



ORANGA TAMARIKI SYSTEM

Action Plan

Oranga Tamariki System Action Plan Six-monthly Implementation Report

January to June 2026



Contents

Introduction	2
The Action Plan is a cross-agency response to improve outcomes for core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki.....	2
Agencies focus efforts where they will have the most impact.....	2
Progress achieved between January to June 2026.....	3
Health Focus Area.....	3
Education Focus Area	6
Housing Focus Area	7
Data and Information Sharing Focus Area	7
What's coming up	9
The next six months	9

Introduction

The Action Plan is a cross-agency response to improve outcomes for core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki

The Oranga Tamariki System Action Plan (the Action Plan) is a statutory accountability mechanism requiring Chief Executives of children's agencies¹ to work together to improve outcomes for the core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki.²

There are also other agencies across the children's sector that are not defined as children's agencies in legislation but play an important role in making the work of the Action Plan successful.

Oranga Tamariki works with children, young people, and families and whānau that often have multiple, complex needs. This includes impacts of poverty, discrimination, long term unemployment, low income, poor housing, greater physical and mental health needs, alcohol and drug abuse, family breakdown, family violence and sexual violence.

The Action Plan considers that agencies across sectors need to work together to support the holistic wellbeing of these populations.

Agencies focus efforts where they will have the most impact

Since 2022, the six children's agencies, along with other key partners, have been working together to progress actions under the Action Plan.

In 2025/26, the Minister for Children approved a new set of initiatives that build on previous work and introduce additional actions in response to findings from the 2023/24 Experiences of Care in Aotearoa report from the Independent Children's Monitor and other relevant reviews. These actions are focused on improving health, education, and housing outcomes for children and young people, supported by improved data and information sharing across all areas.

There is also cross-agency work that sits outside of the Action Plan that supports better outcomes for core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki. For example, initiatives arising from the Dame Karen Poutasi review, Government Target 3 on reducing child and youth offending, and other agency-led programmes. These activities sit outside the scope of this report.

This report outlines progress made between January and June 2026 on implementing actions under the 2025/26 Action Plan focus areas.

¹ Children's agencies are defined by the Act as Oranga Tamariki, New Zealand Police, the Ministries of Education, Social Development, Health, and Justice. Other agencies can be involved, such as Te Puni Kōkiri, Department of Corrections, Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, the Centre for Family Violence and Sexual Violence, Kāinga Ora, and the Ministry for Housing and Urban Development.

² This encompasses the "core populations of interest to the department" as defined in section 5(1) of the Children's Act 2014.

Progress achieved between January to June 2026

Health Focus Area

National improvements to the Gateway Assessment Service

Benefit: Changes to the Gateway Assessment process will help improve timely access to services, improve cultural responsiveness, and clarify accountabilities between agencies in meeting the health, disability and education needs of children and young people

- The Gateway Assessment provides a specialist evaluation to comprehensively identify health, disability, and education support needs of children and young people in care or at the risk of entering care. It ensures a coordinated, cross-sector plan is in place to meet those needs.
- In response to a review of the Gateway Assessment service, the Minister for Children and Ministers of Health and Education agreed to progress national improvements within baseline funding. These national improvements focus on:
 - clearer processes and pathways so children and young people can access supports earlier and more efficiently
 - improved governance and accountability processes and strengthening cross-agency collaboration through clear guidance
 - earlier referrals and access to primary and community health care services
 - improved Education Profile³ and engagement with schools and education professionals (discussed further in the Education Focus Area of this report).
 - practical improvements to the Gateway information technology tool and revision of key performance measures for reporting purposes.
 - refining needs codes so that they better align with how health practitioners assess and record children's needs.
- Between January to June 2026, Oranga Tamariki, Health New Zealand, and the Ministry of Education progressed key activities to drive national improvements to the Gateway Assessment Service including:
 - Establishing a National Governance Group to strengthen cross-agency governance and accountability.
 - Implementing the updated Education profile forms and practice guidance for schools and early learning centres. The guidance is designed to improve teachers' understanding of their role in the Gateway Assessment process and will support schools in completing the assessment and identifying need. Initial user

³ The Education Profile is a key component of the Gateway Assessment process, where teachers or early childhood educators provide detailed information about a child's learning, engagement, and behavioural needs to inform a broader, multidisciplinary assessment.

feedback on the updates will be reviewed by the Ministry of Education in mid-September 2026.

- Progressing work to update the Gateway consent forms to support better informed consent, including clearer information with updated legal and information sharing processes. An information video to support whānau through the consent process and an online training module for the Gateway Coordinators are also being developed by Health New Zealand, in consultation with Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education.
- Testing of a role to support whānau through the Gateway process is also now underway with Hauora Māori Service providers across two sites with a third planned.
- Gateway IT tool changes are being finalised, and performance measures are being refined to better align with cross-agency reporting needs.

Enhanced visibility of children in care within the health system

Benefit: Children and young people in care will receive more responsive health care through enhanced visibility between agencies and health systems

- Enhancing the visibility of children and young people in the care of Oranga Tamariki within the health system will enable health practitioners to be more responsive to their needs and ensure access to appropriate health services. This work will also enable Oranga Tamariki to regularly receive health service information and better respond to health needs (a National Care Standards requirement).
- Key areas of focus include:
 - developing information sharing between Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand, a care status flag in the health system, and guidance for health practitioners
 - supporting conversations between health practitioners and children and young people, guided by new frontline service guidance
 - enabling proactive referrals and follow-ups to treatments
 - improving health data and outcomes for these children and young people.
- Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki commenced development work following approval from the Minister for Children and Minister of Health on the preferred design settings.
- Development of the secure information and data sharing agreements is underway alongside the technical build that will enable a care status flag in the health system. In addition, a provider was selected to develop the guidance for health practitioners.
- We expect that the care status flag and supporting guidance will be implemented by end 2027.

Mental health training

Benefit: Children and young people in care will receive better identification of mental health needs and better wellbeing support

- Health New Zealand funded Whāraurau⁴ to design and deliver a 'train-the-trainer' mental health training package for Oranga Tamariki frontline kaimahi.
- During January to April 2026, Whāraurau worked with Oranga Tamariki to develop the bespoke one-day training programme designed specifically for the Oranga Tamariki context. It is designed to improve capability of social workers to recognise and respond to mental health needs of children and young people.
- Whāraurau trained the Oranga Tamariki trainers in April 2026, along with completing the training materials. The course is now being rolled out through the regions to deliver training to all frontline social work kaimahi (up to June 2027).

Improving frontline collaboration between agencies

Benefit: Children and young people in care will receive timely access to mental health support

- The newly established Oranga Tamariki Chief Psychologist who provides leadership and oversight of the psychology workforce within Oranga Tamariki and strengthens collaboration across agencies started in the role in February 2026.
- Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand undertook a comprehensive review on how health care (including mental health care) is provided and supported in youth justice and other secure residences. This report identified actions needed to improve how the mental health needs of young people in residences are appropriately supported.
- Oranga Tamariki received funding as part of Budget 2026 to respond to the increasing complexity of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki. This includes providing early specialist intervention and providing an intensive clinical response to escalating needs. These new services will improve the response to children and young people with mental health needs, including identification of those needs and supporting referrals to Infant, Child, and Adolescent Mental Health Services (ICAMHS) or mental health crisis services. The early establishment work between April to June 2026 included the service design, initial recruitment, the implementation plan, and evaluation plan.
- Senior officials from Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand at both the regional and national level continue to have regular engagements to ensure alignment.

⁴ An organisation focused on training and support for the infant, child, adolescent and youth mental health workforce.

Education Focus Area

Redesign of education components within Gateway Assessments

Benefit: Holistic educational needs of children will be identified and met, and will engage teachers more effectively in the Gateway Assessment process

- The Gateway Assessment review identified the need to update the education profile templates, which inform education needs and supports specialist assessments. The updated profiles aim to better capture the holistic educational needs of a child and empower teachers to actively participate in Gateway Assessments.
- The Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki finalised three new education profiles for Primary & Secondary, Early Childhood Education, and Non-Enrolled. These have been in use since June 2026.
- Guidance for schools was also developed to support implementation of the Gateway Assessment. This will improve teachers' understanding of their role in the Gateway process and support schools and early childhood education in meeting the education needs identified through the assessment.
- The Ministry of Education will seek initial user feedback on internal processes and guidance in September 2026, so that any identified improvements to the process can be implemented promptly.

Improving access to learning and education supports

Benefit: Children and young people will receive the learning, behavioural, and other supports they need to engage in education

- This work is addressing recommendations from an Oranga Tamariki review of Student Aide Support completed in December 2024.
- The Student Aide Support Joint Agency Initiative agreement between Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education is being refreshed, as recommended by the review. This will clarify the role, scope, and guidance for the provision of Student Aide Support in line with each agency's legislative obligations.
- To advance this work, the overarching Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education was updated and signed by both agencies in October 2025. The MoU reiterates the roles, responsibilities, and commitments of both agencies in meeting the educational needs of children and young people. It also establishes escalation pathways to resolve individual children and system level barriers and issues.
- Under the refreshed MoU, agencies have progressed work to update joint agreements for supporting learning and behaviour and other educational needs, which includes Student Aide Support as well as Education in Residences and Chronic Absence.
- The Student Aide Support Joint Agency Initiative agreement commenced formal review in February 2026. Completion is expected by December 2026.
- Together, the refreshed MoU and underlying agreements will more clearly define each agency's responsibilities in supporting the learning, behavioural, and other educational needs of children and young people in care.

Housing Focus Area

Improving housing services, supports, and access

Benefit: Children, young people, and their whānau and families, who are receiving support from Oranga Tamariki or who are transitioning from state care or custody have access to safe and secure housing

- The review of supported accommodation services was completed. The outcomes are being used to inform commissioning of supported accommodation placements. Stakeholders are being consulted (August 2026 - February 2027) on the findings as part of work to recommission supported accommodation services to better meet the increasingly complex needs of young people transitioning from care to independence.
- The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has delivered a training webinar about housing products and services for Transition Support Service providers. Providers have also been connected into MSD's ongoing 2026 Training Series for practitioners working in the housing and homelessness sector, which is delivered in partnership with Community Housing Aotearoa and Housing First Auckland.
- Oranga Tamariki commissioned the development of a practical and accessible housing education programme specifically for disabled young people to complement the general workshop delivered by Transition Support Service providers. Content includes resources to build capability in independent living skills, tenancy readiness, budgeting, self-determination, wellbeing and successful transition planning.
- Train-the-Trainer sessions are being delivered to support all Transition Support Service providers to integrate these resources into one-to-one support, group programmes and everyday practice.

Data and Information Sharing Focus Area

Information sharing between Oranga Tamariki and Ministry of Education

Benefit: Children and young people in care are supported to be included in the education system through agencies working better together

- Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education continued to work towards regular data sharing on enrolment and attendance for children in care.
- There have been delays to progress due to issues with the data sharing process that have impacted the matching and accuracy of data. This is currently being addressed and worked through by agency data teams.
- Once operational, this information will support both agencies to deliver appropriate and meaningful interventions for children and young people who are, or at risk of, disengagement from education.

Development of information sharing agreements between Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand

Benefit: Health and Oranga Tamariki frontline will have better information to ensure that children in care receive health services that are tailored to their needs

- Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand are developing a two-way information sharing agreement as part of the work to enhance the visibility of children in care within the health system.
- This will enable Health New Zealand to share health information required under the National Care Standards with Oranga Tamariki. This includes information on enrolment with primary health care and dental health care providers. Once operational, Oranga Tamariki frontline will be able to use this information to support children in care to receive necessary health services.
- In addition, Oranga Tamariki will be able to share care status information with Health New Zealand. This will help make children in care visible in the health system so health providers can tailor their practice to better meet their needs.
- Work is underway as reflected in the update for *Enhanced visibility of children in care within the health system* (page 4).

Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Oranga Tamariki and the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

Benefit: ACC and Oranga Tamariki have a strengthened relationship to ensure children in Oranga Tamariki's care are supported with their safety, wellbeing, and recovery

- Oranga Tamariki and ACC have developed a relationship MoU to strengthen collaboration, cooperation, and communication as they carry out their respective roles. The MoU provides a framework to work together more effectively and share information to support the safety, wellbeing, and recovery of children and young people, and improve outcomes for whānau.
- An updated Information Disclosure Agreement was also developed to accompany the MoU. This agreement provides the legal basis for disclosures under section 283 of the Accident Compensation Act 2001, allowing ACC to continue to share information with Oranga Tamariki to help prevent or limit injury to children and young people arising from unlawful activity.
- Oranga Tamariki and ACC formally signed both agreements, putting them into effect.

Development of a Memorandum of Understanding and information sharing agreements between Oranga Tamariki and Corrections

Benefit: Corrections and Oranga Tamariki frontline staff will have strengthened relationships and better information to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, their caregivers, victims of wrongdoing, people who offend, whānau and communities

- Corrections and Oranga Tamariki work together to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people serving sentences, as well as the children of parents serving sentences. Both agencies share a duty of care to protect children and young people from abuse and neglect and work together to support transitions for rangatahi moving between youth justice residences and prison custody.

- Corrections and Oranga Tamariki have drafted a relationship MoU to strengthen partnerships and ensure agencies are working better together to meet the needs of this cohort. The sign off process for the MoU is now underway.
- Once the MoU is agreed, the Oranga Tamariki-Corrections Working Group will begin developing the associated agreements and schedules, including data and information sharing protocols.

What's coming up

The next six months

A refreshed set of actions to be delivered under the Oranga Tamariki System Action Plan for 2026/27 have been identified by agencies and approved by the Minister for Children.

The 2026/27 set of actions continues to deliver on priority multi-year initiatives that are ongoing from the 2025/26 set of initiatives, as well as newly identified cross-agency actions that support efforts to improve wellbeing outcomes for children and young people of interest to Oranga Tamariki.

Ten actions have been identified for 2026/27:

1. Enhancing the visibility of children in care in the health system
2. Implementing national improvements to the Gateway Assessment Service to improve access to health and education supports for children entering care
3. Undertaking analysis to understand and specify future requirements to improve adherence to annual health checks for children in care
4. Developing joint workforce guidance to support the education needs of children in care
5. Supporting regional cross-agency triage and coordinated case management to resolve barriers to unmet education needs for children in care
6. Improving data on enrolment and attendance for children in care
7. Improving access to Transition Support Services for young people in adult custody
8. Recommissioning Supported Accommodation Services to ensure it meets the needs of care experienced young people transitioning to independence
9. Mapping the housing system to identify gaps and barriers faced by care-experienced young people when accessing supports
10. Improving child safety through the Government response to the Dame Karen Poutasi review recommendations

The next implementation report will provide an update on agency progress to deliver on these ten actions.