by the kaimahi*

> *and that's not fair to throw a couple of kupu at them without understanding the meaning or the essence, the spiritual aspect of that word to them ... I know it [PA] works. But when a white [person] is telling me what this kupu means, it's gonna be hard for me to take them seriously, and that's what we get sometimes. (Kaimahi)*

Some kaimahi found it difficult to learn the Māori-centred approach. They found te reo within the training worrying and felt anxious about having to practice in this way as a social worker.

STAFF CASE STUDY: STAFF MEMBER NEW TO TE AO MĀORI

An Oranga Tamariki staff member at one of the evaluation focus groups described their experiences with the Practice Approach. Their practice flowed from their understanding of the Practice Approach. For them, it was simple and supported how their practice was relational and purposeful. Learning the Practice Approach supported them to develop their knowledge of te ao Māori and their journey as a leader with their staff.

The Practice shift was about getting the Eurocentric ways of working with things that work from kaupapa Māori and bringing it together, to weave it, to make it more responsive to our clients and the way we are going to be practicing and achieving outcomes. It's not kaupapa Māori but taking the two and weaving it together.

It's moving from one practice to another practice, incorporating Te Ao Māori ways of thinking, knowing that we are a Crown agency. We can't just adopt te ao Māori space, we're a partner in that context to Te Tiriti o Waitangi...It's meeting at the border.

The shift is taking the two and weaving it together using the Te Puna Oranga to create safety. When things are ebbing for us, it affects one of those elements in our Te Puna Oranga and how do we get it to a flowing space so that we are able to provide that for our tamariki and for our mokopuna so that their wellbeing are flowing too and there's safety there. Our whānau are also the same when things are ebbing, it's not that it's always going to be ebbing, it's about working, building those strengths letting and empowering the whānau to take control in making those decisions and supporting them in achieving those outcomes. That's how I understand the new Practice Framework.

The kaimahi saw the relationships Oranga Tamariki build with tamariki, whānau, communities and partners at the heart of the Practice Approach. They connected with the Te Tiriti o Waitangi framing and the mana-enhancing paradigm.

Continuing to support Practice Approach learning

The factors summarised below emerged as factors to consider in continuing to support the trial sites to implement the Practice Approach and/or extending the Practice Approach to other Oranga Tamariki sites:

- **Understanding the site context:** Each site had a different context which influenced the training and education they needed, how they used the Practice Approach, and what ongoing support they needed. Kaimahi felt that this support would have helped them grasp the Practice Approach quicker and be in a better position to implement it effectively.
- **Facilitator:** Training worked best when it was delivered by skilled and experienced educators who were also knowledgeable and skilled social work practitioners. Facilitators also needed to be able to support kaimahi to explore the cultural dimensions of the Practice Approach and the implications for their social work practice. Some Māori kaimahi thought they would be best supported by Māori facilitators.
- **Experience:** Kaimahi enjoyed and got more from learning sessions that were fun, engaging, and conversational. The content needed to apply to their practice rather than focusing too much on theory.
- **Consistency:** Messages for kaimahi must be consistent across facilitators and sessions because inconsistency exacerbated feelings of uncertainty. Stakeholders noted the challenges in maintaining consistency with the trials' iterative approach to the tools, models, and resources and the learning.
- **Making time**: Kaimahi need dedicated time to engage during working hours. Kaimahi suggested that leadership allocate designated, uninterrupted block periods (half a day or more) for training to create a focused learning environment.
- **Reach all kaimahi:** Ensure training opportunities were available to teams working different hours or offsite so that all kaimahi could participate in learning. The training schedules should respond to the needs of each site.
- **Pace implementation to match social worker capacity:** Pacing the introduction of tools, models, and resources to allow kaimahi to engage with and understand each Practice Approach component. Adjusting the pace of roll-out over time in response to kaimahi feedback was important. This approach could leverage the experience of trial site supervisors to support new sites during rollout. A discussion around these expectations would need to happen with current trial sites to avoid adding more to current workloads.
- **Team specific training**: Implementing the Practice Approach based on team roles (e.g., all Youth Justice team in Auckland) rather than site locations (e.g., Ōtara office). This recognises that teams within sites have varying work dynamics, making it difficult to create training that suits all teams and offer effective support. Implementing based on team roles, which often share similar challenges, enables similar teams to collaborate more effectively in problem-solving and tailor the Practice Approach to their specific work.
- **Mixed teaching and learning approach**: Expand e-learning to address space constraints and support teams that cannot access training during regular work hours. Consider options for onboarding and inducting new kaimahi to the Practice Approach.

Summary of challenges and enablers

The table below summarises the challenges and enablers identified through the evaluation to date by areas of focus for the successful implementation of practice frameworks.[2]

Table 4. Enablers and challenges in the Practice Approach implementation by areas of focus.

Areas of focus	Summary of key enablers and challenges
Clarity of the Practice Approach	– Kaimahi had clear understanding of the intent of the Practice Approach. – There was inconsistency in guidance about implementing the Practice Framework and the other tools, models, and resources delivered to support the Practice Approach. This was exacerbated by inconsistent advice from different trainers, differences in how teams worked, and limited guidance from leadership who were also learning the Practice Approach. – Kaimahi who had access to expert advice found it easier to apply their learning to their work. Confident and competent coaches are important. – Social workers felt that focusing on the purpose and application of the Practice Approach enabled a greater understanding of how the tools, models, and resources could be applied to their work.
Content and process	– The Practice Approach included tools, models, and resources that aimed to help social workers apply their learning to their practice. – The overarching Practice Framework and Oranga Framing were most useful for kaimahi. They had more difficulty and needed more support applying the more process-focused tools, models, and resources to their work. – The number of tools, models, and resources was too -many for kaimahi managing already challenging workloads. – There was a balance to be struck between introducing too much too quickly and slowing down the pace to prevent kaimahi disengagement. – Moving from content to process required support from leadership and/or coaching. – Diversity means some sites wanted support for kaimahi at different levels of prior understanding and different readiness to change. Kaimahi were ready to participate in the approach, but the learning needed to be more targeted to the various levels of knowledge present within each site.

[2] The headings in this table are aligned to a note provided by Oranga Tamariki describing the reasons practice frameworks fail referencing Stanley et al, 2020.

Areas of focus	Summary of key enablers and challenges
Kaimahi expectations of change	– Kaimahi expected the Practice Approach to support their relational work. – There was strong support for the Practice Shift being founded upon a Māori-centred approach. – Some social workers had concerns that relational and Māori-centre Practice Approach created additional risk, but stakeholders were clear that it was not 'either-or'. The most common concern was the time required to deliver a relational way of working when some concerns and risks required prompt intervention and response. – Trial site kaimahi were required to maintain their workloads while learning the Practice Approach, limiting their learning time. – Some kaimahi had difficulty with the amount of reo Māori kupu, but leaders shared that a focus on the framework helped resolve this as people became familiar with the Practice Framework and the other tools, models, and resources, they were better equipped to then incorporate the language in a more accurate and meaningful way.
Promotion of the Practice Approach as a toolkit for supervision and practice leadership, or senior leadership	– Kaimahi were positive about the way the Practice Approach connected with the way they were already working and the ways they wanted to work. – Implementation focused on social worker practice and was isolated to the trial sites, which meant social workers couldn't see evidence of whole of organisation commitment to the change. – Implementation was most successful when there was strong support from leadership. This support ensured the practice approach remained a top priority for site kaimahi. The alignment of vision from management to practice leaders and kaimahi was crucial to the site's implementation of the practice approach. – Leadership's (supervisors, practice leaders, and managers) commitment to relational practice, along with their expectations that kaimahi build meaningful relationships while serving whānau in the community, has had a notable impact. – In some sites, social workers noted their knowledge of the Practice Approach was equivalent to or greater than their leadership as all learned at the same time.
Systems were not yet set up to support the Practice Approach	– Friction with IT systems, Oranga Tamariki partners, and perceived lack of support from leadership added to kaimahi wariness about organisational commitment to change.

Areas of focus	Summary of key enablers and challenges
Supervision not focussed on 'why' we practice and 'how' we practice	– Most sites had not implemented the Tangata Whenua and Bicultural Supervision Model. Supervisors had received training and in most cases were waiting for kaimahi to also be trained to be able to fully implement this model. – Kaimahi who had participated in supervision had experienced positive changes in the supervision approach. They spoke about supervision being more concerned with the wellbeing of kaimahi and not just how kaimahi were undertaking their role.
Quality Assurance reinforcers: difficulties in quality assuring 'practice'	– Quality assurance mechanisms within sites (supervisors, practice leaders, site managers) were learning about the Practice Approach and how to provide support to their kaimahi. – System mechanisms (KPIs, etc.) were not yet in place due to the trial approach.
The Practice Framework is unrelated to codes of professional practice or professional disciplines	– The Practice Framework effectively articulates and formalises practices that many kaimahi were already employing in their social work. Specifically, it provides a structure for engaging with whānau, tamariki, and rangatahi, aligning well with the principles of Te Ao Māori. These strategies are seen as vital for fostering understanding and cooperation during periods of significant change. – Many practitioners expressed those aspects of the Practice Framework, like holistic engagement, were already an integral part of their approach. These strategies were familiar and resonated with their existing practices.

Appendix One: Evaluation framework

Evaluation questions (sub-questions)	Measures/Indicators	Information sources
What is the context for the implementation of the trial (the Practice Framework and the four Practice Approach components)?		
What is the Practice Approach and why was it designed? What are the expected outcomes including changes in practice?	Description of Oranga Tamariki considerations for the implementation of the Practice Approach Any perceived limitations because of resource constraints	Document review National Office staff interviews
How effective was the implementation delivery, including the orientation and onsite coaching?		
How was Practice Approach introduced to the sites? What were the steps in the implementation delivery, including the orientation and onsite coaching? How did Oranga Tamariki kaimahi engage with the Practice Approach? What support do social workers and kaimahi have to make changes? Is there readiness to change practice? What factors affected the Practice Approach implementation delivery at each site?	Description of the implementation delivery, including the orientation and onsite coaching and any strengths and challenges Resources available to support implementation delivery – from the regions and from national office. Participation in the implementation, including the orientation and onsite coaching Context for the trial at each site and any resulting strengths/challenges for implementation delivery For each component: • Agreement on relevancy • Motivation to change • Preparation for making changes to practice • Support for making changes • Barriers and facilitators to change.	Regional case studies Interviews with regional managers, service centre site managers and leaders
How was orientation, onsite coaching and any other training delivered for the trial? What were the participants' experiences? How prepared did kaimahi feel to implement the Practice Approach? Did kaimahi benefit from the orientation, onsite coaching, and any other training in other ways?	For orientation, onsite coaching, and any other training for each component: • Kaimahi experience • Kaimahi participation • Understanding of purpose and intended outcomes • Views on potential benefits. Fit for purpose of practice guidance Intention to change practice as a result Specific aspects of the Practice Approach and the trial that key stakeholders perceive as being positive and/or negative	Interviews with trainers Social worker and kaimahi self-assessments Interviews with service centre site managers and leaders, kaimahi Oranga Tamariki social worker survey (to be completed by the Evidence Centre)

Evaluation questions (sub-questions)	Measures/Indicators	Information sources
Are the Practice Framework and components fit for purpose?		
Is the Practice Framework, and the other models, resources, and tools, which make up the Practice Approach, fit for purpose?	Kaimahi and stakeholder views on whether the trial contents can be applied for the purposes they are designed for Kaimahi and stakeholder views on the trial contents: • Relevance to their practice • Work across service lines • Can be applied for the purposes they were designed for • Meet the needs of social workers. • Meet the needs of whānau they support • Kaimahi and stakeholder views on benefits for kaimahi and whānau • Opportunities to strengthen/clarify the models and approaches.	Interviews with national stakeholders Interviews with regional managers, service centre site managers and leaders, social workers, and kaimahi
How do kaimahi apply and use the Practice Approach, including the various components (models, resources, and tools)?		
How do kaimahi and management/leadership apply the Practice Approach? What are the facilitators/barriers to applying the Practice Approach? What supports are needed to support continued change?	Descriptions of how and when kaimahi use the Practice Approach – supervision, management, planning, individual practice Descriptions of how and when kaimahi use the trial components Barriers and facilitators to applying the Practice Approach Supports that could/do address barriers identified	Interviews with regional managers, service centre site managers and leaders, social workers, and kaimahi
Is there evidence of an emerging paradigm shift – in each of the trial components and the Practice Framework?		
Are there additional supports that kaimahi need to support changes to their practice? How does the Practice Framework help kaimahi deliver their social/youth work? What examples of change can be identified? How do these changes link to the trial components and the Practice Approach?	Examples of practice changes or other changes from applying the Practice Approach, including the Practice Framework and/or the four components Kaimahi experiences of implementing kaupapa Māori approach into their practice Kaimahi descriptions of why/how the Practice Approach, including the	Interviews with regional managers, service centre site managers and leaders, social workers, and kaimahi

Evaluation questions (sub-questions)	Measures/Indicators	Information sources
	Practice Framework and/or the four components, help deliver social/youth work Use of the Practice Approach, particularly the Practice Framework in supervision Kaimahi views on: • Whether the Practice Approach components enable sense making, understanding and critical thinking for planning mahi with tamariki and whānau • How the Practice Framework enables/supports the other components • Positive impacts of the trial on their practice • Any other expected and unexpected outcomes from each component.	