



**Response from Oranga Tamariki to recommendations
from the Mana Mokopuna monitoring visit to:**

Puketai Care and Protection Residence

Visit date: 12 to 14 November 2024

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Introduction

Puketai Care and Protection Residence (Puketai) is located in Ōtepoti. The facility is owned and managed by Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki). The facility is typically for tamariki and rangatahi aged 10 to 17 years old, predominantly with a care and protection background who are placed in the custody of Oranga Tamariki.

In November 2024, staff from Mana Mokopuna—Children and Young People’s Commission (Mana Mokopuna) completed an unannounced monitoring visit to the facility.

The facility has capacity to take eight tamariki and rangatahi. Under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, the legal status which rangatahi are placed at the residence include:

- section 78 – Custody of child or young person pending determination of proceedings or in urgent cases;
- section 101 – Custody orders; and
- section 110(2)(b) – Additional guardianship orders

The purpose of the visit was to assess the quality of Oranga Tamariki services against the seven domains relevant to Mana Mokopuna’s role as a National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). The seven domains are:

- Domain 1: Treatment
- Domain 2: Protection systems
- Domain 3: Material conditions
- Domain 4: Activities and contact with others
- Domain 5: Medical services and care
- Domain 6: Personnel
- Domain 7: Improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori.

The draft OPCAT report was shared with Oranga Tamariki on 31 January 2025.

Recommendations Summary

The OPCAT report for Puketai makes 10 recommendations, of which five are accepted and five are partially accepted. We note that during this visit, Mana Mokopuna found no evidence of cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment).

We value the feedback we receive from Mana Mokopuna and use recommendations to make improvements. For this report, Mana Mokopuna acknowledged several areas of excellent practice and made a range of positive observations about the high quality of care mokopuna were receiving at the facility.

Oranga Tamariki is committed to strengthening practice as a priority and we continue to work towards ensuring consistent, quality practice, that is inclusive, collaborative, culturally responsive and meets the needs of tamariki and rangatahi. We are committed to achieving better outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi and we value the feedback and insights provided by Mana Mokopuna.

Recommendations	Status
Oranga Tamariki Systemic Recommendations	
1. Senior leadership at Oranga Tamariki National Office to urgently prioritise funding for the re-establishment and recruitment of the Kaiwhakaako role to ensure there is clear direction and vision for improving kaimahi cultural capability, connecting mokopuna to their whakapapa, and for providing mentorship and representation for mokopuna Māori in all Care and Protection residences.	Partially accepted
2. Prioritise fundings for a refurbishment at Puketai, including painting the walls and upgrading the bathrooms, to provide an environment conducive to mokopuna mental health and wellbeing. Involve mokopuna in the refurbishment by seeking their ideas and views about the upgrades to the facility and taking their views seriously, actioning them wherever possible and communicating back to mokopuna about the decisions made in relation to the upgrade.	Partially accepted
3. Provide additional resourcing for community-based bespoke placements and caregivers to ensure mokopuna and their whānau have access to intensive, wraparound transition support to help them successfully reintegrate back to their communities.	Accepted
4. The Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki to work together to promote the best possible outcomes for mokopuna in their care by ensuring their admission into mainstream education and the proper supports for them while in residence.	Accepted
5. Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora work collaboratively together to ensure all mokopuna health and mental health needs are met in a timely manner and in ways that work for mokopuna and their individual circumstances.	Accepted
6. Ensure mokopuna are informed of their plan by social workers prior to being admitted into residence, in order to uphold the rights of mokopuna to participation and information, and to promote trust, transparency, and predictability for mokopuna, in line with Oranga Tamariki Practice Standards.	Accepted
Facility Recommendations	
1. Urgently implement a process and training for the night shift kaimahi to administer medication so all kaimahi can administer medication to mokopuna regardless of the time of day.	Accepted
2. Provide foundational and then ongoing training for all kaimahi working at Puketai on youth justice and mental health legislation, processes and practices to further	Partially accepted

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develop their knowledge and skills when working with mokopuna who are placed at Puketai, including mokopuna who crossover between care and protection and youth justice.	
3. Ensure all kaimahi understand and are supported to understand on an ongoing basis, the rationale behind the frameworks, processes and practices that are implemented in the residence, so they can use that understanding to drive decision-making and support mokopuna individual needs.	Partially accepted
4. Ensure the meaningful and effective education programme that Kingslea School provides at Puketai continues, even after new kaimahi are hired.	Partially accepted

The responses to the Puketai OPCAT report recommendations are detailed in the remaining sections of this report.

Response to Systemic Recommendations

Below are our responses to the systemic recommendations made in the Puketai OPCAT report.

Recommendation 1

Senior leadership at Oranga Tamariki National Office to urgently prioritise funding for the re-establishment and recruitment of the Kaiwhakaako role to ensure there is clear direction and vision for improving kaimahi cultural capability, connecting mokopuna to their whakapapa, and for providing mentorship and representation for mokopuna Māori in all Care and Protection residences.

Response: Partially accepted

There is current work underway to review all options for the Kaiwhakaako role. These options will then be presented to the Youth Justice Services and Residential Care leadership team. We will consider the recommendation further when the review is completed in early March 2025.

Recommendation 2

Prioritise fundings for a refurbishment at Puketai, including painting the walls and upgrading the bathrooms, to provide an environment conducive to mokopuna mental health and wellbeing. Involve mokopuna in the refurbishment by seeking their ideas and views about the upgrades to the facility and taking their views seriously, actioning them wherever possible and communicating back to mokopuna about the decisions made in relation to the upgrade.

Response: Partially accepted

Refurbishing Puketai, including painting walls and upgrading bathrooms, is underway and the Property team will work together with Puketai leadership to complete the actions required. As part of this, Puketai leadership had an initial meeting with the tamariki and rangatahi placed at Puketai on 19 February 2025, to seek their ideas and views about upgrading the facility. Puketai leadership will provide feedback to the Property team, and depending on the decided scope for refurbishment, further consultation with tamariki and rangatahi may occur. We have partially accepted this recommendation as although the work has been prioritised, the scoping and planning process needs to be completed, and funding approval received before we can commit to progressing the refurbishment.

Recommendation 3

Provide additional resourcing for community-based bespoke placements and caregivers to ensure mokopuna and their whānau have access to intensive, wraparound transition support to help them successfully reintegrate back to their communities.

Response: Accepted

Oranga Tamariki accepts that additional resourcing for community-based bespoke placements and caregivers is needed. We have increased our contracted services for rangatahi with high needs requiring high levels of specialised staffing care. This is evident in the new contracts that have been developed in the 2024/25 financial year.

Further work will be undertaken in the 2025/26 financial year to assess any gaps in the continuum of care, particularly at the high needs end of the continuum. In addition to this, we are reorienting our clinical services to ensure there is input from psychologists to assist in placement transitions to enable us to better support reintegration with whānau and communities.

Recommendation 4

The Ministry of Education and Oranga Tamariki to work together to promote the best possible outcomes for mokopuna in their care by ensuring their admission into mainstream education and the proper supports for them while in residence.

Response: Accepted

All tamariki and rangatahi have the right to receive an education. Oranga Tamariki acknowledges the need to ensure tamariki and rangatahi in residences have appropriate support in the classroom, and as they transition to their community school settling.

We note that this recommendation is similar to your systemic recommendation five as part of the previous Puketai OPCAT report following the December 2023 visit. There, Mana Mokopuna asked Oranga Tamariki to work together with Ministry of Education to “ensure funding is prioritised to meet mokopuna educational needs whilst in residences and continues to remain in place once mokopuna transition back into the community”.

Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education continue to work together, building a stronger relationship, with work underway to support improved educational outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi. Through the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan, and in response to the Education Review Office report on education provision in Oranga Tamariki residences, there have been joint work programmes between the two Ministries. This has included developing “National Guidelines for the Provision of Education with Care and Protection and Youth Justice Residences” which sits as a new Schedule to the Memorandum of Understanding.

The purpose of this Schedule is to:

- set out a description of the key roles and responsibilities of the various organisations involved in the provision of education within care and protection and youth justice residences; and
- specifically outline the commitments made by the parties to this Schedule to each other.

Day to day operational responsibilities are agreed to on a residence-by-residence basis between each School Board/Contracted Provider and Oranga Tamariki in a separate Residence Education Operational Agreement.

Both Ministries intend to maintain and strengthen these relationships and agreements with the goal of improving the educational experience for tamariki and rangatahi in residences and during transition back to the community.

Recommendation 5

Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora work collaboratively together to ensure all mokopuna health and mental health needs are met in a timely manner and in ways that work for mokopuna and their individual circumstances.

Response: Accepted

We note your recommendation in your OPCAT report following your visit to Epuni Care and Protection Residence in April 2024, which states that Oranga Tamariki needs to “work with Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora to develop a model of care and referral process that is prompt and comprehensive to meet all health needs of mokopuna in residences”. In our response to you on the Epuni OPCAT report, we provided information on the current work we are doing with Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora (Te Whatu Ora) to ensure that all mokopuna health and mental health needs are met in a timely manner including:

- Six Te Whatu Ora Districts have been providing (or subcontracting) co-located health services for Oranga Tamariki care and protection and youth justice residences since 2012.
- To improve health service provision and collaboration between Oranga Tamariki and the local health and mental health agencies, interagency manager groups have been established across four regions to meet the needs of residences within Counties Manukau, Mid Central/Capital Coast, Hutt Valley/Capital Coast and Otago/Southern districts.
- Te Whatu Ora and Oranga Tamariki are presently establishing a series of regular forums for the range of stakeholders including clinicians, Te Whatu Ora contract managers, and a steering group which would sit across both. The purpose is to support and enhance health service delivery across residences.

Additionally, a mental health work programme has been established with Te Whatu Ora that commits to increasing workforce capability, regional collaboration and national escalation pathways. This work has been incorporated into the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan (Health Workstream) ensuring governance

from Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Health and Te Whatu Ora. There is also a focus on strengthening regional relationships between Oranga Tamariki Clinical Services and Te Whatu Ora Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Recommendation 6

Ensure mokopuna are informed of their plan by social workers prior to being admitted into residence, in order to uphold the rights of mokopuna to participation and information, and to promote trust, transparency, and predictability for mokopuna, in line with Oranga Tamariki Practice Standards.

Response: Accepted

We accept this recommendation and acknowledge the importance of tamariki and rangatahi being informed of their plan by social workers prior to them being admitted into a residence.

All tamariki and rangatahi in care are entitled to be visited by their social worker in line with their individual needs. These visits are an opportunity to inform tamariki and rangatahi of any changes to their placements, as well as update their All About Me Plan (AAMP). Prior to tamariki or rangatahi entering a residence, the social worker must update or create their AAMP, to ensure a planned and informed transition into the residence. This also includes completing or updating their Tuituia assessment. This information should be provided to residence staff and should be made available for them to access on CYRAS.

How and when we inform tamariki and rangatahi that they will be admitted to a residence requires sensitivity and an understanding by the social worker of the individual circumstances and specific safety needs of the tamaiti or rangatahi, including whether they are at risk of absconding, self-harm, or harm to others. The social worker needs to use professional judgment to decide how and when a tamaiti or rangatahi should be informed of these changes.

Oranga Tamariki acknowledges there have been instances where tamariki and rangatahi have not been informed of the plans that have been made for their placements. Oranga Tamariki will consider what action may need to be taken, if any, to remind kaimahi of their responsibilities in informing tamariki and rangatahi of a change to their placement, prior to their admission to a residence. This has been raised with National Commissioners and further follow up will take place to look into the issues raised by Mana Mokopuna.

It is important to note, however, that decision making about communication with tamariki and rangatahi is outside of the control of Puketai kaimahi. In instances where Puketai kaimahi have been concerned about communication with tamariki and rangatahi prior to admission, feedback has been given to the relevant Oranga Tamariki site.

Response to Facility Recommendations

Below are our responses to the facility recommendations made in the Puketai OPCAT report.

Recommendation 1

Urgently implement a process and training for the night shift kaimahi to administer medication so all kaimahi can administer medication to mokopuna regardless of the time of day.

Response: Accepted

Puketai is currently implementing a process and training for night shift kaimahi to administer medication so all kaimahi can administer medication to tamariki and rangatahi, regardless of the time of day. Administering Medication training was delivered to all night staff over the week 18 to 24 November 2024, to ensure that there is a robust process in place to administer medication should tamariki or rangatahi abscond and then return to the residence. If this is to happen, on call senior kaimahi will be phoned immediately to attend the residence to support decision making (including matters other than medication). Psychopharmacology training was also delivered on 27 November 2024.

Recommendation 2

Provide foundational and then ongoing training for all kaimahi working at Puketai on youth justice and mental health legislation, processes and practices to further develop their knowledge and skills when working with mokopuna placed in Puketai, including mokopuna who crossover between care and protection and youth justice.

Response: Partially accepted

While we accept this recommendation, we believe that training should focus on the core functions as described in kaimahi individual job descriptions. As Puketai employs a range of kaimahi in a range of roles, it is important to note that some roles require more specialised knowledge than others. Puketai will continue to ensure kaimahi have access to a range of training and professional development including how to better support mokopuna that may have been involved with the youth justice system or that present with mental health concerns.

Recommendation 3

Ensure all kaimahi understand and are supported to understand on an ongoing basis, the rationale behind the frameworks, processes, and practices that are implemented in the residence, so they can use that understanding to drive decision-making and support mokopuna individual needs.

Response: Partially accepted

We accept this recommendation and the need for kaimahi to understand and be supported to understand the rationale for frameworks, processes and practices that are implemented in the residence. Puketai will focus on staff training and professional development opportunities available to care team kaimahi, that build on their understanding of mokopuna needs and how these can be best met through the residences daily practice.

Recommendation 4

Ensure the meaningful and effective education programme that Kingslea School provides at Puketai continues, even after new kaimahi are hired.

Response: Partially accepted

We acknowledge the importance of tamariki and rangatahi who are placed at Puketai having access to meaningful and effective education. It is, however, important to note, that Oranga Tamariki is not responsible for the provision of the Kingslea School education programme. The ongoing funding and

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servicing of the school is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Oranga Tamariki is therefore unable to commit to funding and providing a service into the future that we are not responsible for.

Puketai leadership did not hold concerns for the running of the Kingslea School programme and we are pleased to advise that the new school year has started well. This is likely in part because the teaching team is made up of kaimahi that includes a mix of those new to Puketai but experienced in working in a residential setting, as well as three kaimahi having returned from last year that were not expected to.

We partially accept this recommendation due to our role in working with the Ministry of Education. However, given there are no current concerns for the running of the programme, and responsibility for the ongoing funding and servicing of the programme lies with the Ministry of Education, we consider this recommendation to be closed.