

# Aide-Mémoire

## OTAP priorities meeting with Hon Reti and Hon Chhour 20 March 2024

<b>Date due to MO:</b>	19 March 2024	<b>Action required by:</b>	20 March 2024
<b>Security level:</b>	IN CONFIDENCE	<b>Health Report number:</b>	H2024037825
<b>To:</b>	Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health		
<b>Consulted:</b>	Health New Zealand: <input type="checkbox"/> Māori Health Authority: <input type="checkbox"/>		

### Contact for telephone discussion

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<b>Robyn Shearer</b>	Deputy Director-General, Clinical Community, and Mental Health   Te Pou Whakakaha	s 9(2)(a)
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## OTAP priorities meeting with Hon Reti and Hon Chhour 20 March 2024

**Date due:** 19 March 2024

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**To:** Hon Matt Doocey, Minister for Mental Health

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**Security level:** IN CONFIDENCE **Health Report number:** H2024037825

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**Details of meeting:** Wednesday 20 March 2024, 7.00–7.30pm, Executive Wing 6.6

**Purpose of meeting:** This meeting is to discuss proposed health priorities for the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (OTAP) with Hon Shane Reti, Minister of Health, and Hon Karen Chhour, Minister for Children. John Zonneville, Chief Clinical Advisor, Mental Health and Addiction, from the Ministry of Health will attend the meeting to support you.

**Comment:** **Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (OTAP)**

- In 2019 the Child Youth Wellbeing Strategy was published which committed to the development of an Oranga Tamariki Action Plan to set out how agencies will work collectively to achieve wellbeing outcomes for children and young people of interest to Oranga Tamariki.
- In mid-2022 the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (OTAP) was published alongside an accompanying Implementation Plan.
- The Minister for Children, Hon Karen Chhour, is currently considering advice on updates and proposed priorities for OTAP. This presents opportunities to consider how we can improve health outcomes for children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki.
- Talking points to support you at the meeting are appended to this aide-mémoire. The following sections provide you with additional relevant information related to the mental wellbeing of children and young people in care and mental health and addiction work related to OTAP.

**Children in care and mental wellbeing**

- There are around 6,650 children in care and 1,300 who are receiving transition support (2022 figures). Compared to their peers generally children in care have poorer health status, including higher rates of hospitalisations and mortality, as well as being more likely to experience trauma and have mental disorders. Around three quarters of these children and young people are Māori or Pacific.
- Adverse experiences in childhood (especially early childhood) and adolescence can have profound effects on lifelong mental wellbeing. Children

and young people and their whānau who are involved with Oranga Tamariki are often experiencing, or have experienced, a range of harmful factors that contribute to poor mental health and wellbeing, including current/previous trauma, intergenerational trauma, parental mental illness, systemic racism, and other social determinants such as unstable relationships, unsafe housing, and poverty.

- Several studies have found that children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki have much worse mental wellbeing and higher levels of mental distress and substance use, than their peers. This can be either addressed or exacerbated by the experiences they have while in the Oranga Tamariki system (care and protection or youth justice).
- Children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki have much higher rates of access to specialist infant, child and adolescent mental health services (ICAMHS) than the general population. For example, children with a recent child protection intervention are over five times more likely to use these services than other children and young people (22.5% vs 4%, 2019/20 data).

### **Current work under the OTAP**

- A 2023 assessment of the mental wellbeing of this population, mandated by the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, identified the following gaps and issues:
  - the Oranga Tamariki system does not provide enough support for moderate mental wellbeing needs
  - the Oranga Tamariki system does not have a consistent, oranga- and trauma-informed approach to addressing mental health and wellbeing needs
  - specialist child and youth mental health services are underfunded and under-resourced
  - there is a lack of culturally appropriate services and trusted relationships for children and young people who are involved with Oranga Tamariki
  - the Oranga Tamariki system is uncoordinated and difficult to navigate
  - the availability and effectiveness of mental health services delivered by both Oranga Tamariki and the health system varies significantly around Aotearoa and in different settings
  - there is not good evidence on the mental wellbeing needs of the Oranga Tamariki population, or the efficacy of the system to support their needs.
- In response to this report, the Ministry and Health New Zealand (HNZ) have several initiatives underway across a range of services to support children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki. Recent work includes:
  - working to enhance information sharing across sectors and to review the Gateway assessment, which is conducted when children enter care

- delivery of specific initiatives in ICAMHS for Oranga Tamariki-involved children and young people funded by Budget 2022, as well as developing support for social workers and caregivers in several areas, such as:
  - HNZ and Oranga Tamariki are co-funding an extension of a current pilot at the Starship Child and Family Unit, which involves having an Oranga Tamariki social worker located in the youth mental health inpatient unit. This pilot is being expanded to the other two child and youth mental health inpatient units in Wellington and Christchurch
  - HNZ is establishing dedicated specialist mental health and addiction staffing to provide additional support into Oranga Tamariki residential care facilities in Wellington and Southland.

### **Advice on priorities**

- The Ministry recently provided related advice to the Minister of Health (which was shared with you) on potential OTAP priorities and proposed four key areas that align with Oranga Tamariki's recommendations:
  - improvements to the Gateway Assessment process
  - enabling information sharing between the health and Oranga Tamariki systems to improve practice, data and system monitoring
  - s 9(2)(f)(iv)
  - better guidance around addressing the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people in care for caregivers, social workers, and health professionals [H2024035885 refers].
- These priorities have been selected because they are considered high impact. They would deliver tangible short to medium term improvements while laying the foundation for future improvements.
- Advances in each of the proposed areas would improve physical health as well as mental wellbeing. While some may enable earlier treatment (eg, care status being identifiable in health system data), other actions such as supporting caregivers are likely equally important, and we would recommend more focus in this area by Oranga Tamariki. This is because mental wellbeing is not only supported by specific mental health and addiction treatment, but by living in healthy, supportive and consistent environments.
- The four key areas also align to your priorities of prevention and early intervention, workforce, and access to services.

### **Approach to promoting child and youth mental wellbeing generally**

- You recently received advice about approaches to improve child and youth mental wellbeing [H2024035287 refers] and our response to the Auditor-General's recent report on how well government understands and responds to youth mental health.

- s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- This aide-mémoire discloses all relevant information.



Michael Woodside  
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**Clinical Community, and Mental Health |  
Te Pou Whakakaha**

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

# Appendix: Talking points

s 9(2)(g)(i)

PROACTIVELY RELEASED