



**Te whare Tuhua, Te Whare Matariki – Community
Remand Homes – Visit: May 2022**

OPCAT Monitoring Report
Report Date: October 2022



Kia kuru pounamu te rongō

All mokopuna* live their best lives

*Drawing from the wisdom of Te Ao Māori, we have adopted the term mokopuna to describe all children and young people we advocate for, aged under 18 years of age in Aotearoa New Zealand. This acknowledges the special status held by mokopuna in their families, whānau, hapū and iwi and reflects that in all we do. Referring to the people we advocate for as mokopuna draws them closer to us and reminds us that who they are, and where they come from matters for their identity, belonging and wellbeing, at every stage of their lives.

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Introduction

Who we are

The Children's Commissioner is a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

The New Zealand legislation relating to OPCAT and the role of the NPM is contained in the Crimes of Torture Act (1989). Our role as a NPM is to visit places of detention, including residences run by Oranga Tamariki, to:

- Examine the conditions and treatment of mokopuna
- Identify any improvements required or problems needing to be addressed
- Make recommendations aimed at strengthening protections, improving treatment and conditions, and preventing ill treatment.

About this report

This report shares the findings from our monitoring visit and recommends actions to address the issues identified. We describe the quality of the experience of mokopuna at the facility and provide evidence of our findings based on information gathered before, during and after the visit. Where applicable, this includes assessing the progress in addressing previous recommendations.

About this visit

Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) kaimahi carried out an announced monitoring visit to Te Whare Tuhua me Te Whare Matariki in May 2022. The organisation providing these services is Te Tuinga Whānau Support Services Trust and will be described as Te Tuinga Whānau in this report.

The purpose of this visit was to fulfil our responsibilities under OPCAT to monitor the safety and wellbeing of mokopuna detained in secure locked facilities.

About this facility

Facility Name: , Te Whare Matariki

Region:

Operating capacity: Three mokopuna (tāne) in Te Whare Tuhua and four mokopuna (wāhine) in Whare Matariki.

Status under which mokopuna are detained: s238(1)(d), s235 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989

OPCAT definitions

The main objective of OPCAT is to prevent torture and ill treatment.¹ In order to:

- Establish a system of regular visits to places of detention in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- Provide constructive recommendations aimed at improving the conditions and treatment of detained persons.
- Mitigate risks of ill treatment and build an environment where torture is unlikely to occur

We have adopted the following definitions of torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment in accordance with international human rights practice relating to mokopuna in places of detention.

Torture

Severe physical or mental pain or suffering, intentionally inflicted to obtain a confession, punish a child or young person for something they or someone else committed or is suspected of committing, or intimidating or coercing a child or young person for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

Cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment

Any treatment which offends a child or young person's dignity may be considered cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, regardless of whether it causes pain or suffering.

Cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment

Any punishment intended to cause pain or discomfort. This includes non-physical punishment that belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules a child or young person.

¹ OPCAT in New Zealand 2007-2012, *A Review of OPCAT Implementation by New Zealand's National Preventive Mechanisms* (2013) [Opcat-2013_web.pdf \(hrc.co.nz\)](#)

Monitoring Framework

Our monitoring is conducted under seven domains, six of which are defined by the Association for the Prevention of Torture². The seventh domain, 'Improving Outcomes for Mokopuna Māori' was developed for the Aotearoa New Zealand context by OCC to assess how mokopuna Māori are supported to have a positive connection to their identity and whakapapa.

The domains are:

- Treatment
- Protection Systems
- Material Conditions
- Activities and access to others
- Medical services and care
- Personnel
- Improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori

How OPCAT is reflected in the way we monitor

Using the seven domains as a framework we:

- Rigorously examine the treatment and conditions using a range of methods and information sources.
- Describe these treatment and conditions in terms of their impact on mokopuna.
- Clearly identify anything that constitutes torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment .
- Clearly identify any problems to be addressed and improvements required, along with our expectations for action.
- Make recommendations aimed at improving treatment and conditions and preventing future ill-treatment.

² Association for the Prevention of Torture (2004) *Monitoring places of detention: A practical guide*.

How we work

Methodology

We use several methods to engage with mokopuna, whānau and kaimahi to hear about their experiences. We also want to understand the group dynamics at the facility.

Observing

We spend time in facilities seeing how mokopuna and kaimahi interact and what their daily routines are.

Joining In

We join in activities and mealtimes to experience what access mokopuna have to good food and meaningful activities.

Informal Conversations

We have informal chats with mokopuna and kaimahi who tell us about their thoughts and experiences.

Interviews

We conduct formal interviews with mokopuna and kaimahi who are happy to speak with us confidentially.

Our analysis

We analyse information we have gathered by coding it according to each of the OPCAT domains. We identify themes within each domain in relation to the treatment and conditions experienced by mokopuna. We then identify any treatment or conditions that constitute ill-treatment as well as any areas where preventions could be strengthened.

Finally, we review the recommendations made in the previous OPCAT report and formulate new recommendations based on our findings in relation to current treatment and conditions.

Our findings

Findings are categorised under each of the seven OPCAT domains. Some findings relate to two or more domains – for the purposes of reporting, they are placed in the most significant domain.

Key Findings

Key findings are addressed in our recommendations along with other issues relating to the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment), identified in our analysis.

We found no evidence that mokopuna had been subjected to torture, or cruel or degrading punishment. Our findings from the visit are outlined below.

Findings

Whilst Te Tuinga Whānau has acknowledged there is room to improve its operations, the aroha, manaaki and awahi that kaimahi and house parents displayed in both Whare Tuhua and Whare Matariki was inspiring. Mokopuna are comfortable in the whare and kaimahi role model fun and respectful relationships. Immersed in te ao Māori, mokopuna were smiling and learning new skills. At both whare mokopuna were treated like whānau and not a 'court status'.

The highlights we observed in our visit are:

- House parents and kaimahi demonstrate what an offending free pathway can look like.
- House parents advocate for mokopuna and tautoko them at court hearings and Family Group Conferences.
- When both whare are full, experienced, and skilled kaimahi need to be on every shift.
- Supervision for kaimahi needs to be regular and formalised.
- Te Tuinga Whānau need to establish robust referral and acceptance criteria. House parents and key kaimahi should be involved in the referral process.
- Te reo is normalised and mātauranga māori is evident in both whare.
- Mokopuna feel safe and have a sense of belonging when they are in the whare.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are based on:

- Key findings from our monitoring and analysis
- Any issues relating to ill-treatment
- Progress against recommendations from the previous monitoring visit

We identify systemic issues that impact on the effective functioning of the facility and make recommendations to address these. Our recommendation is that action to address the facility recommendations occurs within twelve months after the date of our visit. We will monitor progress against the systemic recommendations at our next monitoring visit.

Oranga Tamariki Recommendations

1	Support all provider run remand homes to develop independent complaints systems.
2	Support all provider run remand homes to access independent youth advocates for mokopuna.
3	Develop a nationwide training package designed to specifically support provider run community remand homes. Training programmes could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criminogenic risk factors • mental health needs • intellectual disability • neuro-diversity • alcohol and drug support • life skills, and • cultural development/ capacity building
4	Provide all relevant information in the referral documentation. This includes, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to date All About Me plan, • information about any medications and prescriptions • any other relevant specialist reports.
5	Oranga Tamariki site social workers regularly review s238(1)(d) custody statuses as per s242(A) of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. This information should be shared with the remand home and used to inform mokopuna transitions out of the whare.

Te Tuinga Whānau Recommendations

1	Ensure that the referral process robustly considers all relevant information, and referral criteria are met, before a referral is accepted. Ensure key kaimahi and house parents are involved in the assessment of referrals.
2	Develop a care plan template that captures the voice of mokopuna that details their immediate and aspirational goals and tracks progress.
3	Establish formal supervision and professional development plans for kaimahi.
4	Develop a plan for back-fill for the house parents so they can take planned leave.

Te Whare Tuhua and Te Whare Matariki Recommendations

1	Involve mokopuna in their care plan and decisions that affect them.
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Treatment

This focuses on any allegations of torture or ill treatment, use of seclusion, use of restraint and use of force. We also examine models of therapeutic care provided to mokopuna to understand their experience.

House parents set the kawa of the whare

The house parents are the kaitiaki of Te Whare Tuhua upholding the kawa and tikanga of the whare, but also available to protect and nurture all that come into the space. Mokopuna could not speak highly enough of the house parents.

"[house parents are] mean as, they're gangsta"

The house parents ensure that kaimahi actively engage with mokopuna, provide kai that mokopuna ask for, and treat them with genuine aroha. We saw how respectful kaimahi and mokopuna are, not only towards the house parents, but towards each other.

At the time of our visit, the house parent for Te Whare Matariki had been recruited but had not yet started. We hope to see the same values replicated in this whare at our next visit.

House parents provide a solid basis for mokopuna to succeed

We were lucky enough to experience the care, awhi and manaaki that mokopuna have for each other, the kaimahi and the house parents at a poroporoaki held at Te Whare Tuhua. The wairua of the space is filled with aroha with everyone filling the

'kete' with encouraging words and positive reflections of the time mokopuna have spent in the whare.

The house parents work hard to establish a transition pathway for mokopuna and there are high expectations that mokopuna will fulfil their potential. Mokopuna were humbled to be presented with their pounamu and said they were proud to be leaving knowing what they had achieved in Te Whare Tuhua.

Kaimahi relationships with mokopuna are good

Mokopuna said their relationship with kaimahi is "straight up and all good". We saw mokopuna were treated well. We heard multiple times that kaimahi are there to support mokopuna, address their needs and treat them as humans not a court status. Kaimahi also take care to create healthy boundaries.

Dynamics in the whare can change quickly

Kaimahi said that the agile environment of a remand home can sometimes be tricky to navigate when new referrals come in regularly or when inexperienced kaimahi are on shift. When the number of mokopuna is at capacity, dynamics can change fast.

We saw how fast things change whilst off-site on an education visit. Mokopuna had been settled for morning activity and were

engaged when the off-site activity was explained. However, on the activity, mokopuna misbehaved and were given ample opportunity to correct their behaviour but this did not happen. The activity was cut short and even though mokopuna were disappointed, kaimahi continued to be respectful and supportive explaining why they took the action they did.

This was also the case for Te Whare Matariki. This whare is for wāhine with high and complex needs so having maximum occupancy creates issues. There were three attempted suicides within a short space of time at the end of 2021 and early 2022 at the whare. There are a number of factors which may have contributed to an escalation in suicidal behaviour given the already complex needs of wāhine coming into this home. These include the number of mokopuna in the whare at the time, inexperienced kaimahi covering shifts and a change in house parents during this period.

For Te Whare Matariki in particular, we encourage Te Tuinga Whānau to strictly enforce their admission criteria and have all admissions to the whare signed off by the clinical team.

No secure care or use of restraints

All kaimahi are trained in Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA)³. Mokopuna told us that kaimahi don't use restraints and both whare do not have secure care areas. Instead kaimahi use relationship-based techniques to support

and de-escalate mokopuna when they are distressed. Both whare have good outside areas where mokopuna can remove themselves from the home and other mokopuna and take their time to calm down.

Te Whare Matariki also have the services of on-site clinical psychologists and a mental health nurse⁴ to assist in de-escalating behaviours and identifying triggers for mokopuna living here.

There are no fences, but mokopuna rarely abscond

Without fences there is every opportunity for mokopuna to leave the property. We asked mokopuna why they choose not to 'run' and they said that they choose not to because they enjoy what they do in the

"It's like, like they make you fit in, like your actual own house."

"It's not a residence...It's like a place where you [can] be yourself".

whare and have a sense of belonging.

Mokopuna in both whare said they feel safe and that house parents and kaimahi uphold the kawa and tikanga of their whare. This allows mokopuna to ask questions and feel like they are being heard. Mokopuna said there is an open door policy to kaimahi and they feel safe to discuss their feelings when they do consider leaving.

³ MAPA® (Management of Actual or Potential Aggression) | Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)

⁴ Futures is your ONE STOP PSYCHOLOGY SHOP

This is not to say that the two whare have not had any incidents where mokopuna have run away. However, the mokopuna we spoke to said they feel safe, valued, and trusted enough to not make the decision to escape.

Oranga Tamariki should do more to make transitions smoother

House parents at Te Whare Tuhua take on much of the transition work connecting mokopuna with whānau and exploring viable bail addresses, attending court hearings and family group conferences. There is clear cross-over with the work Oranga Tamariki social workers should be doing while mokopuna are on their caseloads.

Social workers are obligated under s242(A) of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 to review the custodial status of mokopuna on statuses such as s238(1)(d). House parents describe the whare like theirs as a dumping ground for Oranga Tamariki, with little contact from social workers and little to no evidence that reviews of the custody situation for mokopuna were being done.

We saw multiple instances where house parents were advocating for mokopuna and asking local Oranga Tamariki site social workers to keep processes moving and remove the barriers for undue delays.

House parents go above and beyond in transition work

Mokopuna said the house parents often tell Oranga Tamariki social workers what they need to do in order to transition mokopuna back to their community. They spend many hours on the phone advocating for mokopuna.

We heard how house parents escort mokopuna to court or their family group conference, pay for their own accommodation where necessary and then escort mokopuna back to Tauranga. This was purely to tautoko mokopuna. As one house parent explained, they aren't the parents of the mokopuna, but while they stay in their whare, they will do 'parent things' for them.

Protection Systems

This examines how well-informed mokopuna are upon entering a facility. We also assess measures that protect and uphold the rights and dignity of mokopuna, including complaints procedures and recording systems.

Admissions need better support from Oranga Tamariki

Both whare need better support from Oranga Tamariki social workers before mokopuna arrive. Thorough information on referral forms and up to date care plans for mokopuna should be a minimum.

Referral information should arrive at the whare before mokopuna. This gives kaimahi an idea of what activities are going to work for mokopuna, what their triggers are and any behaviour need considerations. Mokopuna can then have clarity around what their stay is going to look like.

Due to a lack of information from Oranga Tamariki, the clinical team for Whare Matariki have developed their own care plan to mitigate unsafe practice and risk.

When referral criteria is not complied with, it creates risk

Te Tuinga Whānau do their own risk assessments of mokopuna (which includes clinical psychologist input for Te Whare Matariki). However, there have been times when Oranga Tamariki management have contested the decline and convinced Te Tuinga Whānau management to accept.

If kaimahi do not have the experience or skill to work with multiple mokopuna with a variety of high and complex behavioural and mental health needs, the risk of harm to mokopuna is high.

Referral criteria and threshold must be upheld to keep everyone safe.

The kawa and tikanga of the whare is emphasised on admission

All mokopuna and, if appropriate, their whānau are welcomed into the whare with a mihi whakatau. All mokopuna are then walked through the kawa and tikanga for each whare and the day to day routine. There are no surprises. Karakia to start and end the day and before kai are routine. If mokopuna don't know karakia, they are displayed on the walls for them to read or house parents will say a line for mokopuna to repeat.

Mokopuna are given a 'Rights' booklet on admission.

High level of trust when dealing with complaints

Remand homes are run very different to larger Youth Justice Residences. There are no CCTV cameras, secure care, restraint holds and the Whaia te Maramatanga complaints process is not used.

Te Tuinga Whānau work on a high trust model when dealing with complaints. As per the complaints process, mokopuna and kaimahi can address their complaint to house parents or the Team Leader Operations. The escalation process is then via Te Tuinga Whānau HR Manager and the Manager Operations. All involved in

the complaint would then be interviewed by the Manager Operations.

The contract agreement that Te Tuinga Whānau have with Oranga Tamariki has an incidents and complaints procedure.

The OCC is concerned that the complaints process is not independent of kaimahi and that complaints are reviewed internally.

Without the Whaia te Maramatanga process, mokopuna have no clear pathway to escalate their grievance to the OCC or alternative agency.

There are no independent advocates for mokopuna

Mokopuna in Te Whare Tuhua me Matariki do not have access to independent advocates like VOYCE Whakarongomai.

Neither staff or mokopuna we spoke to knew how to access this service.

Independent advocates should be available to all mokopuna in all places of detention.

Material Conditions

This assesses the quality and quantity of food, access to outside spaces, hygiene facilities, clothing, bedding, lighting and ventilation. It focuses on understanding how the living conditions in secure facilities contribute to the wellbeing and dignity of mokopuna.

Both whare feel like home

Both whare are warm and bright with good natural sunshine. There are large kitchens, dining areas, and lounges to host whānau and manuhiri. There is a separate space in both whare for wānanga, family group conferences and whānau to use when required.

Unlike the larger Youth Justice residences where cutlery is plastic, both whare have metal cutlery and mokopuna help with food preparation. Like a home, mokopuna have access to the kitchen area for snacks and drinks, the fridge and are supervised when they use sharp knives.

A range of artwork, karakia, and waiata, are displayed on the walls and brings life to the tikanga and kawa of both whare.

Outside the whare, the lawns are well kept, mara kai, and basketball hoops are accessible and the whare have low fences. There are no gates to keep mokopuna within the whare grounds.

Safety is a priority but discreet

Line of sight is maintained by kaimahi but mokopuna said this is done in ways that do not make them feel like they are being constantly 'watched'. Kaimahi have excellent relationships with mokopuna so when they join in with activity or wānanga, it is simply second nature and feels so

natural that mokopuna do not recognise this as keeping 'line of sight'.

Food is plentiful and tasty

Mokopuna shared how big, tasty and 'mean' the kai is and told us they have a say in what they would like to eat. Mokopuna let the house parents or kaimahi know what they would like to eat, and kaimahi do their best to make it happen.

*"Yeah f*** mean feeds, massive"*

The kai budget changes according to the number of mokopuna in the whare. Pūtea for kai goes into a separate account the house parents access when shopping. However, we heard that the pūtea sometimes doesn't go in quick enough resulting in house parents having to use their own money.

There is a wide variety of equipment for mokopuna

Kaimahi run the activities throughout the day. There is little time for mokopuna to just hang around the whare. There is plenty of equipment that mokopuna have access to inside and outside the whare. This includes:

- Board games

- Instruments
- Table Tennis
- Basketball hoops
- Gym facility
- Boat with diving and fishing gear
- Hunting equipment

The natural environment in Tauranga moana is incorporated into daily activity. For example, ocean swims, beach activity and walks around the maunga are regularly incorporated into daily life. Local swimming pools and mini golf are also used to mix up daily activity.

Health and Safety is a priority

The Health and Safety Advisor at Te Tuinga Whānau ensures that everything is up to code including vehicle checks, hazard registers and gym equipment. Training for the safe use of gym and boxing equipment and kaimahi training in, for example, Day Skippers courses and First Aid. Kaimahi receive relevant information in 'real-time' and can process their activity plans and risk assessment forms directly on their work phones. These are signed off by the Team Leader Operations and filed.

Activities and access to others

This focuses on the opportunities available to mokopuna to engage in quality, youth friendly activities inside and outside secure facilities, including education and vocational activities. It is concerned with how the personal development of mokopuna is supported, including contact with friends and whānau.

Contact with whānau is regular

House parents and kaimahi regularly liaise with Oranga Tamariki social workers to make whānau visits happen when required. This includes those whānau who live outside of Tauranga moana.

Mokopuna told us that phone contact with whānau happens in the morning and in the evening with no time limit.

Keeping mokopuna busy is a focus

Te Whare Tuhua and Te Whare Matariki create an abundance of activities that align with education plans and build on a te ao māori approach. For example, learning life skills such as hunting, diving, fishing, food preparation and safety.

Te Tuinga Whānau also have their own gym that both whare have access to. There are board games, cards, Netflix, piano, and guitars at each whare. We heard that kaimahi also do activities during the evenings. Going for evening swims before dinner was a favourite. We observed and participated in a range of activities supporting mokopuna to be out and positively engaging in the community. Mokopuna are not isolated and

disconnected from the community they are living in.

Te Tuakiri o te Tangata - Education that strengthens identity, language, and culture

The Kaiako for the whare is funded through the Ministry of Education and has adopted a Te Tuakiri o te Tangata⁵ lens as the method of programme delivery. The programme is designed for mokopuna to learn more about identity and internal wellbeing from a Māori perspective.

Te reo is at the forefront of learning. Mokopuna go through a booklet at their own pace and are supported by the Kaiako and kaimahi to complete these. There are no 'sit-down' lessons or assignments. Mokopuna learn through doing, talking and using what knowledge has been passed their way. This way of learning flows not only into the physical activities but also into both whare and feeds into the tikanga established by house parents and kaimahi.

Mainstream education subjects are also catered for if mokopuna identify an interest area. We heard that mokopuna wanted to extend their skills in maths and the kaiako adopted maths into the

⁵ Literature on this approach include: [Ngā Tuakiri o te Tangata: Being Māori in Early Childhood Education | The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education | Cambridge Core](#);

Bishop, R., & Glynn, T. (2003). Culture counts: Changing power relations in education. Zed Books

programme with te reo and te ao māori continuing to be at the forefront.

If there are no mokopuna in any of the whare the kaiako teaches all kaimahi te reo and tikanga.

Mokopuna are learning the benefits of mahi kai.

We heard from mokopuna that they had never done mahi kai and learning the benefits to be able to prepare and provide kai is a highlight.

Before we arrived, we heard that mokopuna and kaimahi from whare Tuhua went out on the boat to get kaimoana for our mihi whakatau. Mokopuna take pride in bringing kai to the table.

Programming and kaimahi using their own pūtea

We heard that programming for activities and admin work is done in the evening shifts and all factors and options are considered when developing the programme for the next day. This enables the day-shift kaimahi to solely focus on mokopuna. Change to the day programme is agile as the activities can be updated on mobile devices and relevant forms sent to the Team Leader. Mokopuna interests and where their learning takes them is important and Te Tuinga Whānau kaimahi adapt to the needs of the group.

Any programming that has a cost needs to go through to the Team Leader Admin a week before the planned activity. Te Tuinga Whānau have one activity card that both whare can use. However, when the other whare has the card this means kaimahi use their own money or change the activity.

Medical services and care

This domain focuses on how the physical and mental health of mokopuna are met, in order to uphold their decency, privacy and dignity.

Mokopuna have access to primary health care services

Mokopuna have access to primary health care services and are seen by local GPs on request.

Additional services are sourced as required these to meet individual need. For example, alcohol and drug counselling.

Te Tuinga Whānau have access to a team of clinical psychologists

Te Tuinga Whānau have secured the services of a full clinical team which comprises two psychologists and a mental health nurse. These services are attached to Te Whare Matariki however, the psychologists are available to mokopuna in Te Whare Tuhua if needed.

The clinical team focus on 1:1 and group work for mokopuna wāhine in Te Whare Matariki. There are two psychologists available for face to face work in this whare and mokopuna can choose who they work with.

Psychologists have developed their own screens for admission and reintegration back to whānau. Their clinical support focuses on assessing and working on dynamic risk factors, post placement support and helping kaimahi identify and deal with triggers that can unsettle mokopuna.

The clinical team work well with the kaimahi in Te Whare Matariki and offer

mokopuna a holistic experience whilst they are living there.

Health information does not follow mokopuna

The clinical team told us that having a clear idea of what the stay for mokopuna looks like is vital to developing their care plans. However, information is often lacking from Oranga Tamariki. The intake screens developed for Oranga Tamariki by the clinical team are rarely used and referral information is incomplete. This includes documentation around prescribed medication and some mokopuna not having medications or prescriptions when they come into the whare.

Considering Te Whare Matariki is for high and complex needs mokopuna wāhine, having access to up to date medical information is necessary to keep kaimahi and mokopuna safe.

Covid Management

COVID-19 was managed the same as any other whare. House parents could isolate away from mokopuna in their own, self-contained area of the whare and kaimahi operated in work bubbles. This limited the spread of COVID-19 and worked well as a containment strategy.

Personnel

This focuses on the relationships between kaimahi and mokopuna, and the recruitment, training, support, and supervision offered to the kaimahi team. In order for facilities to provide therapeutic care and a safe environment for mokopuna, kaimahi must be highly skilled, trained and supported.

Kaimahi have good relationships with each other, and house parents are respected

House parents role model what a positive, loving home looks like. The care they show mokopuna is exceptional. They also awahi kaimahi to live and breathe quality and meaningful engagement with mokopuna. Their aim is to always show mokopuna positive pro-social behaviour.

The model that Te Tuinga Whānau have adopted across their remand whare feels right. Kaimahi are engaged and mokopuna told us the whare just feels like home.

Te Tuinga Whānau feel pressured to accept referrals

We heard that Oranga Tamariki puts pressure on Te Tuinga Whānau to take mokopuna who have initially been declined.

Kaimahi said that they did not like it when Oranga Tamariki undermine their decisions and put pressure on Te Tuinga Whānau management to accept referrals. Kaimahi feel upset that their professional assessment of the referral counted for nothing and that their decision making powers are diminished when 'deals' were made over their heads.

These situations have caused considerable emotional harm to kaimahi with one kaimahi saying their mana was 'trampled'

when decisions were made over their head to accept a previously declined referral.

The wrong referrals can have very negative impacts for both mokopuna and kaimahi and this was evident with incidents in Whare Matariki.

A disconnect between the operations team and kaimahi on the ground

We heard that communication lines from the Te Tuinga Whānau operations office to those kaimahi on the front line could be better. For example, house parents and kaimahi play an integral role in the success of both whare, however often feel like they are the 'last to know' when it comes to incoming referrals.

House parents and kaimahi are key players in the experience mokopuna have in the whare and therefore should be part of initial and any subsequent discussions.

Te Tuinga Whānau could use their clinical psychologists more effectively

Recruiting kaimahi familiar with mental health and complex behaviour issues are key success drivers for Whare Matariki. The clinical team can assist in the recruitment process for the whare to ensure the right skills are being brought in. We were told about stressful events happening in Te Whare Matariki that the clinical team

believes can be mitigated when the right kaimahi are on shift.

COVID-19 and the impact on kaimahi

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is still being felt by Te Tuinga Whānau. Vaccination mandates and kaimahi illness resulted in many kaimahi not being available for work.

The knock-on effect has been that kaimahi do extra shifts or kaimahi who haven't been employed to work in a remand setting (like cooks and kaimahi from other service arms of Te Tuinga Whānau) have been brought in to provide frontline shift cover.

There are also few options to back-fill the house parents so they can take annual leave. The amount of annual leave days owing is high with few opportunities for kaimahi to take significant breaks. Burn-out for house parents is a real issue and could have negative impacts on the dynamics of the whare which is a safety issue.

Training and development in high complex needs required

Kaimahi who work with high and complex needs mokopuna need intensive fit-for-purpose training. Training was activity based like Day Skippers courses, diving and First Aid. Kaimahi should have training in how to manage mokopuna with mental health needs, neuro-diversity and trauma.

Kaimahi repeatedly told us they needed more tailored training especially working in Te Whare Matariki.

Supervision needs to be regular

The Futures clinical team provide supervision and trauma counselling to kaimahi. However, shift work makes it difficult, and supervision is not prioritised. Supervision is sometimes scheduled but is often bumped for more pressing matters or because kaimahi cannot leave the whare.

All kaimahi have access to EAP⁶ however those working with mokopuna should have regular formal, professional, and cultural supervision. This is vital to child-centered practice and professional development and wellbeing.

⁶ [Home | EAP Services Limited](#)

Improving outcomes for Mokopuna Māori

This focuses on identity and belonging, which are fundamental for all mokopuna to thrive. We assess commitment to Mātauranga Māori and the extent to which Māori values are upheld, cultural capacity is expanded and mokopuna are supported to explore their whakapapa.

Te Tuinga Whānau building cultural capacity

The majority of kaimahi at Te Tuinga Whānau are māori and bring a wealth of experience in te ao māori, te reo and mātauranga māori. Te Tuinga Whānau hold a monthly hui for all kaimahi to share kai, learn waiata and karakia.

Manaakitanga in action

The house parents are the kaitiaki of Te Whare Tuhua and maintain the kawa and tikanga. The kawenata of Te Whare Tuhua are:

- Whakawhānaungatanga
- Manaakitanga
- Tino Rangatiratanga
- Kaitiakitanga
- Tika, pono me aroha

We saw mokopuna express how they are feeling during morning and evening mauri rounds and mokopuna are supported and encouraged to lead karakia.

At Te Whare Tuhua we got to experience Poroporoaki for mokopuna that were leaving and hear the words of encouragement given by kaimahi and house parents. The 'kete' was filled with aroha and the expectation that mokopuna will carry on the values experienced the whare.

Mokopuna are treated like whānau and not a status

Every mokopuna that come to the whare are welcomed through mihi whakatau ensuring they are a part of the whare and treated like whānau and not like a status.

During our mihi whakatau, mokopuna stood in confidence and were proud to share their pepeha. This includes pakeha mokopuna.

Education is not based on a mainstream model

We saw examples of how te ao Māori can be taught through educational activities. Education is delivered through the Te Tuakiri o te Tangata lens and focused on Te ao and te reo Māori.

Mokopuna initially told us they don't 'do' education in the whare. They are so used to a western model, and education at the whare was done so differently, that mokopuna were learning unconsciously. Practical life skills and how to provide for the whare are key focuses.

Te ao māori is the way of life

Mokopuna show respect because they want to, they show manaaki because it is always role modelled, they show aroha because they are treated with aroha. Learning mātauranga is not classroom based, it is mokopuna experiencing what their tipuna have done before, it is

learning how to provide, it is learning how to contribute in a positive way to the group, to your whanau.

Appendix

Gathering information

We gather a range of information and evidence to support our analysis and develop our findings in our report. These collectively form the basis of our recommendations.

Method	Role
Interviews and informal discussions with mokopuna (including informal focus groups) with mokopuna	
Interviews and informal discussions with kaimahi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Imagination Officer • Manager Operations • Human Resources • Health and Safety Advisor • Team Leader for the Whare • Team Leader Admin • House Parents • Kaiako
Interviews with external stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate DCE Youth Justice, Oranga Tamariki • Partnering for Outcomes (OT Contract Manager) • Teacher • Police Youth Aid • Futures – Clinical Psychology team
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident reports • Care plans • Admission booklet • Complaints form
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning, afternoon and evening observations of Te Whare Tuhua and Whare Matariki (Including breakfast, morning karakia, activities, dinner, shift handover, Te Tuakiri, poroporoaki)