

Te Au Rere a te Tonga, Palmerston North

(Announced OPCAT Visit)

Visit date: s 9(2)(a) OIA 2019. Report date: 26 May 2020

2019



Please note that we changed our rating scale to a 4-point rating scale on 1 July 2019. See Appendices 2 and 3 for our new OPCAT rating scale and previous ratings.

Overall Assessment

OPCAT Domains
Treatment
Protection system
Material conditions
Activities & contact with others
Medical services & care
Personnel
Improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori



Harmful



Inadequate



Good



Excellent

Not Achieved

Achieved

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Contents

Introduction..... 3

Key findings and recommendations..... 5

 Domain 1: Treatment..... 8

 Domain 2: Protection system 11

 Domain 3: Material conditions..... 14

 Domain 4: Activities and contact with others..... 16

 Domain 5: Medical services and care 18

 Domain 6: Personnel..... 20

 Domain 7: Improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori 22

Appendix One: Why we visit (legislative background)..... 24

Appendix Two: Interpretation of ratings 25

Appendix Three: Previous OPCAT ratings..... 26

Appendix Four: Interviews conducted, and information accessed..... 27

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Introduction

Purpose of visit

1. From s 9(2)(a) OIA 2019, s 9(2)(a) OIA from the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) conducted a pre-announced monitoring visit to Te Au Rere a te Tonga youth justice residence, Palmerston North. The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of services provided by Oranga Tamariki at Te Au Rere a te Tonga against the seven domains relevant to our role as a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). See Appendix 1.

Structure of this report

2. This report shares the findings from our visit to Te Au Rere a te Tonga and makes recommendations for actions to address the issues identified. For the convenience of readers, we first list our key findings and recommendations. Here we provide the evidence for our overall domain finding as a list of strengths and areas for development. We then describe our findings for each of the seven OPCAT domains. For each OPCAT domain, we provide a statement that summarises the reasons for our rating for that domain. For more information about OPCAT, see the United Nations [website](#).

Context

3. In the context of our OPCAT visits, we use Mana Mokopuna principles and resources, which apply to all children and young people, to engage them in conversation about their experiences in the residence. Mana Mokopuna supports our monitoring to put a stronger focus on children and young people's experiences, and Māori beliefs and social structures. The information from interviews with children and young people sits alongside our assessment of the residence's compliance with the seven OPCAT domains. For more information on our Mana Mokopuna approach, see our [website](#).
4. Te Au Rere a te Tonga is a youth justice residence in Palmerston North. The residence has 34 active beds for both males and females:
 - Tokomaru 12 bed unit – 11 male young people in unit during visit
 - Oroua 12 bed unit – 8 male young people in unit during visit
 - Turitea 10 bed unit – 9 female young people in unit during visit
 - Mangaone 6 bed unit – Not open
5. The residence was home to 28 young people aged from 14 to 18 (19 males & 9 females). Three were on a Supervision with Residence Order S283(n) Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 s 9(2)(a) OIA 25 young people were on remand from Youth Court or High Court (S238(1)(d) Oranga Tamariki Act 1989).
6. At the time of our visit a newly appointed residence manager had been in place for two weeks. The previous permanent manager had moved into a senior role at National Office and senior staff were operating as acting managers until a new permanent residence manager was appointed. Both the newly appointed manager and the previous acting manager are long term staff members at the residence and a supported process of hand-over is in place.

Key findings and recommendations

7. In assessing and rating the residence, we have applied our new OPCAT evaluative framework, effective from 1 July 2019. This is in the process of being developed in consultation with Oranga Tamariki. We have changed our OPCAT rating system from a 5 point to 4-point rating scale to more clearly evaluate compliance or non-compliance with OPCAT. Please see [Appendix 2](#) for more information on our new rating system and [Appendix 3](#) for the previous ratings for this residence using our former rating scale.



Overall rating: Good

"It's been mean as since I've been here, it's nice, it's alright. It's like a home away from home being here."

8. Our overall rating for Te Au Rere a te Tonga is **Good** meaning OPCAT compliance has been achieved (refer App.2 Page 27). We have applied the four-point rating scale introduced from 1 July 2019.
9. This is different from 'well placed' with transformational elements at our previous OPCAT visit in June 2018. The key difference at this visit and the reason for the lower overall rating is that while two domains have excellent elements, three had elements that were inadequate. A summary of the rating for each domain is outlined below.
10. When we visited, we found that young people are safe from harm and there is no evidence of torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
11. The **Treatment** and **Medical Services and Care** domains received ratings of 'good with excellent elements. This was mainly due to the quality of care, engagement and support provided by both internal and external staff working with the young people at Te Au Rere.

Protection System and **Activities & Contact with Others** received a good rating. While the rating for Protection System remains the same as the previous report, Activities and Contact with Others has shifted downwards from its previous 'excellent' rating. This is due to staff changes, secondments of senior staff and reduced staff numbers while new staff were being recruited. We expect this rating to rise, once new staff are in place and fully inducted into the good practices we know Te Au Rere values.

Material Conditions, Personnel and **Responsiveness to Māori** domains were each given a rating of 'good' with inadequate elements. We look forward to seeing these ratings improve at our next visit, by which time we expect that new staff, and the newly appointed residence manager will have become familiar with their roles.

12. Our monitoring assessment identified that the residence has many strengths:
- Young people have positive relationships with staff who they can talk to and trust.
 - Staff keep young people at the forefront of their practice and they care about them

- There is an emphasis on using de-escalation techniques and secure care is only used when appropriately required
- Admission and assessment processes are robust and thorough, using a multi-agency approach.
- Staff use a range of creative, strength-based and engaging ways to document young people's progress while at the residence
- Staff and young people have worked together to develop a video that lets newly admitted young people and their whānau know what happens at the residence
- Young people understand the Whāia Te Maramatanga grievance, suggestion and feedback system
- Young people know their rights and can advocate for themselves and others
- The residence staff are trying different approaches to support young people having positive experiences with kai.
- Staff are active in their efforts to engage with whānau
- Young people's health needs are managed well by care staff
- Working relationships with stakeholders, as well as across the residence teams are positive
- Te Au Rere has key Māori staff who are passionate about kaupapa Maori

13. We identified a number of areas for development including:

- The inside environment is dated and institutional and requires refurbishment to be more youth centred. Other areas require repurposing/ development to better support activities such as vocational training
- Using the availability of increased staff capacity and experience to re-ignite a range of external off-site activities and programmes that match the needs and interests of the young people.
- Ensure that all staff have consistent access to ongoing training, regular supervision and mentoring.
- Engaging young people with their culture through a tailored approach.
- Developing a written, strategic plan for improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori.

Recommendations

National Office

We recommend that the DCE Youth Justice Services:

Rec 1: Ensures that Te Au Rere has a full refurbishment so that the facilities are fit for purpose and enable the full range of programmes to be run.

Te Au Rere a te Tonga

We recommend that the residence leadership team:

Rec 2: Supports the development of a written strategic plan for mokopuna Māori that includes time framed objectives. The plan should be part of enabling a tailored approach for cultural engagement for individual young people

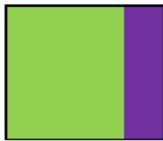
Rec 3: Continues to support all staff to positively engage with the grievance process, understand barriers to young people using it, and actively engage with them in an exploration of the potentially negative impact of norms such as not "narking".

Rec 4: Ensures that staff are supported through ongoing training, mentoring and professional supervision so that there is consistent practice when working with young people

Rec 5: Places priority on re-igniting a range of external activities and programmes tailored to the needs and interests of the young people

Findings for each OPCAT domain

Domain 1: Treatment



Good with excellent elements

14. We rated treatment as good with excellent elements through observing generally positive practice with respectful relationships demonstrated between staff and young people. Thorough planning and assessments are made on the young people's arrival, using a multi-team approach. The young people understand the Behaviour Management System (BMS) and feel it is implemented fairly. While use of physical restraints and secure care was minimal, young people could articulate the use and reason for any physical restraints or secure care admissions. Staff use de-escalation strategies as a first approach and throughout the restraint process.

Strengths

- **Young people have staff they can talk to and trust.** We heard from young people that staff listen to them and that they felt staff cared and were interested in them. Young people said that they could talk to the staff about issues and that these would be addressed. We observed that young people approached staff readily and that there were warm and encouraging interactions between staff and young people.

"Like most of them yeah, they show heaps of love. You can see them trying their hardest to help us out yeah."

- **There was an emphasis on continuing de-escalation.** Staff use of physical restraints is minimal. When physical restraints are used, we heard from young people that staff continue to use de-escalation techniques throughout the restraint. Staff feel confident in using the Safe Tactical Approach and Response (STAR) programme and actively de-escalate and use the lowest form of restraint. Young people could articulate why they would be restrained. The restorative approach supported staff and young people to talk about incidents and restraints afterwards and repair their relationships if needed. We heard from staff there was a residence wide focus on maintaining a settled environment. This was helpful for settling new young people to the environment while they worked out the structure.

"Most of them you know will just go put you in the corner and then try and calm you down and that."

- **Secure care was used when required, with intentional rationale for its use.** From reviewing the secure logs and talking with staff and young people, there appear to be few secure admissions. The secure care register was accurately detailed including the reason for admission and the plan for the young person to return to the unit. Young people knew why they were admitted to secure care. They were supported to reflect on their actions and given an opportunity to process what they could have done differently. The secure care unit is dated but has been well maintained. It is clean with art work around the secure doors and in the admission area.



Photo: Secure unit admin area



Photo: Secure unit door

- **Behaviour Management System (BMS) is liked and understood by young people.** The BMS system is used to develop motivation for behaviour change and to keep young people engaged and positive while in the residence. Young people told us that they understood how the system worked and that they liked most of the 'buy-ups'. For example, being in their rooms when they are on level 3 and having access to the movies and games. We heard from young people they would like a wider DVD selection. We heard from staff that young people have access to a wide range of activities and items when they arrive. While some young people would like to have a greater range of movies available, we heard that the constraint was a policy intended to ensure movies were appropriate for the whole range of young people in residence. This was frustrating for young people in the older age group, especially now that 17 (and in some circumstances 18) year olds can be in the residence.

"So, by BMS's it's depending on what level you are. So, Level 1 you get nothing, Level 2 you get an iPod but for the Level 3's you can get either an iPod, pencil or DVD."

"...it gets boring inside that's one thing I know, it gets boring even watching cos all the movies, they need to update the movies. I think I've seen every single one of them even when I was in here last time and they're all the same movies from when I was in here three years ago too still the same movies. I wish that they would update those that would be a luxury if they would, straight up."

- **Assessment process is multi-agency, robust and thorough.** Assessments are reviewed at regular MAP (Multi-Agency Planning) meetings which involve professionals and whānau. MAP meetings can be arranged more frequently if there is a change for the young person that has implications for their care. Staff said the uncertainty of remand timeframes makes it difficult to do therapeutic work with the young people. Reviewing a range of individual plans and residence records, including secure care records and the grievance register, confirmed thorough record keeping from the professionals involved, including the linking of key information.
- **Staff are using creative, strength-based and appealing ways to document progress.** In order to document young people's progress in residence, staff have been making 'Journey Books'. The books have photos and text showing what the young person has been doing and their growth. Young people can share these with their whānau. We heard young people being requested to take these to Court with them. Staff informed us that some Judges now ask for them to help with communication between the young person and the Judge and to provide a more in-depth understanding about what the young person has been doing while in residence. We saw videos that staff and young people are making together about what happens at Te Au Rere a te Tonga. These videos are intended for new admissions coming into the residence. They are also for whānau, so they have an idea about what their young person may be doing.

Domain 2: Protection system



Good

15. This rating reflects that young people are informed of their rights and the structure of Te Au Rere during admission to Residence. The grievance system (Whaia te Maramatanga) is well administered with an emphasis on thorough investigations. Young people said they feel safe and there are processes in place to help ensure they are physically, emotionally and culturally safe. Young people also stated they were able to talk to staff or use the Whaia te Maramatanga process if required.

Strengths

- **Staff are observant and proactive in managing difficult situations for young people.** Young people stated that overall, they trusted the staff and felt that the staff were interested and cared for them. They recognised that if problems occurred that staff would react quickly and in numbers to help deal with incidents. We heard that young people feel safe.

"Cos, I know if something goes down, the staff are always there."

- **The admission process is appropriate and considered.** The admission processes support the young people to settle, as well as understanding their rights and the key elements of how the residence works. Young people have privacy to shower and change. Property (contraband) taken is recorded and stored. When young people arrive, comprehensive assessments are completed within three to five-days. The young person works with a variety of professionals (education, health, youth forensic, alcohol & drugs clinicians) and in conversation with whānau, their individual programme is created. The assessments are undertaken during the morning education session allowing the young person to return to their units for afternoon programme. This allows for young people to become integrated quickly with others at the residence. Part of initial screening involves sexual health. Overall, the information given to the residence by sites is mixed in quality, so the residence team's initial focus is ensuring that residence based assessments are thorough and comprehensive. A few young people are transferred to the remand home after an initial assessment at Te Au Rere residence.

"When I first came in I went to assessments and that's like they find out where like you're at with your work and that and I had to do like the rules and regs and that, just to see what I knew."

- **Young people know how the grievance system works.** The grievance process is well administered with good records collected and effective oversight of investigations and follow up. The grievance panel is active, engages with residence staff and meets with young people as part of their arrival process. They regularly visit with young people in residence. They have been proactive in working with the site staff including training with new staff. There is a good relationship between the grievance panel and the Te Au Rere site grievance co-ordinator. While we heard from young people that they didn't use the grievance process, the grievance register indicated that grievances were being made, but that there were few in the last quarter. The grievance coordinator actively monitors the number and types of grievances and encourages staff and young people to engage with the process.



Photo: Grievance & suggestion box in residence unit.

- **Young people know and engage with their rights.** Young people were able to explain many of their rights, where to find them, and that they were introduced to them during the admission process. We heard there were weekly reminders about rights with all young people during unit meetings. We also heard, from some young people and staff, that young people are engaging with their rights to discuss residence processes with leadership, thus advocating for themselves and others.
- **Increasing connections between management and the grievance panel.** The residence has recently experienced changes in leadership which contributed to disruption in the regular communication between the grievance panel and the residence leadership. The grievance panel has continued to visit regularly during this time. We heard from residence leadership that a meeting has been planned to reconnect. We are looking forward to hearing how this has progressed on our next visit.

Areas for development

- **Improve access and shift young people's attitudes to the current grievance procedure.** The one process of requesting a form, filling it in (possibly with a staff members' support) then submitting it, can be restrictive for some young people. We heard from some young people that the grievance process was perceived as a form of 'narking' or 'snitching'. Because young people are aware of others filling in grievance forms, this contributes to it being regarded as a 'snitching form'. Residence staff who work with grievances are aware that this attitude exists for some young people and care staff.

"People would know you've filled one in and then people would be like oh you're narking."

Expanding the ability to access the grievance process via other methods like iPad, phone etc. could expand the ability of young people to access this support system. Working on improving the perception of the grievance process amongst young people and staff will also help improve its uptake and usefulness.

Domain 3: Material conditions



Good with inadequate elements

16. This rating reflects the efforts of the staff in providing tidy, clean and useful spaces for the young people. The site has a low level of tagging and damage and has resources for the basic accommodation needs of the young people. The inadequate elements reflect the lack of purpose-built, up to date spaces available to the young people for their vocational or practical activities.

Strengths

- **Te Au Rere is trying different approaches to support young people having positive experiences with kai.** We heard mixed reactions from young people about the food, but common themes were liking some dishes like butter chicken and schnitzel and disliking fish. The menu has been designed by a nutritionist and the residence has been advised they must include fish once a week. Some young people liked how much food they got, and some felt it was too little. While there is no formal mechanism for young people to provide feedback specifically on the kai, we heard that young people raise their thoughts through the Youth Council, grievance process, and directly with staff. The residence is responding to feedback by having kitchen staff attend Youth Council, changing the menu to include salads, trialling a vegan lunch twice a week, and trying to incorporate fish in a variety of ways to make it more appealing.
- The kitchen team is also looking to start a 'garden to table' programme where young people are involved in growing food. We saw kitchens in each unit and were told that these are regularly used. Young people prepare their own breakfast and some other meals, and some young people suggested that they would like to be more involved in food preparation. The kitchen team are planning to build a vegetable garden, with the young people over the Christmas holidays, as a means of young people seeing the garden to table process. We look forward to seeing how this has developed on our next visit.

"I think it's just the big dish that no one likes, the fish pie and the fish curry, anything to do with fish the boys hate it."

"Oh schnitzel, the schnitzel dish. I reckon all the boys like that cos they come out all happy and that."

Areas for Development

- **Refurbish the inside and outside environment.** While Te Au Rere is kept clean and tidy it needs improvements. There is minimal tagging and a proactive approach is taken to clean up any tagging. However, the facilities are dated and institutionally designed. Young people are missing out on some activities as the facilities are not fit for purpose. For example, we saw a screen-printing press in a hallway and were told there was nowhere else to put it where young people could use it. This is one example where several areas are being used for multi-purposes causing issues with access and use for young people. Education and programming have a vision in place but there needs to be dedicated spaces created, especially in relation to the need to increase opportunities for vocational training and learning.



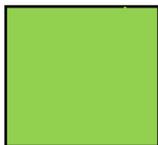
Photo: Unit indoor area



Photo: Central outdoor area

- **Initial arrival area for young people is cluttered and in need of refurbishment.** While the admission processes are thorough, the environment is not very welcoming, with the area in need of updating. The Sally Port and admission area are also used as storage and resource spaces due to a lack of space at the residence. This means that when young people arrive at the residence, their first impressions are negative.

Domain 4: Activities and contact with others



Good

17. This rating reflects that young people have access to a variety of education and vocational activities as well as regular phone contact with whānau. The lower rating than our last report, reflects the difficulty the residence has faced with staff changes and insufficient staff numbers to provide the desired range of external vocational activities. These challenges were acknowledged by staff and management during our visit. It is clear they have a desire to be more creative in the external opportunities they provide for young people.

Strengths

- **Staff are trying to engage with whānau.** Staff told us it can be challenging to get whānau to the residence to visit young people, especially when several of the young people's whānau live a distance away. Residence staff actively attempt to have whānau involved in planning for young people. We heard some of the barriers to whānau visiting were cost and accommodation. We also heard that young people's main form of contact with whānau is through phone calls.

"Yeah it was good, you know, get to spend some time with my family, yeah in the visit area, visit room."

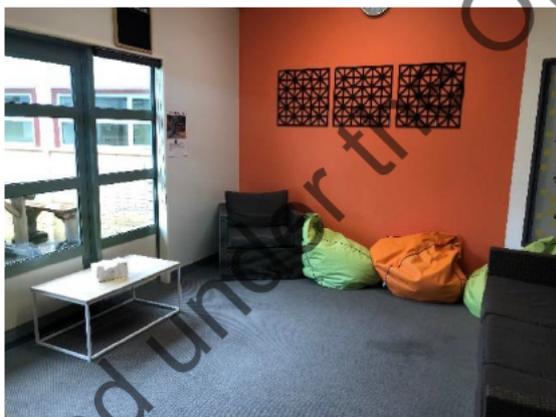


Photo: Family / whānau room

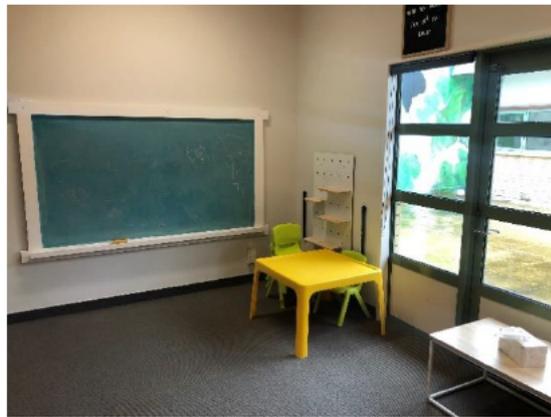


Photo: Family / whānau room

- **Young people have opportunities for tailored educational activities.** The young people stated that they enjoyed the practical, hands-on learning. We heard from older youth that they prefer to focus on vocational training, as they feel they are 'over' school type education. The partnership between residence and school has been key to meeting these educational/vocational needs, particularly since the raising of the youth justice age to include 17-year olds. The educational team has been adaptive to what young people need and want and are working through the changing dynamics related to older young people entering the residence. The residence acknowledges that vocational training opportunities have been more limited in recent times due to staffing shortages and are looking forward to re-introducing these programmes as their staff team strengthens.

"I like barista and that like stuff that you're actually going to, that you can actually get a job out of."



Photo: woodwork benches



Photo: Woodwork area with items made by young people

Areas for development

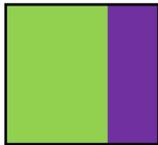


Photo: Phone indoor area

- **There has been a focus on managing risk over the last six months which has prevented creativity with external offsite programmes.** Management acknowledge there has been an increased focus on managing risk, due to staff change, inexperience of new staff and lower staff numbers. External programmes like sporting activities, community events and recreational activities create extra risks and require additional staff supervision and support. While restrictions on off-sites programming are understandable during a time of change, the impact on young people has been that staff have not been able to engage with them as creatively as they usually do. For example, young people stated they want to go to the gym more. Staff told us they know "it's going well for young people when they are having fun and being busy"! We are looking forward to seeing the residence's previous strength with external programmes and activities being re-ignited, once there is a full complement of staff who have the capability to manage risk in ways that maintain and extend these opportunities for young people.

"Just a bit more time in the community so you're just working your way towards getting out, showing that good behaviour to the Courts and everything and just showing that you're really wanting to make progress on the outside."

Domain 5: Medical services and care



Good with excellent elements

18. This rating reflects that young people have good access to health services at the residence. They receive a comprehensive health check during their initial assessment on arrival. Medication and follow up care are undertaken in a timely fashion and the young people know they will be able to seek help when required. There is a good relationship between the health professionals and the residence.

Strengths

- **We heard from young people that access to health care and medication was easy.** There is an effort to explain elements of the young person's health to them in ways they understand. Any medical issues are identified and addressed, and they have on-going sexual health conversations. There is also a parenting programme at the residence. Effective management of medication by staff was demonstrated. There are good processes and practices for delivering and monitoring medications. Care team members are trained and can administer routine medications and processes are in place for monitoring and issuing controlled medications. Orthodontic care is challenging and attending appointments can be difficult due to court appearances and not knowing how long youth will be in residence. Young people are enrolled into community providers when released from residence including GP and dentist. The young person has a health summary that goes with them on leaving the residence. The attitude of staff was that the young person's time at residence provided an opportunity to meet their health needs. It is positive to see that the health team are part of the residence leadership team.
- **Mental health needs are managed well by care staff.** The young people have access to the health team, two nurses and a mental health and AOD nurse on site, Monday – Friday all day. Staff told us that they had noticed an increasing complexity in the mental health needs of young people at the residence. This puts strain on staff skills and resources about how to best support these young people in the youth justice environment. While the care team is working hard with young people's mental health needs there were some concerns from staff about the appropriateness of placement for those with significant mental health needs. They suggested that a few young people coming in with mental health issues would be better managed by a mental health provider. There is a forensic health professional on site, but it can be difficult to provide the therapies that are required for the needs of the young people at the residence. Developing strategies to help young people manage their emotions and deal with trauma is challenging.

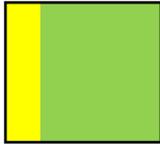
"They're quite good when it comes to this, even if the staff like realise that you're not feeling well or they'll like send you to the nurse or when you know you're not feeling well, you can get sent to the nurse."

"I had this mean as scar over here when I came in like a month ago and like it wasn't even healing after four months on the outs – After being in here for like 12 days it healed."

- **Young people had their medical needs well catered for.** The care team have handled at-risk youth well and have a positive relationship with residence staff. Members of the health team are part of the admission process and were involved in its design. We heard that young people were appropriately checked by medical staff following a restraint. They see the young person as soon as physically possible when they arrive. This includes a basic physical health assessment encompassing hearing, vision, injuries and medication. A GP will also see the young person on admission and the health team will make a care plan for the young person.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Domain 6: Personnel



Good with inadequate elements

19. This rating reflects that the staff are positive, and youth centred in their practice and interactions. Young people enjoy their interactions with staff and feel that staff are interested and care for them. The inadequate element is due to staffing changes and shortages, causing the provision of essential staff development and training, including staff supervision, to be reduced. Staff are looking forward to the new Team Leader Operations (TLO) appointments and the increased supervision and professional development opportunities these will bring.

Strengths

- **Staff appear to keep young people at the forefront of their practice and care for them.** This was commented on by the young people who felt that most staff were there for them and were interested and caring. Staff stated they were there for the young people and it is evident they are looking forward to the continued upskilling and direction needed to develop their own practice. There was comment by newer staff, that a favourite part of their job is seeing the young people change and realising they are able to help them. There are a lot of complementary skills within the staff at Te Au Rere and this allows for a range of interactions and activities, as well as different young people's personalities, to be catered for.

"That they're always there to talk to you and like when you come off your phone call or something, are you okay? And like constantly like ensure that they're there. And there's other staff members that you like click with, so you can just talk to them instantly about anything".

"The staff are pretty good lately and make you not want to go to secure."

- **There is positive communication and shared planning between stakeholders and across teams.** Working relationships across the stakeholders as well as across teams is positive. Staff understand their roles and focus on the young people. New staff are asking questions and communication appears good with management. Staff are overall respectful to and treat young people with respect and dignity.
- **Staff are looking forward to the new TLO roles that are being implemented.** Recruitment has been happening for a long period of time and is for many positions. Management anticipate that the new structure (TLOs based within each unit) will provide increased capacity for supervision, coaching and mentoring and therefore significant benefits for the young people. Staff are keen for the increase in the TLO roles and looking forward to their presence in the units. Staff commented on the energy new staff are bringing and the ability, as staff numbers increase, to be more creative with the activities

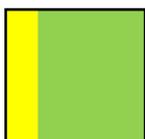
and programmes available, including taking young people off site. We also heard from management there is a reliable casual pool that enables care staff to have time off.

Areas for Development

- **Ensuring that new and existing staff are up to speed with best practice when working with young people in the residence.** We heard from management and young people that there have been some inconsistencies in staff ability to “pick up the small stuff”. Management told us there had not been consistent training, supervision and mentoring for all staff. The residence management team are committed to ensuring staff feel supported and are given the training required to thrive in their roles and ensure that young people’s needs are being met. We are looking forward to seeing the positive impact of increased staffing and additional TLO positions at our next visit.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Domain 7: Improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori



Good with inadequate elements

20. Te Au Rere is engaged in helping to make cultural life better for young people in residence, and especially for mokopuna Māori. There are a range of programmes that are central to each young person's daily programme and these are regarded as a 'normal part of each day. There are also skilled staff who are committed to helping the young people feel confident and supported in their culture. The continued challenge is to engage and motivate the range of young people who come into residence with a variety of backgrounds, experiences and attitudes towards their culture and heritage.

Strengths

- **Te Au Rere has key Māori staff who are passionate about kaupapa Māori.** There are several intentional Māori programmes happening with young people, both as standalone activities and elements that are embedded throughout the young person's programmes e.g. eeling, kapa haka, waiata, mihi, te reo. We also observed that Te Ao Maori was embedded in education classes. There is a positive connection between mana whenua and Te Au Rere and a clear intention within the residence to deepen this relationship. Staff talked about options for taking young people to their marae or places of cultural significance. We heard about plans to have a pōwhiri as a way to engage whānau on the arrival of a young person to the residence. This is to help whānau feel they are part of the residence where their mokopuna are living.

Areas for Development

- **Engaging young people with their culture via a tailored, individual approach.** There were significant differences in the attitudes and uptake of the young people in relation to developing their understanding of their Māori culture. Connecting young people to their culture in a way that 'meets them where they are at' will be the next step. During our visit it was mentioned that the inclusion of a cultural assessment could be beneficial for the young people. This could be informed through a cultural assessment tool and built into their individual care plan (ICP).

"...they should make a Māori unit. I'm fluent in my language, it's actually, I haven't thought of it as a skill but it is."

"Culture is all good, I know my whakapapa."

"I don't even really like know, all I know is it's shit the way that they do it. They just start speaking Māori I don't know what the hell you're saying, if I'm being honest with you."

- **Having an intentional and planned strategy for improving outcomes for mokopuna Maori.** Residence management acknowledged the absence of a written strategic plan for improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori. However, there are a number of skilled residence staff who are strongly committed to improving cultural opportunities for mokopuna Māori. There is a hope amongst staff that that increased staff capacity, including the new TLO positions, will significantly strengthen the residence's cultural planning and programme delivery and their ability to work together as a 'waka'. Developing and implementing this strategy will provide a framework for the long term, consistent approach needed, to improve outcomes for mokopuna Māori. We look forward to seeing how this develops, at our next visit.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix One: Why we visit (legislative background)

21. The Children's Commissioner has a statutory responsibility to monitor and assess the services provided under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. Specifically, section 13(1) (c) of the Children's Commissioner Act 2003, states that the Commissioner must monitor and assess the policies and practices of Oranga Tamariki and encourage the development of policies and services that are designed to promote the welfare of children and young people.
22. In addition, the Office of the Children's Commissioner is designated as a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) under the Crimes of Torture Act (1989). This Act contains New Zealand's practical mechanisms for ensuring compliance with the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT), which was itself ratified by New Zealand in 2007. Our role is to visit youth justice and care and protection residences to ensure compliance with OPCAT.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix Two: Interpretation of ratings

23. The Table below provides a quick reference to the meanings of ratings given in the report.

The overall question our OPCAT monitoring seeks to answer is: *To what extent does Oranga Tamariki have the enablers in place that support C&YP to have the desired experience (for each element that we assess under each domain)?* Enablers we look at include: systems, structures, policies, procedures, opportunities and practice.

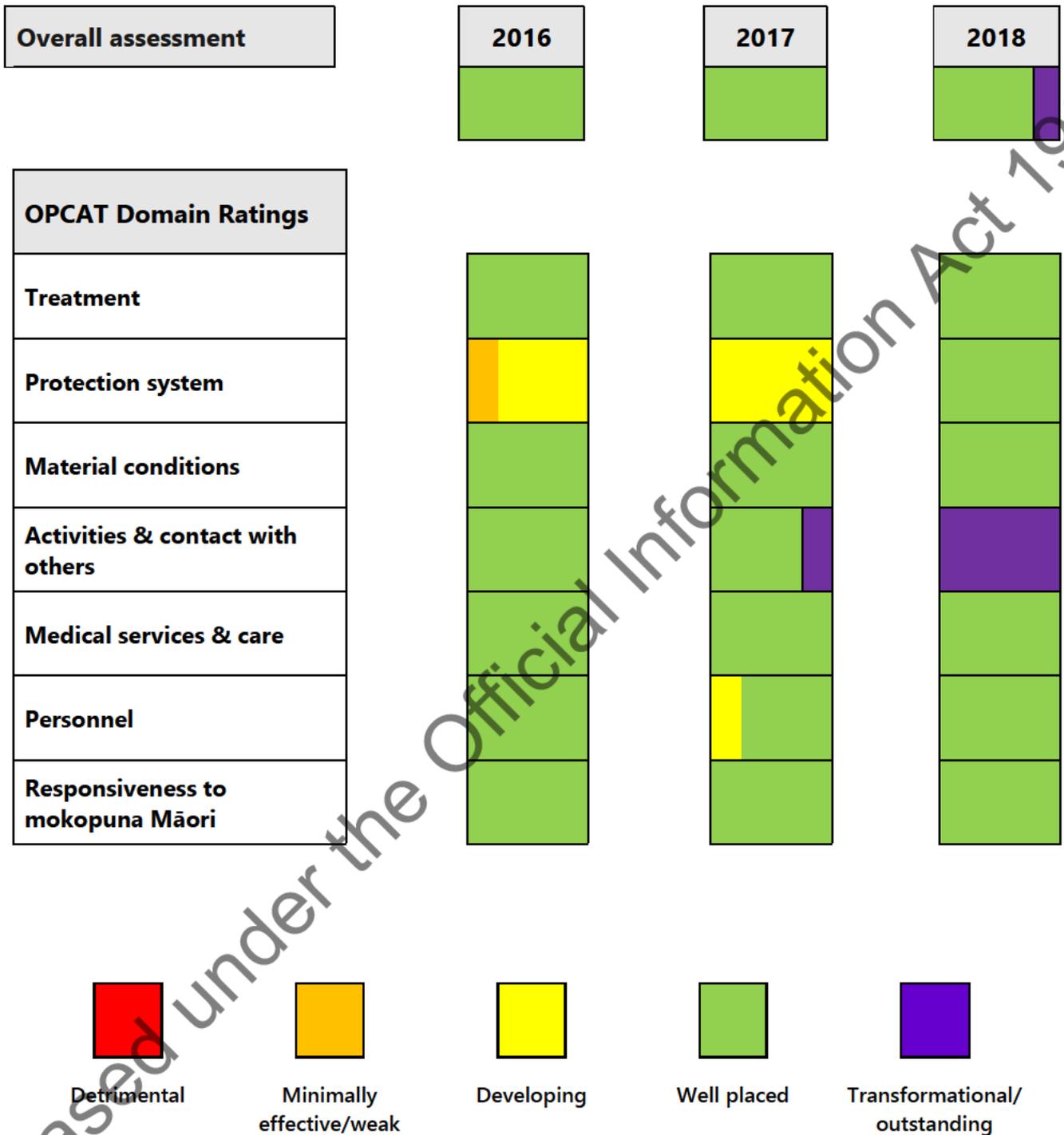
Each OPCAT domain is made up of multiple elements. For each element, the rubric provides a description of the enablers of good practice and the desired experience for C&YP.

Rating	Assessment	OPCAT compliance	What it means
	Excellent	Achieved	The organisation does an excellent job of enabling C&YP to have the desired experience.
	Good	Achieved	The organisation does a good job of enabling C&YP to have the desired experience.
	Inadequate / Needs improvement	Not achieved	The organisation does an inadequate job of enabling C&YP to have the desired experience.
	Harmful	Not achieved	The enablers are not in place, the experience is harmful for C&YP. Note that 'harmful' typically implies an element of intentional, negligent, rejecting, or undermining practice or environment. However, if the consequences of a practice or environment are harmful enough, then they may receive a rating of harmful, even if the practice or environment is not intentionally harmful.

Note: Even though staff experiences and practices are taken into account, it is the C&YP's experiences that anchor the ratings, not the experience of staff.

Appendix Three: Previous OPCAT ratings

24. Note these ratings used our previous 5-point rating scale.



Appendix Four: Interviews conducted, and information accessed

Our visit to Te Au Rere a te Tonga included interviews with:

- 20 young people
- Residence Manager
- Team Leaders Operation (TLO)
- Team Leader Clinical practice (TLCP)
- Residential Youth Workers
- Clinical team
- Health team
- Education team
- Māori Roopu
- Pasifika Fono
- Kitchen staff
- Grievance Coordinator
- Grievance Panel

The following sources of information also informed our analysis:

- Previous OCC OPCAT, transition, and Voices reports
- Visual inspection of the residence
- Last Oranga Tamariki audit report
- Grievance quarterly reports
- Training register
- Young people's files at the residence (including Individual Care Plans and Operational Plans)
- Serious incidents, use of force, and searches register
- Whaia te Maramatanga register