

Ministry of Health Progress Report under section 30A of the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022

Agency and report details

Agency	Ministry of Health
Chief Executive	Audrey Sonerson
Date original response provided under section 30	27 February 2026 Ministry of Health response to Experience of Care in Aotearoa 2024-25
Date progress report due under section 30A	26 June 2027
Date of this progress report	26 June 2027
Contact person for this report	Paula Collins, Acting Manager Maternity Child and Family Policy

1. Summary

Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki have been working together to improve the Gateway service, make children in care visible within the health system, and improve access to mental health services These commitments are also set out under the Oranga

Tamariki System Action Plan. The Ministry of Health has a role in developing policy-related advice to progress the actions and supporting Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki, where needed, to design and implement the commitments.

Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki are making progress on the actions and the work is continuing. Progress to improve Gateway has been slow due to this work progressing within baseline funding. Following agreement from Ministers in December 2025 on the policy settings and funding for making children in care visible within the health system, planning is well underway. The past six months have mostly focused on planning and scoping of data-sharing needs along with initial drafting of agreements to enable sharing.

2. Status of matters addressed in the original response

Matter from original response/original commitment	Status at date of progress report	Summary of progress since original response (Significant progress / Some progress / No progress)	Monitoring undertaken and changes observed	Further work required and by when	Has anything changed from the original response?
Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki are progressing national improvements to the current Gateway service to enable improved access to health, education, and disability services. These changes include improvements to	Continuing	Some progress	No impact monitoring or reporting has taken place as it is yet to be implemented	Yes, end of 2027	No

contract settings, consent processes and clearer processes and pathways.					
Make the care status of children in the care of Oranga Tamariki visible within the health system (working in conjunction with Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki).	Continuing	Some progress	No impact monitoring or reporting has taken place as it is yet to be implemented	Yes, end of 2027	No
Training will be provided to Oranga Tamariki social workers to increase capability and better support children with mental health and addiction needs and improvements for group homes and residences. Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand have been considering how to improve interagency collaboration at service level and have established new liaison roles in both Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand settings. Health New Zealand has contracted training for mental health services to support working with Oranga Tamariki. Health New Zealand is working with	Complete	Significant progress Training sessions for the Oranga Tamariki trainers delivered.	Monitoring undertaken - changes observed. Evaluation report from Training will be provided in next quarterly report.	Yes, through 2026.	No

Oranga Tamariki to provide training on mental health for Oranga Tamariki frontline workers.					
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3. Detailed updates on actions set out in the original response

Matter 1: National improvements to Gateway

Relevant finding(s) from the Monitor's report	Gateway assessments continue to be valued, but there are barriers to getting them.
Actions the agency said it would take	Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki are progressing national improvements to the current Gateway service to enable improved access to health, education, and disability services. These changes include improvements to contract settings, consent processes and clearer processes and pathways.
Original time frames / milestones	End 2027
Status at date of progress report	Continuing
Progress since original response	Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki have continued work to improve the Gateway service, with activity focused on improving consent processes, assessment documentation, service pathways and community-based support.

	Health New Zealand has developed updated consent form content that meets legal and literacy requirements, supported by an accompanying video (under development) to improve understanding and confidence for children, young people and whānau. Work has also progressed to revise the Gateway Assessment Report format and content. Health New Zealand is trialling a community connector prototype with iwi providers in two locations, Porirua and Invercargill. The prototype supports whānau from referral through to independent engagement with the health and wellbeing supports identified through the Gateway assessment.
Monitoring undertaken by the agency	Impact will be monitored by Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand following implementation.
Changes or progress identified through monitoring	As the project has not been implemented yet, no changes can be provided.
Evidence / supporting material	There is no evidence or supporting material to share at this time.
Risks, issues, or barriers	Key risks relate to resourcing, timing, and the sequencing of national service improvement activity, including prototype delivery and completion of supporting documentation.
Further work required to complete the actions	Further work is required to finalise and fully implement the Gateway service improvements, including implementing the updated consent materials and supporting collateral, finalising the revised Gateway Assessment Report format and content, and continuing to test and monitor the community connector prototype. This will include assessing how well the prototype supports whānau to move from referral

	through to confident engagement with health and wellbeing supports identified through the Gateway assessment, and using learning from the prototype to inform any future national service settings or implementation requirements.
When the further work will be completed	National Gateway improvement activity, including completion of supporting documentation and the community connector prototype, is expected to be completed by the end of 2027.
Changes the agency is hoping to see from these actions	Once fully implemented, changes to the Gateway service will help improve access to services and outcomes in meeting the health, disability and education needs of children and young people.
When the agency hopes to see those changes	Changes are expected to become evident as national Gateway improvements are implemented, with benefits expected to emerge by the end of 2027.
Next steps	Health New Zealand will work to finalise supporting documentation, complete recruitment into community connector roles, and continue delivery and evaluation of the community connector prototype.
Updated time frames / milestones	Timeframes remain aligned with the end-2027 milestone, subject to resourcing and completion of supporting documentation, recruitment and prototype delivery.

Matter 2: Make the care status of children in the care of Oranga Tamariki visible within the health system

Relevant finding(s) from the Monitor's report	There is a lack of assurance that health needs are being met. Tamariki and rangatahi are not all having an annual health check as required by the NCS Regulations. It is not clear what an annual health check should include.
Actions the agency said it would take	Make the care status of children in the care of Oranga Tamariki visible within the health system (working in conjunction with Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki). Guidance for health practitioners will be developed to support them to tailor their practice and respond to the unique needs of children and young people in care (working in conjunction with Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki). Oranga Tamariki is leading work on the annual health check. Be involved in the interagency work with Oranga Tamariki to develop a two-way information sharing agreement to support health practitioners to be more responsive to the needs of children in care and support improved monitoring of health engagement and frequency.
Original time frames / milestones	We expect that children in care will be visible in the health system by the end of 2027.
Status at date of progress report	Continuing
Progress since original response	Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki are working together to progress the work required to make the care status of children and young people in the care of Oranga Tamariki visible within the health system. A Privacy Impact Assessment is currently underway to inform a robust and lawful approach to sharing and

	using care status information. This will help confirm the requirements, safeguards and practical arrangements needed to support appropriate use of care status information within health systems. The two-way Information Sharing Agreement is also well underway and will provide the framework for information sharing between agencies. Digital work is progressing to support future identifiability of children and young people in care within relevant health systems. Guidance for health practitioners will be developed alongside this work to support practitioners to tailor their practice and respond to the unique needs of children and young people in care. Oranga Tamariki is leading the annual health check work, with Health New Zealand contributing to this work.
Monitoring undertaken by the agency	Impact monitoring will be developed once care status information is visible within relevant health systems.
Changes or progress identified through monitoring	Monitoring to date indicates that enabling work is progressing, including the Privacy Impact Assessment, Information Sharing Agreement and digital planning. As the change has not yet been implemented, it is too early to identify impacts on health system visibility, practitioner practice, or monitoring of health engagement.
Evidence / supporting material	As the project has not been implemented yet there is no evidence or supporting material to share at this time.
Risks, issues, or barriers	Key risks relate to timing, resourcing, security readiness, and the sequencing of legal, privacy, information sharing and digital workstreams. Mitigation: An integrated delivery plan is in place for Health New Zealand operations and cross agency with Oranga Tamariki. This plan outlines dependencies, decision points, and milestone tracking across all

	workstreams. There are three weekly cross agency check- ins to identify slippage and put in place corrective actions and follow up.
Further work required to complete the actions	Further work includes finalising the Privacy Impact Assessment and Information Sharing Agreement, completing the care status identification flag, and developing guidance for health practitioners and Oranga Tamariki staff.
When the further work will be completed	The Privacy Impact Assessment and Information Sharing Agreement are expected to be finalised in 2026. Completion of the care status identification flag and guidance will support implementation toward the end of 2027.
Changes the agency is hoping to see from these actions	Once implemented, this change will enable more responsive healthcare through improved identifiability and guidance for health professionals about children and young people in care. It will also improve our knowledge of the frequency of health engagements and health needs for children in care.
When the agency hopes to see those changes	Changes are expected to become evident after the care status identification flag and guidance are implemented, with benefits expected to emerge from late 2027.
Next steps	Continue work to finalise the Privacy Impact Assessment and Information Sharing Agreement, progress the care status identification flag, and develop guidance for health practitioners and Oranga Tamariki staff.
Updated time frames / milestones	The Privacy Impact Assessment and Information Sharing Agreement are expected to be completed in 2026. Implementation of the care status identification flag and supporting guidance is expected to progress toward the end of 2027.

Matter 3: Improve access to mental health

Relevant finding(s) from the Monitor's report	Access to mental health services is particularly challenging for children in care.
Actions the agency said it would take	Training will be provided to Oranga Tamariki social workers to increase capability and better support children with mental health and addiction needs and improvements for group homes and residences. Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand have been considering how to improve interagency collaboration at service level and have established new liaison roles in both Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand settings. Health New Zealand has contracted training for mental health services to support working with Oranga Tamariki. Health New Zealand is working with Oranga Tamariki to provide training on mental health for Oranga Tamariki frontline workers.
Original time frames / milestones	End 2027
Status at date of progress report	Complete
Progress since original response	Oranga Tamariki, Health New Zealand, and Whāraurau worked to develop and deliver train-the-trainer sessions for Oranga Tamariki kaimahi leaders in April 2026. Whāraurau personnel will support Oranga Tamariki trainers in delivery of the first round of foundational child and youth mental health/AoD and development training to Oranga Tamariki kaimahi and provide communities of practice to support the trainers build their skills. This has been delivered. Whāraurau has also worked with ICAMHs and Oranga

	Tamariki External Advisory Group on increasing ICAMHS responsiveness to Oranga Tamariki cohort using: Open Dialogue, Distress Tolerance and Tuning into Kids.
Monitoring undertaken by the agency	An evaluation report of the training is being developed by Health New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki.
Changes or progress identified through monitoring	No changes have been identified yet.
Evidence / supporting material	No supporting material at this stage. An evaluation report from the training is to be developed.
Risks, issues, or barriers	No risks, issues or barriers.
Further work required to complete the actions	The action is complete. However, there will be ongoing implementation support provided by Health New Zealand to Oranga Tamariki through 2026.
When the further work will be completed	Through 2026
Changes the agency is hoping to see from these actions	The training is seeking to increase the capability of social workers to better support children with mental health and addiction needs.

**When the agency hopes
to see those changes**

Through 2026 and 2027 (Oranga Tamariki impact ongoing)

Next steps

Ongoing implementation support (Support for first trainings and community of practice) through 2026.

**Updated time frames /
milestones**