

**Child and Youth** Wellbeing

Oranga Tamariki Action Plan **Needs Assessment A3** 

### Focus of this assessment

This assessment examines the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki and how current services and supports within the Oranga Tamariki system aim to meet those needs.<sup>1</sup>

Oranga Tamariki

44%



Mental health and wellbeing needs of

children and young people involved with

**65,170** children and young people are involved with Oranga Tamariki<sup>2</sup>

6% 44% are Pacific\* are Māori\* are Māori and Pacific\* \*Oranga Tamariki IDI analysis, June 2021

of children in a care or youth justice placement had a mental health hospital admission (IDI June 2020)



# **69%**

of children and young people admitted to the Auckland Child and Family Mental Health Unit had past or current involvement with Oranga Tamariki (in the year to August 18, Auckland District Health Board Child and Adolescent Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit and Oranga Tamariki Collaboration Report)

All children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki are likely to have experienced some level of trauma



of young people had who had been involved with Oranga Tamariki reported having attempted suicide in the last year, compared to 5% of those not involved with Oranga Tamariki (Youth 19 Survey)

of children young people aged 10-18 with a recent child protection intervention accessed mental health services in 2019/20, compared to 4% of those without contact with Oranga Tamariki (Ministry of Health IDI analysis, 2022)

Mental wellbeing is one aspect of broader wellbeing, or oranga. Positive mental wellbeing is most likely when the dimensions of oranga are in balance, and people can be described as feeling safe, connected, valued, worthy and accepted, and having a sense of belonging, identity and hope for the future.

of young people who had been involved with

compared to 21% of those not involved with

Oranga Tamariki (Youth 19 Survey)

Oranga Tamariki reported depression symptoms,

The children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki often have high mental health and wellbeing support needs. These needs may be due to a range of interactive factors and complex and challenging life experiences including the experience of trauma (individual, whanau, or intergenerational). These needs are intersectional and often inequitably distributed. Children and young people who identify as Māori, Pacific, disabled, and SOGEISC-diverse (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristic diverse) are over-represented in the Oranga Tamariki population, and are at greater risk of poor mental health and wellbeing than other children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki.

### Current state

A range of supports and services are needed to address mental distress across the mental wellbeing continuum, ranging from universal and prevention supports and services to specialist mental health and addiction services. Some of the key types of services that children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki and their families and whānau access to support their mental health and wellbeing needs are set out below.

### Specialist mental health and addiction services

In-patient acute In-patient units in Auckland, Porirua, and Christchurch provide acute mental health care

Infant Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Assessment, treatment and early intervention services for moderate to severe mental health problems, and youth alcohol and drug addiction

Joint agency services for children and young people with high needs

**High and Complex Needs Unit** Cross-agency unit supporting 230 children and young people with high and complex needs who exhibit high mental distress but do not meet the criteria for access to mainstream acute services

**On-site Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports in Residences** Personal health services contracted by Te Whatu Ora provide primary mental health and addiction services Regional Youth Forensic services and ICAMHS provide in-reach specialist mental health services

Oranga Tamariki Clinical Services teams

42 psychologists and therapists provide medium-long term specialist clinical and trauma-informed suppor

#### Oranga Tamariki Social Work and Practice

Functions involve needs assessment, plan implementation, decision-making, Family Group Conferences and collaborating with/advocating for whānau. Social workers are supported by specialist navigation and advice services

### Whānau and community supports and services

Whānau support services

and training programmes for parents and familie

Community level supports Services based within wider community structures such as schools, marae, and faith-based institutions to help navigate the systems, and provide advocacy services

#### The Primary Healthcare System

Prevention, mental health and addiction, and kaupapa Māori and Pacific services, including youth-specific and integrated services and counsellling helplines

<sup>1</sup>The Oranga Tamariki system refers to the system responsible for providing services or support to children, young people, and their families and whanau under, or in connection with, the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, including but not limited to health, education, and disability agencies. This assessment focuses on health service responses.

<sup>2</sup>Children and young people who are receiving assistance from Oranga Tamariki, or are in the care and protection and/or youth justice systems.

levels of mental distress

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### Government's current efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing include:

The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Oranga Tamariki Action Plan

Transformation of the health system

Kia Manawanui – Long-term pathway wo to mental wellbeing

Future Direction work programme for Oranga Tamariki Upcoming reviews of mental health work across Government

Implementation of the new Oranga Tamariki practice framework

### Driving changes to address system gaps and barriers

Supporting communities and people in them to identify and meet their mental health needs is complicated. We've heard that the system is not meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki.

Oranga Tamariki has proposed a series of responses that will enable everyone committed to the Action Plan to address multiple issues.

### Key system gaps and barriers

### **Focus areas**

To drive system change so that needs are met earlier and in a consistently holistic way that is oranga and trauma-informed

## Identify what a good system response looks like, including the roles of relevant agencies

Agencies from across the Oranga Tamariki system will work together to identify what a good system of support will need to look like in order to meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki and their families and whānau in an oranga and trauma-informed, holistic and whānau-centred way. This will include consideration of the broader environment that supports wellbeing, a focus on whānau-centred, culturally appropriate, wrap-around support services across the mental health continuum, and the roles of different agencies and providers to meet needs.

This work will need to involve all agencies, providers and other interested stakeholders who have a role in meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of these children and young people.

## Build frontline workers' and caregivers' knowledge in identifying and addressing needs

Oranga Tamariki will work with health sector entities and other agencies to investigate the gap in consistent understanding and approaches to meeting needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki across the system. This will include:

- increasing knowledge of the effects of trauma and the intersection of care and protection and mental health and wellbeing needs on the children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki
- supporting effective communication, including common language and shared expectations, around how to respond to the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki and their families in a holistic, oranga-focused and trauma-informed way across frontline staff of different agencies.

#### Improve collaboration and navigation

Health sector agencies and Oranga Tamariki will work with other key stakeholders to improve the way mental health and wellbeing supports and services are coordinated and navigated by the children and young people and their families and whānau involved with Oranga Tamariki. This could include:

- expanding formal collaborative frontline processes such as secondments between Oranga Tamariki and the health agencies
- expanding existing navigation roles and functions across the Oranga Tamariki system
  developing resources to support caregivers to navigate the Oranga Tamariki system,
- including health and other relevant services.

## Increase capacity of existing services and supports for moderate to high needs

Oranga Tamariki and health sector entities will identify options to expand existing services that meet moderate to high levels of need, which will help to alleviate pressure on specialist mental health and addiction services. These services could include the High and Complex Needs Unit, the Oranga Tamariki clinical services teams, and the mental health services provided in care and protection and youth justice residences, all of which are under high demand and do not have the capacity to provide sufficient support to all children and young people who need it.

Lack of culturally appropriate services and trusted relationships

The system is inaccessible for many children, young people and their families and whānau who are involved with Oranga Tamariki

The Oranga Tamariki system is uncoordinated and difficult to navigate

Child and youth mental health services are underfunded and under-resourced

The Oranga Tamariki system does not have a consistent, oranga and trauma-informed approach to addressing mental health and wellbeing needs

Service availability and effectiveness varies significantly around Aotearoa and in different settings

The system does not provide enough support for moderate needs

We do not have good evidence on needs or the efficacy of the system

**Investigate current levels of unmet mental health and wellbeing needs** Oranga Tamariki will work with health sector entities to initiate an investigation to understand the barriers for children and young people involved in Oranga Tamariki to accessing specialist mental health and addiction services, and the reasons why the health system and Oranga Tamariki are not reliably connecting around individual children and young people. This work will allow agencies to determine the size of the problem, and identify possible solutions to meet existing unmet needs.

This A3 is designed to be an introduction to the full Needs Assessment available on orangatamariki.govt.nz or on request from the Action Plan team by emailing otap@ot.govt.nz

#### About the Needs Assessments

As part of the Action Plan, we are working on nine in-depth assessments focused on the housing, health, and education needs of children and young people most at risk. It is critical that we have a solid understanding of the experiences and needs of these children and young people so we can make changes where required and make a meaningful difference for children and young people. These assessments will set out very clearly what is going well and what we need to do better.



