



## Te Maioha o Parekarangi – Youth Justice Residence

### OPCAT Monitoring Report

Visit date: 25-27 February 2025

Report date: May 2025



# Kia kuru pounamu te rongu

## 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 well-being, at every stage of their lives.

Please note for clarity, in this report, we use the term 'mokopuna' to describe a group of children and young people, and 'tamaiti' for a specific child or young person.



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# Introduction

## The role of Mana Mokopuna – Children and Young People's Commission

Mana Mokopuna - Children and Young People's Commission is an independent advocate for all children and young people (mokopuna) under the age of 18 and for those who are care-experienced, up to the age of 25. As of 01 August 2025, the Children and Young People's Commission is replaced with the Children's Commissioner (Mana Mokopuna – Children's Commissioner), due to legislative change. This changes the governance structure of our organisation, while retaining the same mandate and functions. Mana Mokopuna advocates for children's rights to be recognised and upheld, provides advice and guidance to government and other agencies, advocates for system-level changes, and ensures children's voices are heard in decisions that affect them.

Our organisation is a designated National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) as per the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).

The New Zealand legislation relating to OPCAT is contained in the Crimes of Torture Act (1989). The role of the NPM function at Mana Mokopuna is to visit places where mokopuna are detained:

- 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 torture, cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment.

## About this visit

Mana Mokopuna conducted a full unannounced visit to Te Maioha o Parekarangi Youth Justice Residence (Te Maioha) between 25-27 February 2025 as part of its NPM monitoring visit programme. The objective of our OPCAT Monitoring as a NPM is to prevent ill-treatment in all places where mokopuna are deprived of their liberty by regularly monitoring and assessing the standard of care experienced in these facilities.

As per our usual process, our initial findings are reported at facility and Oranga Tamariki national office level in real-time following this monitoring visit.



## About this report

This report shares the findings from the monitoring visit and recommends actions to address any issues identified. The report outlines the quality of mokopuna experience at the facility and provides evidence of the findings based on information gathered before, during, and after the visit. A draft report is available for stakeholders to review three months after the onsite visit has concluded.

## About this facility

<b>Facility Name:</b>	Te Maioha o Parekarangi Youth Justice Residence. Oranga Tamariki operates the residence.
<b>Region:</b>	Rotorua
<b>Operating capacity:</b>	30 beds and 29 mokopuna on-site for the visit. There are 3 units plus a secure care unit that surround a central courtyard known as the 'compound'. Units are made up of two wings containing mokopuna bedrooms and bathrooms that are connected with a common area, a separate TV room, areas to take private phone calls, and a small kitchen hub to serve and store food.  There is also an onsite gymnasium, an education block, and a fenced sports field.
<b>Status under which mokopuna are detained:</b> ss235, 238(1)(d), 311 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, ss173 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011.	

## Key Findings

Mana Mokopuna found no evidence of cruel, inhumane, degrading treatment or punishment (ill-treatment) during the visit to Te Maioha.

### Areas requiring development:

For Oranga Tamariki National Office consideration

- Mokopuna who do not live locally to Te Maioha do not have the same opportunities to create relationships with community-based providers and services when they transition. This is creating undue stress for whānau and due to the lack of support, mokopuna are cycling back through detention facilities.
- Legislation dictates that residential kaimahi cannot administer needle based medications like glucagon or EpiPens. There needs to be an established mitigation plan developed by Oranga Tamariki National Office so the life-saving medication can be administered promptly by residence kaimahi when required.



- Recruitment processes and timeframes need to be reviewed to avoid good prospective kaimahi dropping out of the recruitment phases due to lengthy delays. Low staffing numbers at Te Maioha is having a negative effect on mokopuna care experiences.

#### For Te Maioha o Parekarangi consideration

- Secure care is used as a last resort and admissions are currently following a downward trajectory. However, there is high use of regulation 48<sup>1</sup> confinement to rooms when mokopuna are in secure care. This is limiting their full access to education, the outside, restorative kōrero, and peers.
- Kaimahi need to be clear when secure care admission grounds have been met and accurately document the rationale in the secure care register. This does not always happen and Mana Mokopuna cannot be sure whether legal ground under s368 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 have always been met.
- Kaimahi are sometimes using mokopuna inclusion in educational activity as a way to coerce compliant behaviour.

#### **Areas of strength:**

- Kaimahi across all areas of the residence have strong te ao Māori values and regularly share their matāuranga Māori with mokopuna. There is strong support for mokopuna to grow their knowledge around their own whakapapa and tikanga Māori practices are embedded across the facility. Examples include:
  - Regular karakia, waiata and kapa haka training
  - Te reo Māori is spoken openly in the units by kaimahi and between kaimahi and mokopuna. There are fluent reo Māori speakers amongst kaimahi who want to share their knowledge.
  - Mokopuna are part of whakatau and many have the confidence to introduce themselves through pepeha.
- Connection to whānau is prioritised and whānau are involved in decision making regarding mokopuna plans.
- Resolving conflict between kaimahi and mokopuna and between mokopuna aligns with the Whakamana Tangata<sup>2</sup> model and was evidenced during this monitoring visit.
- Kahui Rangatahi youth council is operational and provides mokopuna with an avenue to have their voice heard directly with residence decision makers.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 48 of the Residential Care Regulations 1996 which enables kaimahi to keep mokopuna in their bedrooms in order to keep them separated from other mokopuna.

<sup>2</sup> Whakamana Tangata is the restorative practice model used in all Youth Justice residences. It is a Māori centred practice approach which has relational, restorative and inclusive practice at its core. It focuses on preventative and restorative elements that encourage mokopuna to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour, enhance accountability, repair harm and restore mana.



- The employment co-ordinator is working well with mokopuna and providing them with life-skills to utilise when they return to their community. Examples include:
  - Utilising the agriculture area to practice building farm fences, animal management, and horticulture.
  - Barista skills and food preparation
  - Driver licensing

## Recommendations

### 2025 Systemic and Oranga Tamariki National Office focused Recommendations

As a result of the findings of our OPCAT monitoring visit in February 2025, Mana Mokopuna makes the following recommendations:

	Recommendation
1	Oranga Tamariki proactively writes operational guidance and issues to all residences how they will manage the health care of mokopuna who require needle-based emergency medications such as glucagon pens and EpiPens.
2	Review Recruitment processes and timeframes to avoid good prospective kaimahi dropping out of the recruitment phases due to lengthy delays.
3	Implement the roster changes established through the Residences and Homes pilot <sup>3</sup> as soon as possible to bolster kaimahi numbers on targeted shifts and ensure kaimahi work/ life balance.
4	Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora develop clear guidelines detailing how these two government departments will work together to ensure mokopuna in places of detention have equitable access to specialist health services.

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<sup>3</sup> *'Residences and Homes'* pilot was launched by Oranga Tamariki in Te Puna Wai o Tuhinapo Youth Justice residence on 9 May 2024 to test proposed changes to the way youth justice residences across Aotearoa New Zealand could operate in the future. The pilot is set to focus on improving kaimahi training and leadership development, trialling a new roster system, and working with kaimahi and mokopuna to understand what the best possible experience in a youth justice residence could look like.



## 2025 Facility Recommendations for Te Maioha o Parekarangi

	Recommendation
1	Supervision is provided on a regular basis by an external party to ensure all kaimahi have the opportunity to share openly with supervisors not connected to their facility
2	Ensure kaimahi understand the grounds for secure care admission and ensure they document the specific details in logbooks and registers. Undertake a review of the use of regulation 48 to ensure it is also being used in line with legislation.
3	Kaimahi are trained in the educational philosophy of Kingslea School and understand the important role of education in the development of mokopuna.
4	Ensure Whakamana Tangata training and refreshers are regularly available to kaimahi to continue the strong use of the model in the residence.

## Concluding Observations from the United Nations

In February 2023, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child ('the UN Committee') released its Concluding Observations<sup>4</sup> for New Zealand's sixth periodic review on its implementation of the Children's Convention<sup>5</sup> and how the Government is protecting and advancing the rights of mokopuna in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In August 2023, the United Nations Committee Against Torture also released Concluding Observations<sup>6</sup> for New Zealand's seventh periodic review regarding the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment<sup>7</sup>.

Both of these sets of concluding observations included recommendations to New Zealand relating to upholding the rights of mokopuna Māori.

Many of the recommendations from both sets of Concluding Observations are directly relevant to aspects of treatment experienced by mokopuna at Te Maioha which Mana Mokopuna has found during this monitoring visit in February 2025. Where relevant, these are highlighted throughout the body of the report.

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<sup>4</sup> Refer CRC/C/NZL/CO/6 [G2302344 \(3\).pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](#)

<sup>6</sup> Refer CAT/C/NZL/CO/7 [G2315464.pdf](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment | OHCHR](#)





## Report findings by domain

### Improving outcomes for mokopuna Māori

This domain focuses on identity and belonging, which are fundamental for all mokopuna to thrive. We note 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.

#### Mokopuna Māori continue to be over-represented in places of detention

Mokopuna Māori continue to be over-represented in places of detention<sup>8</sup> including Te Maioha. The 2023-issued Concluding Observations of the UN Committee Against Torture and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child outline the need for policy and legislative changes to address these disparities.<sup>9</sup> Although mana motuhake (self-determination) for mokopuna Māori can only exist when they are with their whānau, hapū, and iwi, Oranga Tamariki residences should be doing everything in their power to uphold the Crown's Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and improve outcomes for mokopuna Māori whilst they are in the care of the State.

Mokopuna are entitled to the highest standard of care when they are in the custody of the State. Oranga Tamariki is bound by Articles 19, 20 and 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 3<sup>10</sup> of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to actively protect and treat as taonga mokopuna in their care.

#### Kaimahi at Te Maioha actively seek to integrate and support te ao Māori worldviews and values

Te Maioha kaimahi consistently demonstrate strong te ao Māori values and worldviews in their daily interactions with mokopuna. These values are actively embedded across all shift teams and are visible in the residence cultural practices. The residence leadership team and kaimahi collectively uphold tikanga Māori through regular use of reo Māori, karakia, mihimihi, and waiata. Mana Mokopuna also observed kaimahi and mokopuna learning and sharing their pepeha. Residence tikanga was also woven into kaimahi meetings, professional development sessions, and events that celebrate culturally significant occasions such as Matariki. This consistency reflects a meaningful commitment to Māori culture for all working and living in the residence.

<sup>8</sup> [Hāpaitia te Oranga Tangata | New Zealand Ministry of Justice](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Refer CAT/C/NZL/CO/7/31](#)

<sup>10</sup> [The three articles of the Treaty of Waitangi – Nation and government – Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand](#)



The integration of te ao Māori worldviews and values is also evident in how kaimahi at Te Maioha manage mokopuna behaviour, with a strong focus on restorative practice. The residence implements the model Whakamana Tangata, which is grounded in Māori values and principles. This approach incorporates restorative methods of communication and relationship-building, while also aligning with Oranga Tamariki legislation and regulations. Whakamana Tangata draws on key Māori frameworks, including Te Whare Tapa Whā<sup>11</sup> and Te Toka Tū Moana.<sup>12</sup> Central to this model are the domains of:

- Mana Tamaiti (the inherent dignity and potential of the child),
- Whakamana Tāngata (restoring and upholding the mana of all involved), and
- Mana Motuhake (self-determination and identity).

Mana Mokopuna observed strong examples of restorative practice between kaimahi and mokopuna throughout this February 2025 monitoring visit. We encourage the residence leadership team to continually drive the Whakamana Tangata approach to firmly embed this into everyday operational practice.

## Kaimahi have a strong focus on improving cultural needs for mokopuna Māori

Between October and December 2024 over 35 of the 45 mokopuna who were placed at Te Maioha during these months whakapapa Māori (were of Māori heritage).<sup>13</sup> It is essential mokopuna have opportunities to connect with their culture, as research shows it is critical for mokopuna Māori wellbeing and health outcomes, and access to culturally responsive care and services while in this facility is consistent with mokopuna rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Mana Mokopuna found good evidence of kaimahi teams within the residence, such as youth workers, team leaders, and case leaders, working well together to ensure mokopuna needs, including cultural needs, were identified and met.

A standout example was with mokopuna All About Me plans which had been co-developed by case leaders alongside mokopuna and their whānau. Mokopuna participation in the design of their own All About Me plans was clear from input on font styles, pictures of whānau, colour selections and layout, to what therapeutic practices can work for them and what they specifically want to achieve from their time in the residence. Case leaders helped mokopuna to set personal goals, outline aspirations and interests, all with an emphasis on their connection to whānau, hapū and iwi.

Mokopuna in the residence are further supported to develop cultural connection through the education provided by Kingslea school. Cultural history and identity are embedded through

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<sup>11</sup> [Te whare tapa whā » Open Polytechnic](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Working with Māori: Te Toka Tūmoana | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)

<sup>13</sup> Data obtained during the onsite February 2025 visit.



mahitoi (art and craft) and pūrakau (myths, legends) facilitated by knowledgeable kaiako (teachers) to strengthen mokopuna self-identity and creating connection to culture, whānau, hapū and Iwi.

### Kaimahi encourage mokopuna to be proud of their culture

Kaimahi working in the units with mokopuna regularly provide safe spaces for mokopuna to showcase and practice their pepeha as demonstrated when Mana Mokopuna visited Te Marama unit. Mokopuna were able to share their name and where they are from through pepeha. Other activities within the units include learning various waiata with actions from across the motu as well as teaching all mokopuna the haka specific to Te Maioha residence that is performed on special occasions by kaimahi and mokopuna together. Kaimahi take every opportunity to encourage mokopuna to use kupu Māori and expand their understanding of tikanga.

Upon arrival at the facility, Mana Mokopuna was welcomed through mihi whakatau. The welcome party included members of the Te Maioha leadership team as well as two mokopuna representatives. During the introductions of haukainga and manuhiri, both mokopuna stood confidently and introduced themselves through mihi and pepeha. Inclusivity at such kaupapa is intentional by kaimahi as a form of positive role modelling of tikanga practice, using every occasion as teachable moments, and highlighting the importance of mokopuna representation at all levels of the facility.

### Kaimahi participate and engage in culturally appropriate practices that support mokopuna Māori to feel safe to resolve conflict

Mana Mokopuna found that staff are appropriately trained and supported to implement culturally responsive restorative practice approaches, which enable mokopuna Māori to uphold their own mana as well as the mana of others. This was evidenced in unit logbooks where kaimahi had recorded instances of these approaches being used to de-escalate conflict between mokopuna and to support the restoration of mauri and relationships in the units.

Another example is the use of Noho Mauri, which kaimahi explain to mokopuna as a way to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour. Noho Mauri involves mokopuna moving away from the group to a dedicated space within the unit. This approach encourages mokopuna to reflect on their actions and build their capacity to respond to challenges in a constructive and culturally meaningful way. When needed, kaimahi guide mokopuna away to the dedicated area and engage them in a restorative process known as kōrero whakapiri.<sup>14</sup> This involves immediate, respectful dialogue to address issues mokopuna may be facing. Through this process, kaimahi support mokopuna to express their thoughts, identify ways to manage their

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<sup>14</sup> Kōrero whakapiri is described as restorative kōrero for just two people ie facilitated conversations between two mokopuna or a mokopuna and a kaimahi. Where more than two people are involved, the practice moves into hui whakapiri that requires more preparation time and support given a bigger group.



frustrations, and develop strategies that uphold their own mana and the mana of others moving forward. Mana Mokopuna saw regular use of the different restorative practices used by kaimahi detailed in unit daily logbooks with details around what led up to needing an intervention as well as outcomes for mokopuna going forward.

### Te Maioha has built strong connections with whānau and iwi

*“Staff were friendly and approachable, and I didn’t feel uncomfortable or anything nothing like other residences”*

*(whānau member)*

Generally, whānau members who agreed to speak with Mana Mokopuna said they were pleased with the way the residence engage with them and felt informed most of the time. Some whānau highlighted good communications with kaimahi that kept them informed of their respective mokopuna progress against their plans, medical updates, and felt involved when mokopuna plans were updated. Whānau also have the opportunity to join Multi-Agency Team (MAT) hui where progress reports and on-going plans for mokopuna are discussed by residence kaimahi, education and health providers, and social workers and again whānau said attendance at these hui is useful.

Strong connections with local Iwi is prioritised by the leadership team at Te Maioha. The facility itself is built on Tuhourangi Ngāti Wāhiao (local hapu) land. The Parekarangi Trust forms part of the governance structure for the residence and meets quarterly with the residence leadership team. The Trust also plays a role in recruitment of new kaimahi and they are represented through an Iwi delegate on the facility grievance panel. Use of the local pūrākau are used in conjunction with hīkoi (walk) up the puke (hill) behind the facility where mokopuna are able to take the short walk to the summit and learn about the local Iwi history alongside facility kaimahi.

The celebration of Māori kaupapa such as Māori language week and other Pacific language celebrations are acknowledged at the facility. A Matariki celebration evening is a feature at Te Maioha where mokopuna and kaimahi celebrate the Māori new year with acknowledgements of mokopuna and kaimahi achievements. Mokopuna share in kai alongside whānau, community stakeholders, and members from the Parekarangi Trust.

Mana whenua involvement helps ensure that Te Maioha is operated, and maintained in a way that respects local tikanga, whakapapa, and kaitiakitanga. Having regular and stable contact with mana whenua breathes life into the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi by enabling active protection, participation and partnership between iwi and the residential facility. Mana Mokopuna would like to see this relationship continue to grow and strengthen as it has the potential to positively impact the outcomes for all mokopuna and their whānau who transition through Te Maioha.



## Treatment

This domain 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.

### The restorative practice model sets the foundation for strong relationships between mokopuna and kaimahi

Setting and maintaining strong, caring, but professional boundaries is easier if the relationship between kaimahi and mokopuna has a solid foundation. Mokopuna often thrive in settings that are predictable and structured and are managed by people who role model respect, transparency, and aroha. Kaimahi find this foundation set in the principles of the Whakamana Tangata practice model and because of this, the relationship between most kaimahi and mokopuna was positive. Mana Mokopuna observed mokopuna being able to kōrero with kaimahi openly and mokopuna were encouraged to kōrero with the Mana Mokopuna OPCAT team without hesitation. Mokopuna displayed a high level of trust with most kaimahi in the facility. Due to the solid relationship foundation, kaimahi could re-direct negative behaviours, hold mokopuna accountable with mana, and keep a professional line that still treated mokopuna with aroha and awhi. An example observed by Mana Mokopuna was during a phone call one tamaiti was having with whānau. The call was going well above the allocated time slot and was having an impact on other mokopuna being able to use the phone. Kaimahi gave te tamaiti fair warning to finish the call and when te tamaiti did not listen, warning again was given that the call would be terminated. While te tamaiti was not pleased with the abrupt end to the call, they did hand back the phone to kaimahi and re-joined the other mokopuna in the TV room.

Mana Mokopuna did observe some kaimahi normalising drug use, by joking and laughing about being 'high' during open kōrero with mokopuna. While we note that this was a one-off conversation that the OPCAT Monitoring team witnessed, it highlights the need for all kaimahi to continuously assess their behaviours on the unit with mokopuna to keep that high standard of care whilst being relational and engaging with them.

Mana Mokopuna encourages the Te Maioha leadership team to continuously refresh the Whakamana Tangata training and provide on-going support and role modelling to kaimahi regarding professional boundaries in a residential setting.



## Secure care is used as a last resort and data received reflects low admission rates

The isolation and seclusion of mokopuna goes against their human rights.<sup>15</sup> There is strong international advocacy for the seclusion of all mokopuna in all settings to cease immediately. International research<sup>16</sup> labels the seclusion of mokopuna as harmful and a practice the New Zealand government has been questioned about on numerous in-person sittings by various United Nations committees. Mana Mokopuna supports zero seclusion practices.

The high use of regulation 48<sup>17</sup> to confine mokopuna to their bedrooms when in secure care is an ongoing concern for Mana Mokopuna and is a practice evidenced across all youth justice facilities, including Te Maioha.

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The Committee against Torture, the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child note that the imposition of solitary confinement, of any duration, on children constitutes cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment or even torture.<sup>18</sup>

The Concluding Observations released by the United Nations Committee Against Torture on 26 July 2023 recommends New Zealand should immediately end the practice of solitary confinement, including secure care, for children in detention.<sup>19</sup>

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Data received from Oranga Tamariki<sup>20</sup> shows there has been a steady decrease in secure care admissions for Te Maioha over the previous twelve months to date (February 2025). For the six months February 2024 to July 2024 the average number of secure care admissions was just over 50 per month, compared to the six months just before this February 2025 monitoring visit (August 2024 to January 2025) where there was an average of just over 30 admissions per month. Whilst not all admissions had clear evidence documented as to how it met the legal grounds under s368 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, Mana Mokopuna found some evidence of rationale documented in unit logbooks that included the steps taken to de-escalate situations or help regulate mokopuna emotions before the secure care admission happened.

As noted above, there is an ongoing concern regarding the use of regulation 48 at Te Maioha and the lack of time some mokopuna are spending out of their bedrooms, on rotation<sup>21</sup>, with

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<sup>15</sup> A/ HRC/28/68, para 44

<sup>16</sup> Examples include: [Seclusion - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics](#), Nowak, M. (2019). *The United Nations global study on children deprived of liberty- online version*. United Nations, Hales, H., White, O., Deshpande, M., & Kingsley, D. (2018). Use of solitary confinement in children and young people. *Crim. Behav. & Mental Health*, 28, 443.

<sup>17</sup> Reg48 of the Residential Care Regulations 1996 – confinement to rooms in secure care.

<sup>18</sup> A/ HRC/28/68, para 44

<sup>19</sup> CAT/C/NZL/CO/7 para 38(h)

<sup>20</sup> Data received as part of a regular bundle of information that outlines monthly secure care admissions and use of force incidents for all youth justice residences. This data is not official and used for informal analysis.

<sup>21</sup> Rotation refers to the practice of bringing single mokopuna out of their bedrooms for a specified time per hour. When secure care is full, mokopuna may only spend less than ten minutes out of their bedroom per hour.



limited access to kaimahi support and peer interaction, or the ability to go outside for fresh air and recreation.

Mana Mokopuna did see evidence of restorative activities being completed with mokopuna when they were admitted into secure care and had access to the common areas of the unit. When mokopuna are admitted into secure care, programmes are delivered in a form of reflective discussion between kaimahi and mokopuna that cover topics such as taking responsibility, goal setting and planning, anger management, art, and word finds based on emotions. These programmes are designed to encourage mokopuna to reflect and share thoughts and own observations of self. When the grounds for the secure care admission no longer apply, kaimahi work with mokopuna to return to their open unit and ensure supports are in place to mitigate the risk of return. This involves a hui or kōrero whakapiri and talking through ways mokopuna can regulate their emotions in their own units.

Mana Mokopuna would like to see a continued reduction in the use of secure care with a review of practice around regulation 48 confinement to rooms. Kaimahi should be continually supported through training to further strengthen de-escalation and restorative practices in the open units to assist in the reduction of secure care admissions.

### Mokopuna relationships are strained with an increase in assaults

One of the main reasons secure care was being used at the time of this February 2025 visit, was due to assaults between mokopuna. Mana Mokopuna found inter-mokopuna relationships were strained and data received by Mana Mokopuna detailed numerous incidents where mokopuna have assaulted fellow mokopuna and sometimes kaimahi. In some cases, these assaults are gang related, whilst others centred around a personal grievance, or were opportunistic.

Many kaimahi explained that it is sometimes difficult to achieve cohesion in the open units given the complex personalities and backgrounds mokopuna have. Kaimahi said that it can often be the admission of one tamaiti that can upset the balance or mauri of a unit creating heightened situations and disruption for everyone. With this knowledge, kaimahi said they try hard to ensure mokopuna are a good fit for units on admission, and they do try to mitigate risks, such as gang affiliation, however bed capacity pressures sometimes do not allow for this to always happen. In these cases, kaimahi rely heavily on their role modelling approaches and de-escalation strategies to keep mokopuna safe.

Use of Force incidents have been trending upwards for the past six months in the residence, with an average of around 15 incidents per month.<sup>22</sup> This is corresponding to a spike in assaultive behaviour by mokopuna at the residence. Mana Mokopuna found that each

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<sup>22</sup> Data received as part of a regular bundle of information that outlines monthly secure care admissions and use of force incidents for all youth justice residences. This data is not official and used for informal analysis.





incidence of Use of Force was well documented and is being reviewed by appropriately trained kaimahi.

## Whānau contact is regular and whānau are involved in decision-making for their mokopuna

Mana Mokopuna spoke with mokopuna regarding whānau contact and all mokopuna said they have regular contact with whānau via phone calls and in-person visits. Whānau interviewed by Mana Mokopuna also said that contact with their mokopuna was frequent and staff made efforts to accommodate whānau with travel and accommodation support where necessary.

Whānau acknowledged the work of residential case leaders at the facility who work tirelessly as conduits between whānau and mokopuna and with Oranga Tamariki site social workers to ensure whānau are included at every opportunity while their tamaiti is living at Te Maioha. This includes at Multi-Agency Team hui where whānau are part of decision making when it comes to input into mokopuna care plans.

*"[kaimahi] will ring, always call me, if I don't answer I get an email and text message."  
(whānau member)*

## Transitions and mokopuna care plans

Strong community-based supports and plans are needed to fully wrap around mokopuna and whānau to enable successful transitions. When these supports are not in place, the potential negative impact on whānau already under pressure, can result in mokopuna returning to youth justice residences. Mokopuna need on-going mentoring, access to positive role models, education or vocational training, and holistic health supports already set up before they leave the residence. Mana Mokopuna heard about some good examples from whānau and kaimahi around collaborative efforts between residence case leaders and Oranga Tamariki site social workers in setting up these types of supports. An example came from a whānau member who had been engaging with a life coach set up by the Oranga Tamariki site social worker allocated to their mokopuna. This māmā explained how important it had been for her to connect with this life coach and change some aspects of her own life to benefit her mokopuna. An emerging issue, not just for Rotorua, is the decrease in funding for community organisations or NGOs closing altogether. Funding pressures are leaving gaps in services available for mokopuna and their whānau, especially in smaller centres like Rotorua.

For local mokopuna, the Rotorua home 'Te Kohanga' operated by Oranga Tamariki is currently being used to support mokopuna transitioning from Te Maioha and into the community. Kaimahi working at Te Maioha explained that the transition via Te Kohanga allows mokopuna to be in the community but still receive support from the residence kaimahi who also work in the home. This creates a smooth transition path for local mokopuna and their whānau before





mokopuna fully enter their whānau home. This arrangement is relatively new, and Mana Mokopuna looks forward to assessing the success of this pathway when we next visit.

Whilst this is a significant benefit to local mokopuna, those who come from outside of the region do not have the same opportunity to stay at Te Kohanga or create the same connections to local NGO supports and generally reintegrate back into community life. Mokopuna, who were not from Rotorua, told Mana Mokopuna that although they would prefer to stay at Te Maioha, they would rather move to a facility that is less desirable in terms of what is offered, facility culture, and kaimahi, in order to be closer to home just to be able to see their whānau more and be in their own familiar communities.

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Social workers are required to provide appropriate transition supports and ensure a positive care transition experience for mokopuna under section 74 of the Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018<sup>23</sup>. This includes providing information on their placements prior to their transition date and providing sufficient monitoring and support during their care transition.

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Mana Mokopuna continually encourages Oranga Tamariki to place mokopuna in residences and homes close to whānau and that reviews are frequently carried out to ensure that when they are not, they are transferred at the earliest opportunity.

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<sup>23</sup> [Oranga Tamariki \(National Care Standards and Related Matters\) Regulations 2018 \(LI 2018/111\) \(as at 01 May 2023\) 74 Monitoring and support during care transition phase – New Zealand Legislation](#)



## Medical services and care

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

Mokopuna have the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including timely access to health services such as dental, sexual and mental health services, and preventative health care such as guidance for parents<sup>24</sup>. Mokopuna who require specialist health care are not always having their needs met at Te Maioha.

### Conflicting legislation is creating a health risk for mokopuna

The medical team alerted Mana Mokopuna to a situation that had occurred in the weeks prior to this February 2025 OPCAT monitoring visit that involved a mokopuna with type one diabetes. Legislation under Regulation 4 of the Residential Care Regulations 1996 prevents kaimahi at Te Maioha from administering needle based medications. These medications can only be administered to mokopuna by a nurse, general practitioner or dentist. A situation arose at the residence for the mokopuna with diabetes whereby the mokopuna experienced very low blood sugar levels overnight and was in danger of becoming hypoglycaemic. Fortunately, a kaimahi with whānau experience of diabetes was able to administer a sweet drink and blood sugar levels were monitored until nursing staff arrived at the residence. The medical team are concerned that should a glucagon pen be required in an emergency when there is no registered nurse onsite, mokopuna could experience a catastrophic medical event. When Mana Mokopuna questioned the residence leadership team about the event, they shared the concerns of the medical team regarding the legislation but felt hamstrung in terms of providing the very best care for mokopuna.

This issue was raised to the Chief Children's Commissioner at the time of the monitoring visit despite te tamaiti now not living at Te Maioha. There is concern that this situation could happen again, and Mana Mokopuna has raised this directly with Oranga Tamariki. Mana Mokopuna recommends Oranga Tamariki proactively write operational guidance and issue to all residences how they will manage the health care of mokopuna who require needle based emergency medications such as glucagon pens and EpiPens. In the long term, consideration should be given to secondary legislation amendments to the Residential Care Regulations 1996 to enable dedicated residential kaimahi to administer potentially lifesaving medications.

There is also conflict in legislation when it comes to mokopuna being able to consent to medical intervention. Currently for mokopuna under the age of 16 and who are ordered by the Youth Court to serve a Supervision with Residence Order under s311 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, they must have parental or guardian consent to receive medical treatment.

<sup>24</sup> [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](#) - Article 24 Health and Health Services



The medical team have raised their concerns regarding consent and a lack of consent forms on mokopuna files for those under 16. The medical team suggested using the Gillick Competency assessment<sup>25</sup> as this would be the norm for medical practitioners in the community.

Further discussion needs to be had at an Oranga Tamariki National Office level to ascertain if Gillick competence could and should be applied to mokopuna in places of detention and who are under 16 years of age when they want to access medical treatment.

## Specialised mental health care and assessments for mokopuna need to be prioritised

There continues to be a disconnect between agencies when it comes to mokopuna being able to access timely specialist assessment and care. Mokopuna who are placed into youth justice residences often have complex unmet care and protection and health needs. Both medical and clinical kaimahi expressed to Mana Mokopuna that they are seeing more mokopuna with diagnoses of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and other neurodevelopmental conditions, as well as mokopuna presenting with a range of neurodiversities. They said there are many more mokopuna who have suspected diagnoses but these have yet to be confirmed due to a lack of assessors and mokopuna access to psychiatrists and psychologists. Te Maioha has a psychiatrist onsite fortnightly, but it is difficult for all mokopuna to access this specialist care as clinic hours are very limited.

Kaimahi are also concerned that mokopuna who are experiencing mental health challenges and unwellness are not getting their needs met when staying at Te Maioha. It continues to be concerning that residence kaimahi who are not specifically trained are working with mokopuna experiencing mental health unwellness. Often mokopuna are being admitted into secure care because they are not being supported to de-escalate in a way that is appropriate to their presenting mood or mental state. More support needs to be available from community-based adolescent mental health services to assist kaimahi and mokopuna through periods of challenge.

In addition to this, the medical team have seen more mokopuna coming into residence who are detoxing from drugs and alcohol and again, specialist support for them is lacking. Residence kaimahi do not have specialist training in this area and often mokopuna are simply relying on their contact time with nurses to provide assistance.

Mana Mokopuna recommends a cohesive plan be developed between Oranga Tamariki and Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora that outlines how these two government departments will work together to ensure mokopuna in places of detention have equitable access to specialist health services.

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<sup>25</sup> [View of Children and Competence to Consent: Gillick Guiding Medical Treatment in New Zealand](#)



## Improved communications between medical team and residential team to improve health care for mokopuna

The health team contracted to Te Maioha is onsite every day during the working week. However, there is some work to be done to streamline mokopuna access to nurses in order for mokopuna to be seen on a regular basis. The medical team did note there had been examples of delays in them seeing some mokopuna due to an inability for residence kaimahi to escort them to the onsite medical rooms. Despite this, nurses reported healthcare checks are up to date for mokopuna and they are usually engaged when mokopuna have been assaulted by other mokopuna or need to be checked after force has been used on them by kaimahi.

The medical teams did want to raise with Mana Mokopuna the issue they have regarding doctor-patient confidentiality when working with or examining mokopuna. Currently residence kaimahi will often be present in the room with a GP and mokopuna and this feels uncomfortable given consultations should be private. Medical staff understand why this might occur from a safety perspective but the medical team is keen to kōrero with the residence leadership team to establish how safety can be maintained as well as mokopuna right to privacy when discussing their medical history or problems.

Mana Mokopuna encourages continual conversation between the residence team and medical practitioners in order to provide a safe and private place for mokopuna health consultations.



## Protection Systems

This domain 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.

### Mokopuna and whānau are well informed on admission

All whānau that agreed to speak with Mana Mokopuna said that their experience with the admission process was very good and transparent and they felt that they were well informed on how things work and who to contact if they needed further support.

One whānau member described their mokopuna transfer from another youth justice facility and how they appreciated that both facility kaimahi kept very good communications on the movements of their mokopuna. This whānau member said they were provided with expected departure and arrival times and kaimahi confirmed when their mokopuna was settled into their new residence. The nursing team at Te Maioha had also contacted them after medical checks were completed as part of the admission.

Residence case leaders obtain as much information as possible from whānau and Oranga Tamariki site social workers before the admission to ensure a care plan is developed and maintained for the entirety of mokopuna stay in the residence. This is recorded in All About Me plan template that whānau and mokopuna continue to develop alongside residential case leaders.

Once consent from mokopuna is received, health and wellbeing screening commences including mokopuna referral to Te Ara Kaupare forensic mental health team which occurs within 14 days of admission to residence. Education screening is also conducted by kaiako employed by Kingslea School, and an individual learning plan is created to support mokopuna educational journey whilst at Te Maioha. Residential case leaders also work alongside employment co-ordinators to support mokopuna goals with employment and develop plans to enhance their employment skills. Results from screening and any concerns in the development of care plans are discussed at the admissions MAT hui, which whānau are a part of.

*"Felt well informed on why he was going there and what to expect".  
(whānau member)*

### Kaimahi proactively set mokopuna up with aroha, awhi and a trusted adult when they are coming into the residence

Kaimahi intentionally make efforts to meet with mokopuna prior to arriving to the residence. Kaimahi said they travel to build rapport with mokopuna and sometimes whānau to ensure



mokopuna have a familiar face to support them when they arrive at Te Maioha. Kaimahi said this process makes a significant difference for mokopuna transitioning into the facility as well as providing some opportunity to connect with whānau. Mana Mokopuna recognises the effort Te Maioha kaimahi go to in order to ensure mokopuna can enter into the facility with mana and kaitiakitanga.

## Kahui Rangatahi is a place for mokopuna to be heard

Kaimahi at Te Maioha have created a forum in 'Kahui Rangatahi' that allows mokopuna to advocate for themselves. This hui brings together two mokopuna representatives from all units in the residence to discuss issues of importance to them with the residence leadership team. A pre-meeting is planned and facilitated by kaimahi within each unit with the support of VOYCE Whakarongo Mai<sup>26</sup> Kaiwhakamana to capture the views of all mokopuna in the unit so there is fair representation at the hui. The leadership team work with mokopuna at Kahui Rangatahi hui to create tangible solutions to move issues forward. The facility leadership team also work with the Grievance Panel<sup>27</sup> to discuss matters brought to the Kahui Rangatahi hui and report on solutions and outcomes of the hui. Mokopuna representatives also conduct feedback sessions to their respective units on the outcomes of each meeting.

Mana Mokopuna recognises the Kahui Rangatahi forum provides an added layer of advocacy for mokopuna that ensures their voice is heard and they are able to bring forward matters relating to them and participate in finding solutions. Mana Mokopuna sees value in the hui as it provides opportunities of leadership, self-determination and participation in the operations of the residence. Mana Mokopuna encourages Oranga Tamariki to support youth councils or similar youth voice and participation mechanisms to be established and maintained in every residence.

## Mokopuna have access to Independent Advocates and use the grievance complaints system effectively

Mokopuna have access to Voyce Whakarongo Mai and their two Kaiwhakamana who visit the facility every Monday. The residence leadership team also said, the Kaiwhakamana are able to visit any time whenever there is a need for mokopuna. Kaiwhakamana act as an independent advocate for mokopuna that ensures their voices are heard, needs are being met, and rights are being upheld. This may include support with a grievance or complaint<sup>28</sup> that mokopuna want to make, as well as having a presence at the Kahui Rangatahi hui implemented at Te Maioha. VOYCE Whakarongomai also support mokopuna with activities and are currently working on a skincare activity alongside mokopuna and residence kaimahi that will roll out

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<sup>26</sup> [Home - VOYCE - WHAKARONGO MAI](#)

<sup>27</sup> Whaia te Maramatanga is a grievance and feedback mechanism specifically designed for mokopuna living in Oranga Tamariki run residences. The Grievance Panel is an integral part of this system and panels are made up from members of the community who investigate mokopuna complaints and grievances.

<sup>28</sup> Whaia te Maramatanga is a grievance and feedback mechanism specifically designed for mokopuna living in Oranga Tamariki run residences.



later in 2025. Mana Mokopuna spoke with multiple mokopuna who understood how they can make a grievance or complaint and who to speak to if they are needing support with this process.

The Grievance Panel meet regularly with the residence Quality Lead and wider leadership team and maintain a presence within the facility through the mana whenua panel member who frequently visits Te Maioha and is someone mokopuna report having a good relationship with.

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Providing mokopuna with clear understanding of how to make a complaint and how they can access independent youth advocacy, supports their right to express their views and be heard in line with article 12<sup>29</sup> of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and section 11 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

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<sup>29</sup> [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](#)



## Personnel

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

### An overly long recruitment and induction process is a barrier to increasing kaimahi numbers

Mana Mokopuna was told that there is an issue with the recruitment process for residences. The issue is mainly due to time delays from application to interview, with engaging in initial training, and then getting new kaimahi allocated to shifts and working in the units. Many kaimahi across all levels of operations said that they knew of multiple applicants who had withdrawn their applications as they found employment elsewhere due to the drawn out timeframes of Oranga Tamariki.

The roster is also a sticking point with many prospective kaimahi, and the residence leadership team are looking forward to implementing roster changes that have been piloted in another Oranga Tamariki run residence<sup>30</sup> to promote positive work/ life balance amongst their kaimahi. Mana Mokopuna encourages Oranga Tamariki to start implementing some of these changes, especially with regards to the roster, as soon as possible.

Mana Mokopuna strongly supports a review of the current recruitment and on-boarding process to minimise wait times and ensure high quality applicants are engaged and recruited.

### The low staffing levels at Te Maioha has an impact on kaimahi and mokopuna wellbeing and safety

Some kaimahi within the senior leadership team shared with the Mana Mokopuna OPCAT Monitoring Team that low staffing numbers has an incredibly negative impact on kaimahi wellbeing which then affects their ability to provide quality care for mokopuna. When asked what themes or patterns they have observed impacting the low staffing levels, recruitment was a recurring concern for kaimahi as well providing good support and leadership to retain kaimahi and reduce turnover.

The residence leadership team acknowledged that more kaimahi per unit per shift would go a long way in terms of increasing engagement with mokopuna, ensuring safety, and providing positive care experiences. Kaimahi across all operations of the facility said that having low staffing levels places added pressure on kaimahi who are essentially needing to do more with

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<sup>30</sup> 'Residences and Homes' pilot was launched by Oranga Tamariki in Te Puna Wai o Tuhinapo Youth Justice residence on 9 May 2024 to test proposed changes to the way youth justice residences across Aotearoa New Zealand could operate in the future. The pilot is set to focus on improving kaimahi training and leadership development, trialling a new roster system, and working with kaimahi and mokopuna to understand what the best possible experience in a youth justice residence could look like.





less. Kaimahi want to provide mokopuna with effective activities and programmes but said they feel unable to deliver these due to low staffing numbers where the focus is on maintaining line of sight and ensuring safety. Kaimahi said they feel supporting individual tamaiti with matters relating to education and personal development falls by the wayside when kaimahi numbers in the units are low.

When Mana Mokopuna asked mokopuna what their view was of whether there were enough kaimahi in the units, they said there were times when activities are organised and then cancelled due to a lack of kaimahi. Whilst some mokopuna shared that they understand why the activity cannot go ahead, it was still very frustrating and, in some instances, heightened the behaviour of mokopuna in the units.

Kaimahi working night shifts also outlined the importance of having higher numbers in the units over night as although mokopuna are mainly sleeping, some do require support overnight. Some kaimahi recounted historic events involving mokopuna disruption that had occurred on the night shift. Again, the staffing roster pilot currently being conducted by Oranga Tamariki may help with providing optimal kaimahi numbers at various points of the day and overnight. Mana Mokopuna encourages Oranga Tamariki to share the findings of the pilot with other residences and operationalise a final staffing model as soon as possible.

## Kaimahi receive consistent training and support for professional development

Training days for kaimahi are held weekly on a Tuesday and are facilitated by the residence Kaiwhakaaue, Team Leaders Operations (TLOs), and other experienced staff from the residence leadership team. Mana Mokopuna reviewed Te Maioha training day folders that outlined a wide range of topics or models of care that kaimahi were trained in. Topics included Oranga Tamariki regulations and legislation, facility-specific operational processes, safety best practice, youth development engagement models, and Whakamana Tangata. Training also included compulsory refresher trainings like STAR<sup>31</sup> training and first aid.

Areas of site-specific training are identified through information contained in TLO shift reports, information from shift leaders, and feedback from kaimahi working directly with mokopuna in the units. Senior leadership review these reports and identify trends and patterns of mokopuna behaviour and formulate training to support kaimahi to mitigate risks within their units and therefore maintain a safe environment whilst ensuring quality care for mokopuna.

Professional development and growth pathways for kaimahi are also evident at Te Maioha with many members of the leadership team being experienced residential youth workers who have been developed into sound leaders. The Tuakana/ Teina (teacher and learner) philosophy exists within Te Maioha with many kaimahi explaining they have been provided opportunities to be creative in their roles and develop their craft in working with and caring for mokopuna.

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<sup>31</sup> Safe Tactical Approach Response – this is the use of force training utilised in all youth justice residences.



Mana Mokopuna spoke with members of the leadership team who shared this philosophy and the importance for them to provide residential youth workers with as many tools and resources as possible and to support them by role modelling practice expectations and supporting personal growth and curiosity.

There is a commitment from senior leadership team to support kaimahi professional development in line with the supervision policy and extra support is available via EAP.<sup>32</sup> However, kaimahi said that it can be difficult to organise time to see a supervisor or EAP counsellor due to staffing numbers being tight in the units. Kaimahi working night shift said that accessing these services during their working hours is impossible. Consequently, supervision happens internally via TLOs or peers.

Mana Mokopuna continually recommends to Oranga Tamariki that across all residences, supervision is provided on a regular basis by an external party to ensure kaimahi have the opportunity to share openly with supervisors not connected to their facility. Supervision is an important component to consistent practice delivery and reflective practice to ensure mokopuna continually experience a high standard of care. The roster pilot may also provide solutions for Te Maioha kaimahi in terms of all having the opportunity to access their TLOs and any external services between normal business hours.

### Kaimahi practice can be strengthened to maintain professionalism and consistency

Mana Mokopuna spoke with various kaimahi across the units and within the residence leadership team who acknowledged that whilst maintaining consistent practice is a priority there is always room for development and growth. Whilst Mana Mokopuna found kaimahi practice to be generally sound, the monitoring team observed the following:

- Kaimahi were in conversation with mokopuna and made several references to drug use.
- Inappropriate language could be heard in conversations between kaimahi and mokopuna.

Mana Mokopuna found the residence leadership team to be pro-active in ensuring a high level of care that meets the national care regulations through consistent training and refreshers for kaimahi. An example of the targeted training is around documentation. This has been a focus in terms of practice improvement for the residence and Mana Mokopuna noted good quality in terms of detail in the overall entries into logbooks and registers with most kaimahi being able to explain why good documentation is necessary in a facility like Te Maioha. The on-going challenge the leadership team has identified has been ensuring the learnings from trainings

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<sup>32</sup> [EAP Services Limited](#)



are being quickly translated into practice, and providing support for newly appointed kaimahi as their application of theory can take time to develop and embed.

## Material Conditions

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

### Mokopuna have access to the outside and various recreational areas including a swimming pool in the unit courtyard

Mokopuna are able to access outside courtyards, a recreational gym, and a grassed area to enjoy sports. For mokopuna who were on level three of the Behaviour Management System (BMS),<sup>33</sup> TLOs also took groups of mokopuna up the local puke located directly behind the facility for a hikoi on nominated days. Mana Mokopuna saw all of these areas being used by mokopuna during the on-site visit. Kaimahi told Mana Mokopuna that the portable swimming pools were no longer in use as they required cleaning but said they were a welcome addition during the hot summer season as mokopuna grew restless with the heat in the units and the pools were great for de-escalating behaviours. Mokopuna also said they enjoyed going in the pool during summer.



*Outside grass areas and pools for mokopuna to use*

### Mokopuna living areas were clean, but heavily tagged

Mokopuna had allocated chores that contributed to keeping their living areas clean and tidy. Chore lists for each mokopuna were clearly displayed so that each tamaiti could see how they were contributing to unit life. The units all had artwork displayed on the walls and had soft

<sup>33</sup> There is a behaviour management system operating in all youth justice residences that is a points-based system that mokopuna can move through in order to Access various incentives. These incentives range from later bedtimes, a choice of treats to eat and opportunities to mix with other mokopuna in other units for special occasions/ events.



furniture for chairs and tables. However, many of the Perspex window panels and unit walls had heavy tagging. Some observation windows were hard to see through creating a potential line of sight issue for kaimahi and should therefore be replaced urgently.



*Examples of inside areas at Te Maioha*

The facility has a dedicated staff member who oversees the maintenance of the facility and works quickly when small repairs are needed. However, kaimahi said there can be significant delays for repairs that require resources of services and therefore need approvals and processing from Oranga Tamariki National Office.

Mana Mokopuna would like to see these processes carried out in a more timely manner to ensure the residence remains safe and mokopuna can live in an environment that is conducive to mental and physical wellness and dignity.

## Good nutrition is required for mokopuna wellbeing

During the monitoring visit, some kaimahi and mokopuna raised concerns around the quality and quantity of food served at the residence. Concerns centred around the nutritional value of the food served and whether it was adequate for growing young men needing a healthy



balance of macro and micronutrients in the form of whole foods as well as free access to water in mokopuna bedrooms. Mana Mokopuna reviewed the grievance quarterly report for Te Maioha (October to December 2024) which contained mokopuna complaints around food. Whilst the Grievance Panel found the quality of food was largely adequate, Oranga Tamariki should ensure the food has the optimal nutritional value that active and growing young people require to maintain and support their growth and development.

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All children have the right to healthy food and adequate nutrition and easy access to water to drink as per Article 24 of the Children's Convention.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> [Protecting-Childrens-Right-Healthy-Food-Environment.pdf](#)



## Activities and access to others

This domain 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.

### There is a future focus on mokopuna employability with a dedicated employment co-ordinator role filled

Mana Mokopuna met with the employment co-ordinator to discuss the role and how they can progress vocational development of mokopuna whilst they stay at Te Maioha. The employment co-ordinator has been fulfilling a dual role position as the programme co-ordinator and employment co-ordinator more recently taking up the employment coordinator role, fulltime. During the interview, the employment co-ordinator said there is a strong focus on developing and strengthening mokopuna employment skills to increase personal capability and employability when returning to their community. This is achieved through vocational programmes combined with practical experience and NCEA accreditation as well as driver licensing. The employment co-ordinator emphasised that the hope is to change the vision of mokopuna to see themselves as skilled people working towards goals and achieving success.

One of the resources used by the employment co-ordinator is a small agricultural area of land that houses farm animals such as chickens and pigs located within the grounds of the residence. The employment co-ordinator explained that use of the area through the agricultural programme has great value for mokopuna as they can learn tangible skills like fence building, horticulture, animal management and gain NCEA credits for these skills and begin to build confidence in themselves and their ability to learn and achieve through education.

Programmes are developed in conjunction with the employment co-ordinator, case leads and social workers as well as a key residential youth worker who support mokopuna through their learning and skill development. Driver's licensing has recently become popular amongst mokopuna with many of age wanting to receive their license. Mokopuna are supported to learn the road code in order to get their licence to then carry on this learning when returning to community.

Mana Mokopuna acknowledges the urgency needed to address recruitment and development of skilled kaimahi to deliver meaningful programmes for mokopuna. Learning and development of mokopuna whilst in care has significant impact on their pathways into the future, and resources such as the vocational programme provide tangible life skills that mokopuna can take with them into adulthood.



## The Life Skills Unit still not in use

The Life Skills Unit, which consist of two, one-bedroom, self-contained flats within the main compound of the residence, are still not operational and have not been since November 2021. There is still no timeline for re-opening the unit as the residence does not currently have enough kaimahi to provide consistent staffing levels for the unit to come back online.

The Life Skills Unit is essential to supporting effective transitions that teaches independence in preparation for returning to community. Mokopuna learn life skills such as budgeting, buying groceries, cooking, and self-maintenance duties including washing clothes and keeping facilities clean and tidy.

Te Maioha is the only facility in the country that has this type of step-down unit within the residence. Mana Mokopuna continue to support prioritising opening the Life Skills Units for mokopuna to use. Having these units available is vital to increasing the options available to mokopuna to build on their life skills and provide a supported transition back into the community.

## Kaimahi create meaningful engagements and activities that build on mokopuna strengths and culture

Te Maioha has a skilled workforce of kaimahi who bring lived experience and personal skills to the facility that support the development of mokopuna. Mana Mokopuna observed various activities where kaimahi were able to facilitate sports activities as well as cultural activities where mokopuna were positively engaged. Where mokopuna chose not to engage in activity, kaimahi were able to use that time to speak with mokopuna in a one-to-one capacity. Kaimahi explained they use times like that to check in with mokopuna and build rapport if they are not engaged in the activity.

In addition to activity within the residence, opportunities to engage in community sports outside of the residence is encouraged at Te Maioha and viewed as important developmental experiences that build life skills for mokopuna. Staff shared that getting outside the fence of the residence empowers mokopuna as it grows a sense of hope, widens their perspective on community, and supports a pathway outside of offending.

Mana Mokopuna also observed karakia, waiata and haka lyrics in most of the units written on large paper and stuck on the walls. When kaimahi asked mokopuna to introduce themselves to Mana Mokopuna, mokopuna were able to stand and introduce themselves with some sharing their pepeha. The learning of waiata and haka was commonplace at Te Maioha as many staff members whakapapa Māori and intrinsically bring their skills in te ao Māori to the facility and openly share with mokopuna.





Mana Mokopuna found kaimahi make great efforts where possible to create meaningful activities and build on the strengths and cultural identity of mokopuna. Te Maioha kaimahi are highly skilled and bring a broad range of expertise to the facility. Mana Mokopuna wants to highlight the cultural capability of kaimahi at the residence as a strength and as a standout feature within the Oranga Tamariki residence network. We encourage Oranga Tamariki to continually support and develop kaimahi to benefit mokopuna care experiences.

## Educational development for mokopuna requires an educational approach, not a punitive approach

Mana Mokopuna spoke with kaiako from Kingslea School who deliver education on behalf of Ministry of Education at Te Maioha. Kingslea School kaiako are skilled in working with mokopuna who have not been in mainstream education for some time or are difficult to engage. Education is structured in small chunks and uses mokopuna interests as 'hooks' into learning. Kaiako did explain that residence kaimahi need to be enablers for education as well and create easy ways for them to engage. Kaiako gave examples where there were struggles that included when incidents had happened in the evening and raru (disagreement) had boiled over to the next morning when mokopuna arrive at education. Another example was when school-run activity options were used as a carrot by residence kaimahi to encourage mokopuna to behave. Kaiako shared their view that mokopuna should not be reprimanded and excluded from educational activity, especially practical, hands-on type options, due to an incident that occurred the night before, or to coerce good behaviour for the day.

Mana Mokopuna highly recommends residence kaimahi are trained in the educational philosophy of Kingslea School and understand the important role of education in the development of mokopuna, and the fact that all mokopuna have a minimum basic right to good quality education.

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Under Articles 28 and 29 of the Children's Convention, mokopuna have the right to a good quality education that helps develop their personalities, talents, and abilities to the full. Oranga Tamariki must ensure mokopuna at Te Maioha have access to all of the structured day of education offered to them by Kingslea School.

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## Education programmes are well-resourced, however low staffing can impact learning opportunities for mokopuna

Mana Mokopuna found the education offered by Kingslea School is appropriate and enhances mokopuna skills and identity. Kingslea School utilises the kitchen and barista machines to deliver food preparation and cooking lessons as well as teach barista skills to mokopuna. Cultural learning is also offered and Kingslea School invite guests to create programmes that look at pepeha and tikanga on a marae that is also reinforced within the units by facility staff.



Physical Education is also a highlight for mokopuna where they can engage in exercise utilising the residence weights room and indoor gym.

Kaiako who spoke with Mana Mokopuna did say that the impact of low staffing numbers at Te Maioha has an impact on what they can teach in terms of education outside the classroom. Kingslea School requires the assistance of residential kaimahi when delivering educational activities outside a classroom environment, and there have been times when activities have had to be re-scheduled due to low staffing numbers for the residence. This highlights the need for recruitment and retention issues to be addressed as the effects of low kaimahi numbers has far reaching consequence.



# Appendix One

## Progress on 2022 recommendations

The following table provides an assessment of the recommendations made by Mana Mokopuna for the previous full monitoring visit Te Maioha carried out in July 2023. Mana Mokopuna acknowledges that work on systemic recommendations is led at the Oranga Tamariki National Office level. . The progress detailed here relates only to the day-to-day operations of this residence and is assessed on the following scale:

**No Progress** | **Limited Progress** | **Some Progress** | **Good Progress** | **Complete**

### 2022 Systemic Recommendations

	2022 Recommendation	Progress as at February 2025
1	Revise the Individual Care Plan templates to ensure they are functional, youth-friendly, and available in other accessible formats and languages.	<b>Good progress in residence.</b> Te Maioha case leaders are working with Oranga Tamariki site social workers to ensure mokopuna care plans are up to date and have been informed by mokopuna and their whānau. Mokopuna and whānau are regularly at the table when updates to plans occur and there is evidence mokopuna have had input into their plans – both in content and layout.
2	Develop a nationwide package of training programmes that sits alongside the Oranga Tamariki Te Waharoa Induction programme.	<b>Good progress in the residence.</b> There has been good progress to training undertaken by kaimahi in the residence. There are a range of topics regularly covered as well as mandatory refreshers. Te Maioha has been innovative in terms of utilising information from TLO and shift leader reports to tailor training to help kaimahi address trends in mokopuna behaviour. The application of Whakamana Tangata is strong in this residence and the residence leadership team should continually facilitate in-depth scenario training and refreshers to maintain experience and confidence in the model.
3	Review the grievance process. It should be independent and impartial and provide a clear mechanism for keeping mokopuna informed of progress.	<b>No progress nationally.</b> Whaia te Maramatanga is still used in residence and is not an independent or impartial system. However, mokopuna at Te Maioha know how to make a grievance and use this process regularly. Mokopuna are well supported by VOYCE Whakarongo Mai to make complaints and have their voice heard.
4	Develop a national strategy to address recruitment and retention issues for kaimahi across all residences.	<b>Limited progress nationally.</b> Oranga Tamariki National Office continue to prioritise recruitment and workforce development however pressures for high quality kaimahi to work with mokopuna in residences continues to be an issue. Low staffing numbers at Te Maioha had an effect on mokopuna care experiences in the residence and more needs to be done to retain kaimahi to provide a high standard of care for mokopuna.
5.	Urgently roll out the National Medication Training for all kaimahi.	<b>Complete</b> Standard Operating Procedure training was rolled out to Te Maioha in July 2023. However, continued vigilance is required to ensure medication errors are kept to a minimum. We also note the issue around the administration of needle-based medications to mokopuna by residence kaimahi. If nurses or GPs are not present in the facility and mokopuna require lifesaving medications such as glucagon or EpiPens, there is a risk of serious negative outcomes for mokopuna if this is not administered quickly. Mana Mokopuna has recommended that Oranga Tamariki Oranga proactively writes operational guidance and issues to all residences how they will manage the health care of mokopuna who require needle-based emergency medications.



## 2022 Facility Recommendations

	Recommendation	Progress as at February 2025
1	Address the high use of secure care, restraint holds, and searches. Secure Care should only be used as a last resort and not as a place to hold surplus admissions.	<b>Some progress.</b> Secure Care admissions are trending down for Te Maioha, however there is evidence of a high use of regulation 48 for mokopuna admitted into this unit. This remains highly restrictive practice and more work needs to be done to ensure that if mokopuna are to be kept in their rooms, they meet the legislated requirements. Likewise, kaimahi need to ensure details as to why mokopuna meet the grounds for secure care admission are properly entered into the secure care register.
2	Ensure all reviews and record keeping meets national standards, in particular, for secure care admissions, use of force, and Whāia te Maramatanga grievances. CCTV footage should not be deleted until the review has taken place.	<b>Some progress.</b> As above, there was some good evidence of detailed reasons as to why secure care was being used and the legislative grounds under which this applied. However, this did not happen in all cases and this has been noted as a continued area for development.
3	Address maintenance issues as a matter of urgency. Priority must be given to the secure care unit, temperature control issues, and fencing repairs.	<b>Some progress.</b> Maintenance issues that can be addressed onsite are done in a reasonable timeframe. However, there can be delays when services require Oranga Tamariki National Office sign off. Mana Mokopuna note there needs to be replacements made to Perspex panels especially in some of the unit hubs to enable appropriate line of sight. Tagging on the walls is extensive in some places and would benefit from removal.
4	Develop programmes of activity specifically for after-school hours and during school holidays.	<b>Good progress.</b> Kaimahi were able to engage mokopuna in a variety of activities. When mokopuna were not willing to participate, kaimahi used this time for 1:1 reflection work or to check in individually with mokopuna.
5	Reinstate Te Ara Tikanga and other meaningful, vocationally focused programmes for mokopuna.	<b>Good progress.</b> The work of the employment co-ordinator is excellent and mokopuna are being exposed to a variety of employment options and growing their life-skills to use once they return to community. Skills include farm fence building, animal management, horticulture and driver licensing. Mokopuna report they enjoy these activities and can see how they can shape their path in the future.
6	Increase access to cultural programmes and invest in the cultural capability of kaimahi Māori.	<b>Good progress.</b> The current group of kaimahi have largely high capability in terms of knowledge of te ao Māori and matāuranga Māori. Kaimahi are eager to share their knowledge and help mokopuna learn reo Māori and about their whakapapa. There is also good, continued support from mana whenua with iwi representatives on recruitment panels and the Grievance Panel as well as regularly meeting with the residence manager.
7	Ensure kaimahi are aware of the Code of Conduct and provide guidance on best-practice engagement strategies with mokopuna.	<b>Complete.</b> Code of Conduct training was completed over 2023 and a revised SOP training in early 2024.
8	Ensure all staff receive the Te Waharoa Induction Programme in its entirety before working in open units.	<b>Good progress.</b> Kaimahi are largely receiving their full Te Waharoa induction and report that on-going training is beneficial to their professional development. Kaimahi did raise that attending training can be difficult when they are short staffed as there is no resource to backfill. This issue needs to be addressed in order to have regular training embedded.



# Appendix Two

## Gathering information

Mana Mokopuna gathered a range of information and evidence to support the analysis and develop findings for this report. These collectively form the basis of our recommendations.

Method	Role
Interviews and informal discussions with mokopuna.	
Interviews and informal discussions with kaimahi and external stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Mokopuna</li><li>■ Whānau</li><li>■ Residential Youth Workers (RYW)</li><li>■ Quality Assurance Lead</li><li>■ Kaiwhakaue</li><li>■ Team Lead Clinical Practice (TLCP)</li><li>■ Team Lead Operations (TLO)</li><li>■ Shift Leaders</li><li>■ Nurse</li><li>■ Doctor</li><li>■ Grievance Panel Chairperson</li><li>■ Teachers</li><li>■ OT Social Worker</li><li>■ Residential Manager (RM)</li><li>■ Manager Residence Operations (MRO)</li><li>■ Employment Coordinator</li><li>■ Case Leaders</li></ul>
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Grievance Quarterly Reports</li><li>■ Serious Event Notifications</li><li>■ My Safety Incident Reports</li><li>■ Reports of Concern</li><li>■ All About Me Plans</li><li>■ Daily Logs</li><li>■ Secure Care Logs</li><li>■ Daily Schedules</li><li>■ Staff Roster</li><li>■ Disruption toolkit</li><li>■ Safety and Security Plans</li><li>■ Training Folder</li></ul>
Observations and engagements with mokopuna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Mihi whakatau and facility tour</li><li>■ Unit Routines - mealtimes, community hui, structured activity time, free time, education</li><li>■ Shift handovers</li><li>■ Hikoi with mokopuna up the hill behind the residence.</li></ul>