



**Evaluation of Transition Support Service:  
Theme report:**

**Understanding the needs of  
rangatahi in Youth Justice  
facilities eligible for a Transition  
Worker**

**March 2022**



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## Executive summary

**This report provides the perspective of young people in Youth Justice (YJ) residences aged 16-18 who may be eligible for a transition worker and of the staff who work with them.**

The report synthesises information from interviews with young people and staff in youth justice residences, and responses to the Just Sayin' 2021 survey<sup>1</sup> from 24 eligible young people who were in a Youth Justice residence at the time of the survey. It does not include transition worker perspectives.

We completed in-depth interviews with 17 rangatahi aged 16-18 and 19 staff across four Youth Justice residences in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our aim was to explore the transition process for leaving a Youth Justice residence and to better understand the specific transition needs of rangatahi.

The views of rangatahi with past experience of the Youth Justice system who were not in a residence at the time of the survey are not included in this report.

The Transition Support Service (TSS) was introduced in July 2019 to ensure rangatahi leaving care and custody have the same opportunities in life as any other young person in Aotearoa New Zealand. From the age of 15, rangatahi who have been in care or Youth Justice and who meet the eligibility criteria are able to be supported by a transition worker<sup>2</sup> who will help them plan for a positive future when they leave care.

Oranga Tamariki has five<sup>3</sup> Youth Justice residences for children and young people who have or are alleged to have committed an offence. The aim of the Youth Justice residences is to provide a safe, secure, and supportive environment where young people can get their lives back on track and improve their prospects for the future<sup>4</sup>.

Limitations to the study are:

- The number of responses is small, and is a snapshot in time and may not be reflective of all the eligible transition cohort with Youth Justice residence experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Will be available on the Oranga Tamariki research website:  
[www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/research/our-research](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/research/our-research)

<sup>2</sup> Rangatahi who have been in the care or custody of the Chief Executive for at least three months from the age of 14 years and 9 months are eligible for transition support services.

<sup>3</sup> At the time of this survey, there were four Youth Justice residences. The fifth one was opened in April 2021 and received first placements after July 2021.

<sup>4</sup> [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/youth-justice/youth-justice-residences/](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/youth-justice/youth-justice-residences/)

- Information is self-reported and young people and others interviewed may not be clear about the transition process, different roles in the process and the different roles of people who support them.

### **Young people transitioning from a Youth Justice residence often have a long history of care experiences and complex needs**

The interviews with rangatahi and Youth Justice staff and survey data identified the following considerations for rangatahi transitioning from a Youth Justice residence:

- Many had a long history of being in Oranga Tamariki care or custody (In response to the Just Sayin' survey: 42% said they entered care before age 11 years).
- The Youth Justice residence may be a safer and a better place to live than other experiences some rangatahi have had.
- In response to the Just Sayin' survey 52% of rangatahi had not gained NCEA level 1 and only 9% had gained NCEA level 2. Although most were still in some form of education and training, their feedback about education was not very positive.
- Full-time engagement in education, training or employment may not be achievable for some rangatahi, and rangatahi experiences with exclusion from education may mean they are resistant to participation.
- Many rangatahi described wanting practical skills, and employment related to construction, driving etc. Basic literacy is required for many of these occupations and there is an opportunity to look for innovative ways of leveraging off practical activities to build literacy and numeracy.
- Youth Justice staff highlighted the importance of not '*setting rangatahi up to fail*' by setting unachievable goals, or through a lack of preparation for tasks such as driver licences. Building their confidence by setting smaller achievable goals and working towards larger goals is important. There is a balance between having a FGC plan that is agreed with the judge and police and also FGC and transition plans that are realistic and achievable for rangatahi.

### **Connecting young people with a transition worker could be more complex than for young people not in Youth Justice residences; however, a similar proportion were receiving transition worker support**

- It was difficult for those we interviewed to differentiate between planning to leave Youth Justice and transition planning. Planning was happening at a higher rate than for other rangatahi leaving care but transition workers were not involved as early in the planning process despite the complexity of

rangatahi needs. In response to the Just Sayin' survey 74% of young people said they had talked to someone about a plan for leaving care, 22% had a copy of their plan for leaving care.

- In response to the Just Sayin' survey, 63% of young people in Youth Justice residences said they had a transition worker. The policy intention is that young people are referred to a transition worker as soon as possible after they turn 15. Reasons given for young people in Youth Justice residences not having a transition worker included Oranga Tamariki social workers and Youth Justice staff not understanding the transition worker's role, lack of confidence that the transition worker had the necessary skills and experiences, uncertainty about how long the young person would be in the residence, and that young people may move away from the location after leaving Youth Justice.
- Transition planning timing was challenging for rangatahi on remand with the associated uncertainty about length of time in the residence, but transition workers could start to build relationships with rangatahi over this time, providing a good foundation for transition planning.
- Some rangatahi plan to go to another geographic location after leaving Youth Justice residences. Linking these rangatahi with a TS partner<sup>5</sup> was difficult and Youth Justice staff suggested access to a database of TS partners would help.

**Transition workers supporting young people leaving Youth Justice residences may need additional skills and experience**

- Rangatahi leaving care and Youth Justice require transition workers with whom they can relate and build genuine relationships. It is also important the transition worker understands these rangatahi. It would be helpful if they had experience in supporting rangatahi with complex issues (trauma, mental health and addictions, anger management, disability, oppositional defiant disorder) – or who can support rangatahi to access specialist services. Rangatahi histories of being let down by systems and lack of trust highlights the importance of transition worker stability and reliability.
- Many rangatahi had complex health and social issues (in response to the Just Sayin' survey 50% had some form of disability<sup>6</sup>) highlighting the need for intensive support immediately on leaving a Youth Justice residence.

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<sup>5</sup> Transition partners are NGOs who employ transition workers under contract to Oranga Tamariki.

<sup>6</sup> Based on the Washington Group scale (level 3) of 'often' or 'always' having difficulty with one or more of the following: seeing (even when wearing glasses), hearing, physical activity, learning and emotional or mental health condition.

**Accommodation after leaving the YJ residence was a major challenge for many rangatahi**

- While approximately half the rangatahi were supported by whānau and wanted to return to live with whānau, others had no-one and nowhere to go after leaving Youth Justice residences. It was not safe for some rangatahi to return to some whānau, or whānau were not able to have rangatahi return to them. (In response to the Just Sayin' survey 26% said they did not have an adult to turn to if they needed help).
- Supported accommodation providers who offer intensive social support alongside accommodation may be the best option for rangatahi with nowhere to go, at least in the short-term. Supported accommodation offers rangatahi opportunities to develop life skills while in a safe housing situation.

**Whānau including partners and children are motivators for change**

- Interviewed young people highlighted the importance of their whānau and many wanted to return to them. However, the reasons why young people went into care and/or a Youth Justice residence show the importance of holistic support for whānau to address the issues in their lives to enable rangatahi to return to a more positive whānau environment.
- Being or becoming parents was a huge motivator for change for the 23% who were parents. However, many wanted more support to develop parenting skills. Supporting rangatahi to learn parenting skills and to parent also has the potential to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. Incorporating parenting and relationship skills into pre-transition and transition support is likely to also have future benefits for those not already parenting.

## 1. Background and the purpose of the study

Oranga Tamariki has established a new Transition Support Service (TS) for eligible young people leaving care or custody up to age 21, with access to advice and assistance available up to age 25. From 1 July 2019, the legislative transition to adulthood requirements in the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 includes:

- That care-experienced rangatahi can request to remain or return to live with a caregiver between 18 to 21 years (not available to those rangatahi with only YJ experience)
- The obligation that Oranga Tamariki must remain in contact with eligible rangatahi once they leave care or a longer-term youth justice residential placement while aged 15 to 21 years old.

The existing advice and assistance obligations have been extended through to the age of 25, and eligibility includes rangatahi with three months or longer youth justice residential placements. Obligations to help rangatahi prepare to leave Oranga Tamariki care have also been strengthened.

Transition workers, employed by Transition Service partners<sup>7</sup> work alongside the Oranga Tamariki social worker while the rangatahi is in a Youth Justice residence helping to coordinate the support and encouraging the rangatahi to have more say and increasing responsibility about what they want. The transition of rangatahi from Youth Justice residences through to the community is the responsibility of Oranga Tamariki social workers. When rangatahi are eligible for a transition worker for the transition from Youth Justice through to adulthood, a transition worker takes the lead responsibility when the rangatahi is discharged from care or Youth Justice matters are closed.

### 1.1. Oranga Tamariki has five Youth Justice residences

Oranga Tamariki has five<sup>8</sup> Youth Justice residences for children and young people who have or are alleged to have committed an offence. The aim of the Youth Justice residences is to provide a safe, secure, and supportive environment where young people can get their lives back on track and improve their prospects for the future<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> NGOs who are contracted by Oranga Tamariki.

<sup>8</sup> At the time of this survey, there were four Youth Justice residences. The fifth one was opened in April 2021 and received first placements after July 2021.

<sup>9</sup> [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/youth-justice/youth-justice-residences/](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/youth-justice/youth-justice-residences/)



Children and young people in Youth Justice residences may be waiting to go to Youth Court, remanded by the Youth Court, sentenced by the Youth Court for three to six months or sentenced to prison.

The Youth Justice teams work with the young person, their family or whānau and social worker to make a plan for when they leave the residence. This could include further schooling, a training course or looking for work. This planning is done for all young people leaving a Youth Justice residence regardless of eligibility for a transition worker.

**1.2. The purpose of this report is to explore the transition needs of young people leaving Youth Justice residences.**

The Just Sayin' surveys are distributed annually to seek feedback from young people who are eligible for support from a transition worker. The surveys are part of the TS evaluation.

In responses to Just Sayin'<sup>10</sup>, there were some differences between rangatahi leaving Youth Justice residences and other survey respondents. As part of the evaluation of the transition support service, Oranga Tamariki commissioned in-depth interviews with a sample of rangatahi in Youth Justice residences and the staff at the residences to explore the transition process and to better understand the specific transition needs of rangatahi. In this report, information from the interviews was complemented by responses to the Just Sayin' 21 survey.

## **2. Methods and information sources**

**2.1. Information about the transition support needs of young people leaving Youth Justice residences was gained from surveys and interviews**

Information was sourced from in-depth interviews and the Just Sayin' 2021 survey. Interviews included 17 rangatahi who were in the four Youth Justice residences at the time of data collection and 19 staff from those facilities. Twenty-four (of 78<sup>11</sup>)

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<sup>10</sup> The number of responses in Just Sayin' 2021 from rangatahi in Youth Justice was a small proportion of the total respondents (24 of the 355 total completions)

<sup>11</sup> As of June 2021, there were 78 young people aged 16 or older in Youth Justice facilities. We did not have information about how many of the 78 were eligible for a transition worker support. [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Performance-and-monitoring/Quarterly-report/June-2021/Oranga-Tamariki-Quarterly-Performance-Report-as-at-June-2021.pdf](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Performance-and-monitoring/Quarterly-report/June-2021/Oranga-Tamariki-Quarterly-Performance-Report-as-at-June-2021.pdf)

rangatahi from the four Youth Justice residences responded to the Just Sayin' 2021 survey.

All interviews and surveys were completed face-to-face at the Youth Justice residences. Interviews were conducted in March and April 2021 and Just Sayin' was completed between June and July 2021.

Interviews were semi-structured and a copy of the interview guide is appended (Appendix 1). Just Sayin' was a fully structured survey. Details of the survey are available on the Oranga Tamariki website<sup>12</sup>.

Ethics review of the proposed work was provided by an expert at the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre.

Rangatahi were told about the research and could choose whether or not to come to the interview/survey or stop the interview/survey at any time. Interviewed rangatahi were aged 16-18 and gave their own consent to participate. After the interview rangatahi were given a \$50 Warehouse voucher as a koha (their voucher was placed with their personal belongings and they would receive it when they left the Youth Justice residence). Rangatahi who completed Just Sayin' were given a \$25 retail voucher.

A more detailed profile of those we spoke with is shown below (Table 1).

Limitations to the data are:

- The sample is small and may not reflect all young people in Youth Justice residences
- Information is self-reported and young people and staff interviewed may not be clear about the transition process, different roles in the process and different roles of people who support them.

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<sup>12</sup> Pending ( March 2022) - Will be available on the Oranga Tamariki research website:  
[www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/research/our-research](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/research/our-research)

**Table 1. Data sources**

Rangatahi Interviews (n=17)		Interviewed
<b>Youth Justice sites:</b>	Korowai Manaaki	5
	Te Maioha o Parekarangi	4
	Te Au rere a te Tonga	4
	Te Puna Wai ō Tuhinapo	4
Sex:	Male	16
	Female	1
Youth Justice status:	On remand	7
	Sentenced	9
	Unknown	1
Time in care:	Been in care for over 5 years	16
Transition worker:	Has a transition worker	7
Just Sayin' 2021 (n=24)		Surveyed
<b>Youth Justice sites:</b>	Korowai Manaaki	6
	Te Maioha o Parekarangi	6
	Te Au rere a te Tonga	6
	Te Puna Wai ō Tuhinapo	6
Sex:	Male	22
	Female	2
Ethnicity – using a total count approach <sup>13</sup> :	Māori	19
	Pacific	3
	Non-Māori, non-Pacific	3
Entered care:	10 or younger	10
	11 to 15	11
	16+	3
Transition worker:	Has a transition worker	15
Staff (n=19)		Number interviewed
Staff roles:	Case leaders	10
	Clinical leads	2
	Employment coordinators	2
	Youth workers	3
	Programme coordinator	1
	Team leader	1

<sup>13</sup> Young people are included in each ethnic group they identify

### 3. The rangatahi

#### 3.1. Many rangatahi had a long history of Oranga Tamariki care

Most interviewed rangatahi had a long history of Oranga Tamariki care and many had been in Youth Justice residences multiple times. In response to the Just Sayin' survey, 42% had been in Oranga Tamariki care before they turned 11 years. However, for a few rangatahi being in a Youth Justice residence was their first interaction with Oranga Tamariki.

*I've been in Oranga Tamariki care since I was a little kid. Four years old, but residences [Youth Justice] since I was 12. (Rangatahi)*

While some had whānau who cared for and supported them, many felt let down and unsupported by the adults in their lives. Many talked about wanting more contact with their fathers.

*I feel like so many boys are lost... in the system. It's kind of like, a massive square and it is all like circuits and circuits of wires, and then we are just the programme. We [are] lost in that square of circuits. None of our dreams are captured and none of the things we want or that are helpful, are given because of a lack of support. (Rangatahi)*

*I don't really know dad. I got his number, but he doesn't really pick up. (Rangatahi)*

Some had nowhere to go.

*It's difficult to work with them around self-determination skills and development and all that when actually, the primary concern for [rangatahi] is, 'my family have abandoned me and I've got nowhere to go'. And at 14 that's a barrier. (Youth Justice staff)*

Complex lives and multiple care or custody experiences resulted for many in a lack of trust of people and services.

*My trust is limited mate. (Rangatahi)*

*... I just stayed in the background [at FGC] 'cause they don't get it. Like talking to them or talking to people who don't have similar [experiences] to me they just don't understand me. (Rangatahi)*

#### 3.2. Rangatahi in Youth Justice residence have complex needs

Youth Justice staff often described the rangatahi they supported as having more complex lives and needing more support than other rangatahi in Oranga Tamariki care. Complexity and support needs for some related to conditions on the foetal alcohol spectrum. For others it was their whānau contexts and exposure to antisocial environments (violence, alcohol and other drugs).

*Anyone that comes into contact with Oranga Tamariki through police or Justice intervention, they are beyond a general Oranga Tamariki population. They are at a higher need level and often we know the families. These families have had contact with the care system for many years ... (Youth Justice staff)*

*Most of them have had trauma in their lives from seeing their parent killed or things happening under them ... some of the parents have mental health disorders as well, it's usually the case. (Youth Justice staff)*

In Just Sayin' rangatahi were asked if they had any difficulties with their vision, hearing, physical movement, learning and emotional/psychological mental health. In response to the Just Sayin' survey, 50% of the 24 rangatahi in Youth Justice residences included in the survey reported some form of disability on the Washington scale<sup>14</sup> and 21% reporting more than one form of disability. The most common self-reported disability was having difficulty learning and remembering (35%) followed by difficulties with their emotions and mental health (17%). Difficulties with vision (9%) and hearing (13%) were also reported by smaller numbers of rangatahi.

In Just Sayin' rangatahi were also asked to rate their life in general and for the four domains of wellbeing in Te Whare Tapa Whā on a one to five scale (taha tinana (physical health), taha hinengaro (mental health), taha wairua (spiritual health), taha whānau or family health). Most rangatahi rated their domains of wellbeing at three or higher (1=poor, 5=excellent). However, only 30% rated their life in general as very good or excellent compared to 40% of young people not in a Youth Justice residence.

**Table 2. Self-assessed wellbeing (Source: Just Sayin' 2021)**

How would you rate your...	1-2 Low (Poor or fair)	3 Good	4-5 High (Very good to excellent)
Life in general	43%	26%	30%
Taha tinana (physical health)	4%	39%	57%
Taha hinengaro (mental health)	22%	26%	52%
Taha wairua (spiritual health)	21%	42%	37%
Taha whānau or family health	24%	14%	62%

<sup>14</sup> Based on the Washington Group scale (level 3) of 'often' or 'always' having difficulty with one or more of the following: seeing (even when wearing glasses), hearing, physical activity, learning and emotional or mental health condition.

## 4. How rangatahi described living in a Youth Justice residence

Rangatahi descriptions of life in a Youth Justice residence varied. Some described many positives aspects of living in a Youth Justice residence, some thought it was *fine* though they would prefer to not be there, while others only saw the negatives.

*There are good times [and] bad times. For some people, it's a detention centre and then for some people it's like a recovery centre. For me at first it was like detention. I was getting corrected for I was doing. But now, after a longer time in here, this becomes home. (Rangatahi)*

### 4.1. Living in a Youth Justice residence was positive for many rangatahi

Positive things about living in Youth Justice residences	
Context	Example
Three regular meals a day (some rangatahi considered the food delicious, others did not)	<i>It's alright. It's nice food and a nice bed and everything, just not how they tell you what to do. But it's not their fault, they have to 'cause we're in here for a reason. It would be better without gates. I thought it would be way worse than what it is but it's not too bad. (Rangatahi) You get breakfast, everything you get here is yuck, you just gotta eat it. (Rangatahi)</i>
Safe place to be	<i>Yeah, it's a bit different to being out in the community. But it's like you can feel safe, and that you get fed and there's always people looking after you. And it's more or less a second home to like most boys like us. Like, we know, when we come in here that we're going to be alright, until we get out. (Rangatahi)</i>
Getting education or training	<i>Yeah, I've got my level one for literacy, numeracy. Yeah, I've done that by like, coming in and out of here. (Rangatahi)</i>
Activities	<i>Getting physical doing sports and stuff. (Rangatahi)</i>
Away from people they did not want to be around	<i>[Is going back to your [whānau] a good place to go?] Yeah, no. I've got out every single time I went there, I always ran away or chopped my bracelet. It's bad. I need to find somewhere out of [this town] or find new friends, it's the only way ... (Rangatahi)</i>

Helpful staff they got on with	<i>The social workers here I can rely on them even when I get angry and I'm punching stuff. They come in and help me calm down and help me to sleep even when I've like hit people. They are there to help me. (Rangatahi)</i>
Get help with things and items they might not otherwise get	<i>With good behaviour, you can get anything you want, basically. (Rangatahi)</i>
Learning about and using tikanga practices	<i>Sometimes we do a Māori class. And they like, they can help you go back and do your pepeha, and all of that stuff, and then find out who're our ancestors. Yeah, it's interesting. (Rangatahi)</i>  <i>My whakapapa is from the North Island, so I'm a bit far away from there. But with my tikanga and all that, I'm actually quite strong in the position I am... When we invite guests here, we do a little mihi whakatau for them. We get to speak for them, do the haka, sing ... it makes me feel like I'm connecting with my other side. (Rangatahi)</i>

**4.2. Other rangatahi described the negative aspects of life in a Youth Justice residence**

Negative things about living in Youth Justice residences	
Reason	Example
Feeling isolated and not being able to see their family/partners/children and friends	<i>Even though like, it's a good place, I hate to see people like, at the age of 13, and 14 coming in here, as, like, that's hard to be away from your parents, as, as I found because the first time I came in ... And it breaks your heart not to be able to like, be at home, and have to grow up with people older than you. (Rangatahi)</i>  <i>[I'm] away from family a bit... they're really far. I don't really get many visits from them or talk to them much. (Rangatahi)</i>  <i>Nah, it's not helpful at all [being in here]. Probably takes away some relationships that really changed me [for the better] .... (Rangatahi)</i>
Not having time out of the Youth Justice residence	<i>I reckon they [Youth Justice] do all good. It's just, us. We need to have behaviour and we've got to do the good stuff to get the good treats ... If we're naughty, we get nothing... And with COVID, it's making it even worse, no more sites, we're not allowed out any more because of COVID. (Rangatahi)</i>

Not feeling safe/ having to be on the look out	<i>In here [in Youth Justice] I don't really go to anyone [for help], I stay by myself. My back's always to the wall, always watching around. You've gotta be, it's like a prison in here. (Rangatahi)</i>
Negative/ boring environment where they would get into more trouble	<i>[Living here] doesn't make you better, but it makes you worse. There is nothing to do, so you do heaps of dumb sh*t there's fights all the time. (Rangatahi)</i>
Not being treated like an 'adult'	<i>You can't go anywhere without people watching you, can't smoke when you want, can't do heaps of stuff, you have to be supervised with cutlery, dumb sh*t. You're treated like a little kid, basically. (Rangatahi)</i>  <i>Stop giving us curfews because it isn't helpful for me it just gets me in trouble for no reason. Like what's wrong with me being out at night. Then I get caught then I'm in trouble and I'm not even doing anything wrong. (Rangatahi)</i>
Not being listened to and given activities, courses etc that did not align with what they wanted to do	<i>I don't really want to go to school, I've been going to school for ages now... Yeah, we were in classes before [this interview], and I don't do sh*t. I just sit there and talk to the boys, get in trouble... I'm more like hands on? So, like, I'd rather do like an apprentice thing or like, start work .... (Rangatahi)</i>

## 5. What rangatahi said they wanted to do with their lives

### 5.1. Most interviewed rangatahi had positive goals

The Just Sayin' survey asked rangatahi where they thought they would be in five years. Of the 19 rangatahi who responded, three gave negative responses including in prison and dead but the remaining 16 rangatahi spoke about positive goals. These positive goals usually included having a "legit" job (often in the trades), not being in prison, having stable accommodation and being involved positively with whānau (either their own children or their siblings).

*[Where do you see yourself in the next five years?]*

*Out of jail, living a brand new life. Out of the system. Doing music as a career. (Just Sayin' rangatahi)*

*Be a good dad - be with my son, take him to school. I also want a career in music. (Just Sayin' rangatahi)*



Interviewed rangatahi described their goals including:

- Having their own home

*[What do you want to do in the next few years?] Moving into my own place for now. Then get my own house by paying for it with a job. I used to think it would be easy but now I'm meant to do it, it might be hard to do that, I don't know.*

*At this stage, the idea is that when I get out, I want to be able to be able to flat, get a job and be able to settle down and probably have a few kids and whatever.*

- Having a legitimate job (usually jobs that involved physical activity like a personal trainer or the trades e.g. mechanics, builders)

*[What do you want to do in the next few years?] Maybe be a builder, but just get a house of my own and get a job really that's it.*

- Getting a driver licence and owning a car

*I don't know [what I want to do], that's why I'm going on a course, so I can do something. I don't know what yet. I want to get a job, I'm due to sit my restricted, so this place is helping me out with that.*

- Trying to stay away from criminal activities.

*Hopefully, this is my last time in here. I've got a couple credits in here so far, once I crack my NCEA level 1, that should be me ready to go.*

Rangatahi without goals thought they would probably end up back in Youth Justice or prison and they were not concerned by the prospect. For a very small number it was almost their comfortable backup.

## 6. Preparing for transition

The service intention pre-transition is that:

- A holistic life-assessment is completed with each rangatahi and a transition plan is developed
- Services and ongoing transition support are arranged and/or provided
- An appropriate caregiver is found for the Entitlement to Remain and Return provision
- Rangatahi are advised of their entitlement to transition support to the age of 25.

### 6.1. Including rangatahi voices and the voices of their whānau in transition planning is intended as a foundation of effective planning.

Rangatahi and whānau voices sit alongside the views of professionals who have been working with rangatahi such as the case leaders, social workers, transition workers

and, for some, parole officers. Youth Justice staff talked about how plans needed to be a combination of the voice of the rangatahi as well as the expectations of whānau and professional views to ensure the plan included important aspects such as education. Staff felt this was a balance that needed to be reached through mutual understanding with rangatahi.

*I've got a plan in place, I just need to wait until the FGC to bring it up. (Rangatahi)*

*If we did a plan according to their voice... they would want just gym and just all the fun things as well. Sometimes they are not prepared to put in all the hard work around all those other things as well. So, in some ways yes, they are listened to, but there is a bit of give and take. (Youth Justice staff)*

## 6.2. Planning for leaving the TJ residence often, but not always, involved whānau and Family Group Conferences

Family group conferences<sup>15</sup> (FGCs) were described as the way of bringing together the different perspectives in planning. Although, hui ā-whānau<sup>16</sup> were not discussed by the interviewed rangatahi or staff, use of the term FGC may have been hui ā-whānau. The situation for rangatahi in Youth Justice is more complex than for those not in Youth Justice with the need to have other forms of FGC to plan their care while in Youth Justice, to leaving of Youth Justice and to address their offending.

FGCs are often arranged by an FGC coordinator who works with the rangatahi and social worker to make sure the important people are present. The people involved in FGC varied by individual situations and who rangatahi wanted there. As well as the rangatahi, others at an FGC may include:

- Key whānau/carers involved in the care of the young person (parents, grandparents, aunties/uncles, carers, partners etc.)
- Field social worker
- Transition worker and/ or other support workers/mentors etc.

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<sup>15</sup> Family group conferencing is a family/whānau-led process to plan how to address concerns about tamariki or rangatahi who are in need of care or protection or about offending by tamariki or rangatahi. At a care and protection family group conference, te tamaiti or rangatahi and their family/whānau come together to create their own solutions for the safety and wellbeing concerns, with support from Oranga Tamariki.

[practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/interventions/family-group-conferencing/care-and-protection-family-group-conference/](https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/interventions/family-group-conferencing/care-and-protection-family-group-conference/)

<sup>16</sup> Hui ā-whānau are a whānau gathering facilitated using Māori methods of engagement and protocols (te reo me ōna tikanga). They are initiated and facilitated by either whānau themselves or Oranga Tamariki staff to engage whānau as early as possible.

[practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/working-with-maori/how-to-work-effectively-with-maori/practice-for-working-effectively-with-maori/hui-a-whanau/](https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz/our-work/working-with-maori/how-to-work-effectively-with-maori/practice-for-working-effectively-with-maori/hui-a-whanau/)

- If appropriate - the Youth Justice worker, Police representative and/or rangatahi lawyer.

However, even when rangatahi wanted them to be there whānau were not always involved in planning via an FGC because:

- Whānau did not always want or were not able to be involved in FGCs (work commitments, lack of involvement in rangatahi lives, whānau crises)  
*It's really hard to tie families down and get them actually there [to an FGC] (Youth Justice staff).*
- Some were not allowed to be involved due to their criminal associations or being in prison.

Other rangatahi did not want their whānau involved. If a rangatahi did not want their whānau involved then having whānau at the FGC might reduce rangatahi engagement with their transition plan.

*They [my whānau] don't even want me to get out. They don't trust me because ... I might run. (Rangatahi)*

Some felt their partners should be involved, others were indifferent. Rangatahi who wanted their partner involved in their planning to leave the YJ residence did so because they were a large part of their life.

*[Who are the important people to you and in your life?] Mostly my partner, more than anybody else, is my partner. She's the person that's made me want to actually feel free and want to be out there in the freedom. If I didn't have her, I would just want to do the rest of my life inside [in jail] ... (Rangatahi)*

*It's only my missus who I let see the plan or be a part of it. My brothers don't understand ... They just don't get it. (Rangatahi)*

In response to the Just Sayin' survey, half (52%) of rangatahi said that the important people in their lives were involved in planning what happens as much as they would like.

Some Youth Justice case leaders felt they should be more involved in the planning for rangatahi as they were only sometimes invited to help with the planning. Some case leaders felt they added value to the planning for the future of rangatahi because they had spent a significant amount of time with the rangatahi and knew them quite well. Although they also mentioned this would be more work on top of their existing workloads which might not be feasible.

### **6.3. Whānau were very important to many rangatahi but others did not want whānau involved in their lives**

Whānau were very important to many of the rangatahi we interviewed. They could provide the motivation to change.

*[My whānau are] involved [in my planning] as much as they need at the moment. (Rangatahi)*

*Like, just, they're there to support me and like, they come and visit me. And I get to talk to them every night. So the support is pretty good. (Rangatahi)*

*The last one [FGC] I had it was the first time I've ever said anything at a family group conference. 'Cause I wanted the plan, the people listened to me. I had lots of family and people there who I know. (Rangatahi)*

#### **6.4. Being a parent gave rangatahi a sense of purpose and direction in their lives**

For the 23% of rangatahi who were parents and for those who were about to become parents, parenting gave them a sense of purpose and direction in their lives. They spoke about wanting to be able to provide, support and love their children. Even when they spoke about potentially not having access to their children, their goal was to get them back and prove to the world they could be a good parent.

*I'm just finding where I am in that maze [of life] and in the system and finding my belonging. My belonging is not in this place [Youth Justice] and is not in the system. It belongs at home with my kids. (Rangatahi)*

*I have to actually want this. It is sad that it took me so long to realise that this isn't the life. I remember I could never think of anything but gates and high fences and watchtowers ... Now all I can think about is taking my son to preschool, hugging my daughter, taking my partner out for dinner. I think that is what drives me, because I know that it's there and I can grasp it if I really want to and I do. That is cool because it gives me a sense of living. (Rangatahi)*

#### **6.5. Approximately two-thirds of rangatahi felt they had a say in important decisions in their lives**

Three out of five rangatahi (61%) said they felt they got to have a say in important decisions about their life all or most of the time. The remaining 39% responded with 'not much of the time' or 'never'.

Whether rangatahi felt listened to was key to whether they felt the planning process had worked well. Some rangatahi felt their point of view had been considered during their care and planning for their future and that the process had worked well.

*[Are FCG helpful] Yeah, it is. When you get to a certain age, I think it's about 15, you get to have your input. And then they work around that so then you get what you want and you have to do this as well to be about to get that stuff. (Rangatahi)*

Others felt they only had limited options and were not interested in engaging with the process.

*They listen to what you say but it doesn't go through their heads, our voices are just not heard. Like you say stuff but they then go on to make all these other plans. (Rangatahi)*

*No, I'm like a puppet on a string at the moment. I can't make my own choices, they put choices there for me to make. They put it there and I either pick the right choice or the bad choice. (Rangatahi)*

Not believing they would be listened to led to rangatahi treating planning as a tick-box exercise.

*Yeah, I just say what they want to hear so I can get out quicker. (Rangatahi)*

Some rangatahi did not want any support so were negative about anybody trying to change.

*I think that's what the problem is with most of us boys that end up back in here, the fact that we just don't want to change. Some of them, they have got all the support they have got a good plan, but they just don't want to change. (Rangatahi)*

## 6.6. All rangatahi in Oranga Tamariki care who are transitioning to adulthood should have a transition to independence plan

In the interviews rangatahi and some staff were not clear about differences between a transition from care FGC and other FGC and the different types of planning discussions. It was often not possible for interviewers to distinguish which were being talked about.

In response to Just Sayin', 74% of rangatahi said they had talked to someone about a plan for leaving care, 68% said they had been to an FGC about leaving care but only 22% said they had or have a copy of a transition plan. Other rangatahi may have had a plan but not been aware of it.

*I think I'm gonna move in with my mum. And this is where I don't really like OT. They are really late. I could imagine it'd be my last week here and I still wouldn't have found a placement to go out to ... Yeah, that is the thing with OT. Or it might not just be OT, it might just be my social worker. (Rangatahi)*

Realistic transition plans are those that have achievable goals. As one rangatahi said:

*... something that I know I can achieve. So little steps. Yeah, like having little goals for what I'm doing. Not a goal for it overall ... It like comes down to the young person. Because if they're not willing to do it, well, then there's no point trying. (Rangatahi)*

Some staff spoke about not all plans following an FGC being appropriate due to being "bulked out" to make it look better for the police (who need to agree to their plans) or for judges to consider. The worry was that extra things were being added to the plans that may not be achievable or realistic for the rangatahi.

*That was like for this young person that I work with ... he was like, "Why are we putting on all these other things [in the plan] as well?" And we are just chucking this in to look good for the courts. It's just a waste of time, pretty much. Yeah, it looks amazing but if he's not going to do it and he doesn't want to do it, then we are setting him up to fail. That's where I find a lot of the stuff here looks fancy and the judge is going to be like, wow this is*

*amazing. But if he's not engaged in it, he doesn't want to do it, he is just going to come back again and again. (Youth Justice Staff)*

Not all rangatahi were interested in engaging in the planning process.

*I've always been the type to just let everything go. What I mean by that is, I don't really hear them when they're talking to me. There's so much talking like, okay, you're gonna do this, this and this... It's just that will to actually want to do that plan. I think that's what has been the difference with now and all those other times. It's because now I actually do want to finish my plan. (Rangatahi)*

The social worker working with the rangatahi has responsibility for writing the plan for leaving the YJ residence but may be assisted by the Youth Justice staff. Youth Justice staff said they thought social workers were often overworked and too busy dealing with emergencies to make transition plans for their rangatahi. There also seemed to be a lack of clarity amongst the Youth Justice staff who were interviewed around the timing of completion of a transition plan.

*It is the responsibility of the social worker to do it. Often that does make a bit of sense that we [Youth Justice staff] do complete it because we know a lot, or we know another aspect of the guys that social workers don't necessarily know. (Youth Justice staff)*

#### **6.7. Finding an appropriate carer or somewhere for rangatahi to live was often difficult**

Accommodation and finding an appropriate carer was a challenge in all locations. While Entitlement to Remain or Return (ETRR) with a previous carer is an accommodation focus of the transition service, rangatahi leaving Youth Justice residences are not always eligible<sup>17</sup>.

In Just Sayin' rangatahi were asked where they wanted to live after they left care. Of the 15 who responded to this question eight wanted to move back with their parents or other whānau while seven wanted to live independently.

Returning to live with parents was not always possible or the best option and other whānau were considered as carers.

*He's moved back to [whānau] because there's no other placement. But [whānau] has seven others in the house. It's a two-bedroom house and four of the people in there have just been arrested for committing crimes in the last couple of weeks. (Youth Justice staff)*

*Or if one of the boys is smoking weed or a family member smokes weed or smokes crack or does all that stuff, it's hard for me or even any person to want to stop that stuff. (Rangatahi)*

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<sup>17</sup> Only available for young people who have three months care experience in addition to the time in Youth Justice. Responsibility for finding accommodation support sits with Youth Justice not the transition service. [Transition to adulthood — Entitlement to remain or return to live with a caregiver | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)

Some previous accommodation options in the regions were no longer an option for rangatahi leaving Youth Justice residences because they were being used for people who were homeless during and post-COVID.

Supported accommodation providers contracted by Oranga Tamariki could provide accommodation and transition support options for rangatahi who could not return to whānau.

#### **6.8. Similar numbers of young people in a Youth Justice residence had a transition worker as other young people leaving care**

In responses to Just Sayin' nearly two-thirds (63%) of the 24 rangatahi had a transition worker when they were interviewed compared to 60% of rangatahi not in a Youth Justice residence (although a further 17% of rangatahi not currently in Youth Justice reported they used to have a transition worker). However, Youth Justice staff often spoke about the need to involve transition workers early in the transition planning process.

*But if the work can be done in here, not after they leave, everything set up when they are in here ... [if] transition is done too late, when they leave, we're just scrambling. (Youth Justice staff)*

*As soon as the young person is eligible for the service, we should be looking at making the referral or talking to the social workers about making the referral to the transition service to get that key worker allocated sooner rather than later. But what we're finding is if we're trying to refer the 15-16 year olds, they're like, No, we don't have capacity. We're focusing on those 17-18 year olds that are actually about to leave. (Youth Justice staff)*

Starting planning early for leaving the YJ residence also allowed time for multiple FGCs if needed to reach agreement. A rangatahi described how his FGC had not resulted in agreement of a transition plan.

*People were catching feelings, getting angry over stuff, ... That is not their job, to get angry. Their job is to try and do their best and not take it to heart and stuff. It's their job, they're getting paid for it, but they're taking it to heart now, saying with a tone, that I've f\*\*ked up and everything. That is what criminals do, they f\*\*k up. Their job is to not put them down and tell them they can do better, but they're not helping anybody. (Rangatahi)*

However, early referral to a TS partner and connection with a transition worker was not consistently happening.

*They had made a plan where I will do the programmes, will see a psychologist, will do this and that. Now that I'm nearly coming up to my end date, we haven't actually made a plan to what I'm going to do when I'm out. (Rangatahi)*

*There is supposed to be that transition to independence FGC, right? That happens early, it used to be 15 and a half, it's probably 16 now. It's supposed to happen early, have your transition worker, your social worker, you're planning, you have multiple FGCs before you*

*exit care, but that's not the reality, especially not for youth justice young people who might not have care and protection issues. (Youth Justice staff)*

*Transition hui, that's only for like three weeks out for when they leave, I think it should be looked at two months earlier or a month and a half, because that's when you can start connecting with services and stuff ... you need time to find employment in that area and stuff. Two weeks beforehand is not enough time to make those connections with people... (Youth Justice staff)*

## 6.9. Reasons for delays in transition worker support included waiting times, need for complex support and young people moving to a different location

A major challenge to transition planning was uncertainty about rangatahi futures until they were sentenced, so plans or the creation of plans was put on hold.

*Most of the time [my transition worker] has been working with me, I've been here [Youth Justice]. So, a lot of the time we haven't been able to start our plan because it has been so prolonged. (Rangatahi)*

*If I turn 18 [while I'm in here], I'll go straight to prison from here, then I'm on district so it could be two years, three years... It is [hard not knowing what's going to happen]. (Rangatahi)*

Once release dates were confirmed, other reasons for delays in transition planning included:

- Perceptions of workload barriers and waiting lists

*A lot of these young people aren't referred to these services at all, or they don't even know what transition is. It's like the last minute thing, to fill that box. But it's a long process, because I guess there is a massive waiting list. (Youth Justice staff)*

- Uncertainty about the role of transition workers. Many of the Youth Justice staff interviewed said they did not have a clear understanding of what the transition workers did or what funding could be accessed.

*I'm not sure how the transition support funding as such, works, if at all comes from Oranga Tamariki, or what, but when we're talking about the boys being entitled to the service till they are 25, that funding is not gonna come from Oranga Tamariki, necessarily. Like waiting for a gym membership, who's paying it? (Youth Justice staff)*

- Complex needs of rangatahi. Matching the rangatahi with a transition worker who they could relate to and whose experience matched the needs of rangatahi was important. Youth Justice staff described limited ability in some locations to match the transition worker to the rangatahi, e.g. ethnicity, gender, interests.

*You describe this person, these interests that they might have, but they get whoever is turning up here. We have described completely different people and got the same person [transition worker]. Which didn't end well for either of them. (Youth Justice staff)*



- A further challenge to matching a rangatahi with a TS partner was the mobility of some rangatahi who moved or were placed in another location in Aotearoa New Zealand after leaving the Youth Justice residence. While Youth Justice staff had established links with TS partners in their locality, they were not necessarily aware of the range of TS partners across the country and what they offered to rangatahi. Staff said having a full list of TS partners around Aotearoa New Zealand would help them know who they could contact for their rangatahi.

*I reckon it would be cool to have a database or something that actually said who [which transition service] was responsible for what area. (Youth Justice Staff)*

*We have to know what they [TS partners] are contracted for and is it the same everywhere or is there different contracts and then what is our local contract, so what can we expect so that we can make sure that is happening and we know the right people to talk to if that is not, because it is a new service and it's hard for lwi agencies and these other services to understand exactly what they're delivering and what they can support them with. (Youth Justice Staff)*

#### **6.10. Transition support is voluntary and some rangatahi did not want to engage with a transition worker**

After a transition worker was identified, convincing rangatahi to engage with the transition worker could be challenging. Staff reported that many rangatahi were sceptical about working with another service but felt the fact that transition services were not Oranga Tamariki was a good selling point. Another good selling point was their ability to help rangatahi with money and provide things like furniture.

*[The rangatahi are] like, "why would I want another person in my life?" And 'I've gotta engage with them for 12 months, why?' ... "Are they part of OT, because I want to get out of under OT." (Youth Justice staff)*

Some staff described variation between different TS partners and transition workers who did not live up to expectations.

*When the guy [transition worker] met with him, he came here, the boy was already like, I've had some people let me down in the past, I'll wait to see it happen. [The rangatahi] was really respectful, came over and met the guy. [The transition worker] really sold the service to the boy, to the point where he was like, Okay, I think he might do what he said he's gonna do. Then within a week of leaving, we realised that service wasn't doing what they were saying that they were going to do for him. (Youth Justice staff)*

*That [reliability and good service] has not being consistent across the board, either. So, we're seeing that service [x] will be different to what level of service you get in [place y] so I don't know that everybody has a general consistent idea of what they even do. (Youth Justice staff)*

## 7. Transition support

Transition support is voluntary. Once rangatahi leave care they can:

- Receive transition support from a TS partner
- Receive transition support from a Transition Helpline through the National Contact Centre (NCC)
- Have the right to remain or return to living with a caregiver after they turn 18 and until they turn 21 (ETRR) (Not available to those with only YJ residence experience)
- Become independent from Oranga Tamariki but with the right to reconnect.

### 7.1. Transition workers need to be a good fit for the rangatahi they support

Although some rangatahi wanted to be completely independent and did not want any support or help, many spoke about wanting support. In response to Just Sayin', two-thirds of rangatahi were usually positive about their transition worker, with 60% being positive about all three of the below.

- Understands what kinds of support I need: 67%
- There when I need them: 67%
- Does what they say they would (most or all of the time): 67%

Just under half (47%) said their transition worker helped make things better for them.

Rangatahi should ideally have some input into their TS partner and transition worker.

The important characteristics of the support people the rangatahi spoke about are summarised below:

- Rangatahi can get on well and can connect on a personal level with the transition worker

*Just liaise [with us] on a different level. What I mean by that is, not see them from worker to young person, it's not adult to child, it's more. I see my transition worker as my big brother and he comes and talks to me and looks after me. Comes and tells me what's happening on the news and all that stuff. He connects to me on a different level. I think that is cool, because sometimes I will sit in the car with my social worker and I'll put on all my music, she'll put on her music and I don't like her music and that's a little joke between us. That is connecting on a different level, I'm not just sitting there next to my social worker, I'm sitting next to my big sister.*

- The transition worker is consistent and persistent

*I've had like two [social workers] so far [in the last year] and I'm getting my third one. I had one, her name was [something], for a month or two months and then she left. I had [another one], a recent one and she left like a week ago. It's confusing my brain. I don't know who my social worker is now. I'm gonna find out who's my new social worker, I haven't met them yet.*

[Did you ever have a choice about who you worked with at the transition service?]  
*Not really, I didn't really know them at the time, they just come over, introduced himself 'I'm blah blah blah'. I didn't get along for him at first, then I started meeting him and then I was like oh, he's actually a good fella. And I liked him ever since.*

- **The transition worker is easy to understand and relate to**

*[I've been with my transition worker for like a year now. He's solid. I like that fella... He understands what we think. ... he understands what we go through. He understands everything. He can relate back. Not like the other ones that I had, they didn't know sh\*t. All they knew was, you getting your sentence, that's it.*

*Sometimes when [my transition worker] is talking I just go off 'cause I don't understand her much. She just talks about things that I don't know or I can't understand her. [Do you tell her?] No.*

- **The transition worker is reliable, easy to contact and responsive**

*OT aren't helping, they are not! I need the support I ask for, everyone with OT... they all sh\*t. Ask any young person if their social worker answers their phone calls. They aren't there when you need them.*

*Let down in the past: It's a little bit hard to trust people. Especially if there's like, if because of something bad has happened in the past. Adults just always fail you. It's a little bit hard to find that one person. But with my transition worker, it was good to find that with him.*

**Being reliable was the bottom line for what staff felt rangatahi needed because without that the rangatahi wouldn't engage with them.**

*[It] only takes one time, They [the transition worker] could do three really cool things, but one time of letting the boys down, that's it. One thing you miss that you might not even think it's a big thing, but you miss that and there is so much history of being let down, that is like, you're gone. (Youth Justice staff)*

- **The transition worker is non-judgemental**

*Stop looking at my family like they're animals. Stop judging me from my past. Help with grants when I ask for them. Or when my family ask for them. Like food grants. Mum wouldn't go to WINZ for a food grant unless she needs food so just f\*\*ken give it to her. Don't ask her when the last one was, just give it to her, she's there 'cause she needs food.*

- **The transition worker is willing to work with their whānau**

*[Important people at FGCs are] probably my social worker and my mum... I think because maybe they work together to see what will be best for me for the future. Like they're on your team and trying to get what you want.*

However, only three of the 16 rangatahi with a transition worker (from Just Sayin') said they had a choice about what organisation supported them. Choice was limited in localities where there was only one transition provider.

When rangatahi already knew the transition worker and had a positive relationship with them it made it a smooth process for the rangatahi to start working with them

*The course I went to, that is where my transition worker is from, and so I used to talk to him when I was at the course. Then he called me one day when I was in here and said 'I'm your transition worker.' I'm like what? I thought you just walked around the course and did nothing! (Rangatahi)*

*He was good, I already knew him through another mate because he worked at the same building, he did the same thing, plus also transition work. So I hanged out with him a lot, so it was easy because you knew the person already. It was pretty simple because it wouldn't be a fresh new person in a fresh place. You're comfortable in that you know what you're talking about. (Rangatahi)*

## **7.2. As well as the transition worker other organisations support rangatahi during transition**

Support for rangatahi leaving a Youth Justice residence may be provided by some or all of a combination of a Youth Justice social worker, a transition worker and a parole officer. One rangatahi also mentioned support from VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai<sup>18</sup>.

*But I have to give a shout out to VOYCE, they help with stuff like court and telling me stuff I wanna know. Thumbs up to VOYCE they are actually pretty good. They ask for what they can do for me you know. (Rangatahi)*

VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai goes to all Youth Justice residences and all 23<sup>19</sup> rangatahi in Just Sayin' that were in Youth Justice residences had heard about the organisation, 18 (78%) knew how to contact them, but only four rangatahi had called them. This compares with 15 (65%) rangatahi reporting they knew how to contact Oranga Tamariki if they needed support. None had called the transition support line.

## **7.3. Transition workers need to be able to support the more complex needs of rangatahi leaving Youth Justice residences**

Youth Justice staff noted that rangatahi in Youth Justice need more intensive support than many rangatahi leaving care and the transition service may be more suitable to meet the transition needs of rangatahi leaving care not custody.

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<sup>18</sup> [voyce.org.nz/](http://voyce.org.nz/)

<sup>19</sup> One rangatahi did not complete this section of the survey

*For those who have a stable environment, are employment focused and motivated to move into that phase, it's a really beneficial service that they find easy to engage with. But when their focus is I just want somewhere to live, how are they going to help me? It's less so. (Youth Justice staff)*

*But there's lots of different barriers. It could be their mental health, it could be their IQ, it could be the fact that they are so anxious about court or their own trauma is getting in the way of everything, their focus, memory, sitting down and learning. (Youth Justice staff)*

The complex needs of rangatahi leaving Youth Justice residences meant they required intensive support as soon as they left Youth Justice.

*That's the population that we're working with, like that's the level of service that these kids need. They are at that highest end, they need a service that is going to match that. (Youth Justice staff)*

*I have heard the young people say they are telling their caregivers to turn the shower on for them or open the toilet door. It is so structured here ... We know that social workers and transition support and everyone, don't realise how much support these young people need as soon as they walk out the gate. They need that extra support as soon as they walk out and then it can be withdrawn back. Slowly. Really intense for a good three weeks at least. (Youth Justice staff)*

*I've got a transition support worker at the moment working with one of my boys. She has mentioned that she is going to be working with him about three hours a week, maximum. That is going to be intervention, independence, budgeting, how to do shopping and all that kind of thing. He has also got a mentor who's going to be coming in for two hours a week, I think they said. It's not enough. (Youth Justice staff)*

#### **7.4. Accommodation was highlighted as a crucial need**

Many staff felt that finding a place for their rangatahi to live was one of their biggest challenges for helping rangatahi into independence. When the transition service was first launched some staff were hopeful that TWs could help find accommodation to live independently and/or placements for their rangatahi however this has not happened very often.

*[Rangatahi] has nowhere to go and therefore he's 16 and they are wanting him to transition to independence already. It's just due to a lack of placement options. (Youth Justice staff)*

*It has probably been the biggest barrier, the lack of transition housing or placement options... So even if a transition worker is engaging with you, if you're on the street or you're running from couch to couch, it can be really hard for them to be purposeful, helpful. (Youth Justice staff)*

### 7.5. **Engaging rangatahi with employment, education or training was important for long-term independence and in the short-term to reduce boredom**

Rangatahi were usually expected to engage in education while in Youth Justice facilities. Results from Just Sayin' showed 52% of rangatahi had not gained NCEA level 1 and only 9% had gained NCEA level 2. Most (71%) of the rangatahi in Just Sayin' were older than 16 which is older than the age most rangatahi complete Year 11 to get NCEA level 1 (nationally, NCEA level 1 attainment rate for rangatahi at the end of year 11 is 72%)<sup>20</sup>.

*It's just my mindset. If I'm bored, I'm going to do crime. If I'm in the mood to do the crime, I'm going to do crime. But if I feel like kicking back, I'm going to kick back and get stoned. (Rangatahi)*

*We also know that boredom was one of the main aspects that they talk to us about why they offend. So if they get back on the benefit when they get out, there's gonna be that boredom. (Youth Justice staff)*

Those who were ready for employment may need encouragement to engage and one staff member noted the importance of encouraging independence.

*I think the ones that are ready for work, we had the understanding that the transition support service would have extra connections in the areas and I've actually not seen that at all. Their best suggestion is, get on the independent living youth payment. ... When it's not necessary. I understand at times it may be crucial, it may be needed. But it shouldn't be suggested until that time is defined that it is necessary... It takes away a lot of the hard work that we do here. It's almost anti-transition, it defeats it ... (Youth Justice staff)*

Youth Justice staff noted that some rangatahi would not achieve full-time work or education and expectations needed to be realistic.

*Again, comes back to understanding each individual, who they are. One boy might do 60 hours a week, no sweat, but one might find it hard for 20 hours. And that might be realistically what they can manage. (Youth Justice staff)*

### 7.6. **When rangatahi did have a transition worker, the type and intensity of support varied for each rangatahi**

Some saw their transition worker regularly such as every week while others had very little engagement with them while in Youth Justice. Variation is appropriate to meet the different needs of rangatahi. However, Youth Justice staff felt support provided related to how busy the transition worker was and how close the transition worker

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<sup>20</sup> [www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Publications/stats-reports/NCEA-Annual-Summary-Report-2020.pdf](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Publications/stats-reports/NCEA-Annual-Summary-Report-2020.pdf)

was to the residence (even though there was the ability to do online video calls if the transition worker arranged it).

The support rangatahi described receiving from their transition worker included:

- Being supported at meetings like family group conferences

*[Did your transition worker come to your FGCs?] Yeah, he comes to every one. (Rangatahi)*

*[Did your transition worker come to your FGCs?] No, he didn't. Someone else did, he couldn't because he had to work and help someone else. So, he would have been there but things happened. (Rangatahi)*

- Help planning for the future

*I've known [my transition worker] for a few months now, they're all good. Haven't done much yet 'cause I met them just before I got locked up. I seen her once when I'm in here then I met her off site again too, so twice since being here. We chat about what I wanna do in the future you know. (Rangatahi)*

*[My transition worker]. He comes in every couple of weeks, talks to me, sees what I want to do. (Rangatahi)*

*Well, basically, they [Oranga Tamariki] have given me a chance to physically sit down and turn my life around and instead of struggling where I was when I was with my mum. Now I have the chance to go out I can do and turn my whole life around.*

- Life skills (cooking, budgeting) and support with education or training. In Just Sayin', 14 rangatahi said they wanted to learn skills to help them get where they wanted. The most common skills mentioned included getting a driver licence, enrolling in training and becoming work ready. Ten of the fourteen said they were being supported to learn these skills. Interviewed rangatahi often spoke about getting help with a driver licence while in Youth Justice.

*Yeah, I'm trying to go for the mechanic [course] if I get sentenced, they have already tried to help me for it and it's all going well at the moment, so I might get it. (Rangatahi)*

*[what is going to help you reach your goals?] I done courses and stuff like I've got my [certificates], I got my restricted licence when I'm in here so yeah helpful stuff. (Rangatahi)*

- Help finding and getting employment

*When I was out the last time, he [my transition worker] came with me to my first job interview. He was there with me, just guiding me slowly. (Rangatahi)*

*I'm hoping my social worker and transitions person will help me find a job and work. I've got a job interview all lined up from the people here [in Youth Justice]. (Rangatahi)*

- Helping to get grants and entitlements from Oranga Tamariki

*We need more clothing grants cause my clothes are always gone. ... [My transition worker] actually goes hard, I don't know how. He tries to do it, if he can't he tries to do it out of his own pocket or tries something. It's mean. (Rangatahi)*

*More money so we don't need to steal stuff. Like I don't get any money. I'll get out of here and I won't have any money or anything. Apparently like I get \$15 bucks a week or something but I never seen anything of that. It'd be good for my social worker to set that up for me. (Rangatahi)*

- Emotional/social support

*[My transition worker] comes and sees me every week. Me and him don't really talk about like, 'what do you want when you get out?' We just talk about the right then and there, like, 'Not doing very good.' He's like a good friend to me, a real good friend. (Rangatahi)*

- Whānau including help reconnecting with whānau, partners and support for their whānau and help to keep up the relationships

*We sit in a room, sit like this and just talk, basically. [He checks up with] how I'm doing, if I've been all good. He has tried to keep my mum in contact, go over there, see them... He takes food over [to my family]. [Is that part of why you trust him, because he is helping your whānau too?] Yeah. (Rangatahi)*

- Help to stay away from negative influences (might be whānau or friends), this can be hard when returning to the same place and wanting to see whānau

*[What advice would you give to someone coming to Youth Justice?] Good luck out there and don't go back to the same boys you used to hang out with. Don't do anymore crime otherwise you're back here or across the road (prison). (Rangatahi)*

*They love the mum but they know that mum isn't any good for them. (Youth Justice staff)*

- Learning about their culture and whakapapa

*We have a person here..., he is the kapa haka teacher ... and I had a chat to him and he sat down and said, you are [iwi] and whatever and asked how much do you know, I told him a little bit and he comes back now and then, goes away and comes with more information and tries to link it up. (Rangatahi)*

- Ongoing support for future challenges.

*[It's good] that they [Oranga Tamariki] are still with you up to the age of 25, helping with other stuff, I think that is a good idea instead of leaving you at 17. Giving them the option of the helplines and other stuff they need to know so they're not always trapped, they know where to call and whatever. (Rangatahi)*

As well as specific areas of support some rangatahi talked about the difference having general emotional support can make and wanting to know their life would be alright even if they found themselves in a bad situation.



*Like, [my transition worker would] call me up, he'd say, Oh, you've missed your course for the last two weeks. What are you doing? You're missing, you're on the run? Like, I'm going off the tracks. I just need reassurance to know that I'm going to be given a second chance, all that stuff. A lot of the reasons I wasn't going back to my placement or going to courses was because I threw it away and I thought it was gone. (Rangatahi)*

## 8. Rangatahi stories

The rich stories of a few of the interviewed rangatahi have been summarised below to provide understanding of their lives and contexts. Pseudonyms have replaced names and identifying details have been removed or changed. All quotes in the stories are from interviewed rangatahi.

### The right way and the wrong way<sup>21</sup>

"It's good," 18-year-old \*Billy says about his time on remand in a Youth Justice facility. *"It basically tells you to have a think about what you have done, and lets you know there's always an option with the right way and the wrong way."*

While it's his first time on remand, Billy is well-used to being in care. It's been part of his life since he was six. Of Oranga Tamariki, he says *"no complaints. I think they have done what they basically can do, really."*

He credits his most recent caregivers, who he describes as old school, with getting him on track. At this point, after six months inside to reflect, he regards the input he's had, and continues to get, as pretty positive. He believes the right people are involved in his life, providing him with tools, skills and guidance.

He knows being on remand is a consequence of bad choices, and he's making the most of it. He is being helped to connect with his Māori heritage, and his transition worker is helping figure out next steps. He knew the transition worker already, through a friend, and describes their relationship as easy – it's comfortable hanging out and talking.

The NGO-based transition worker (he's not sure just who he works for) has done more than he expected. The two of them *"go around and talk to people about information, how to get into this and whatever...eliminate the ones we don't need and pick the ones we want."* It's a pretty good service he thinks, offering more than he expected.

The needs of other clients meant his transition worker couldn't attend Billy's recent Family Group Conference, but someone else did and overall, Billy thinks, the right people from both whānau and agencies are involved in the conferences, and planning what comes next for him.

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<sup>21</sup> All names and identifying details have been changed

He likes having a plan. His includes a flat and a job – preferably on a farm or maybe in forestry. And he definitely won't be choosing somewhere to live where *"shit happens, like last time"*. Longer-term he'd like somewhere to call home, and his own family.

If he wants help, he'd call Oranga Tamariki or his dad. He didn't know about the Transitions Support helpline, but sees that sort of ongoing support as useful for others.

Overall, Billy says, he feels 100 percent supported to attain his goals. *"They just support me so I can get there and achieve what I want to do." ... "Basically they (OT) have given me a chance to just sit down and physically turn my life around."*

Meanwhile, he's trying not to think too much about sentencing – three weeks away when he was interviewed - because it's too stressful. *"I hope I get out"*.

### It feels like home<sup>22</sup>

It's sixteen-year-old Bo's third time in a youth justice facility, and he quite likes it. After five months he says *"it's all good, it feels like home."* And compared to the other two he's done time in this is much easier *"because you don't have to watch your back that much."*

*"We can have laughs and joke, we can call each other shit and we're all good at the end of the day."* In other places, you couldn't take the risk. You'd be blindsided, he says.

Bo does a full day of schooling – mainly learning to read and write because while he was quite good at maths before this, he wasn't at literacy. And he's going for his licence, working out, keeping fit, doing an agricultural course.

He doesn't quite know what will happen next, with sentencing still a while off. If he's not in jail, he says, he will go back to whānau. *"It feels safe. My brothers are always there. And my whole street family is there."*

Both mum and dad are supportive, he says. There's not much they can do right now but he's allowed phone calls, they always come to meetings, they stand there for him in court. *"They are always there for me."*

It seems to be a matter of mood, rather than where he lives, that dictates his choices. What happens next is not something he's sure about. Once he turns 18 he's no longer in Oranga Tamariki care. While he's been the focus of many Family Group Conferences – he's been under Oranga Tamariki care since birth - the plans which each one prompts don't extend beyond his time in this facility.

Bo says he doesn't know about transition support – that he is entitled to someone to help him transition out of Oranga Tamariki care. If he wants help he can go to mum and the bros, he says.

Nor does he know his whakapapa, or about tikanga. And he doesn't really care.

<sup>22</sup> All names and identifying details have been changed

Asked if there is anything else that could be done for him he specifies clothing vouchers. He likes brands, like Nike he says, but he lost all his when he was raided. He's looking forward to the vouchers and getting out of boring unit clothes.

### Repeated remand<sup>23</sup>

Seventeen-year-old \*Gage is on remand to a Youth Justice facility for the fifth time. It's alright if you've been there before, he says. *"It's like a holiday home, if you think about it. You still get lunch, dinner, gym. It's nothing bad."*

Only there for two and a half months, he's about to get his third social worker. *"It's confusing my brain. I don't know who my social worker is now,"* he says. His transition worker \*Larry is a different story though. *"He's solid,"* Gage says. *"I like that fella."*

It took two or three months to get to that point, but since then it's been good. They mainly sit and talk – Larry reports back on Gage's mum, who he keeps in touch with, and is also working with his brother who's on home detention. Sometimes he takes food. If he didn't Gage suspects the whānau would be hungry. Last time Gage was out, Larry used to pick him up and take him to the gym every morning.

The service is *"way better"* than Oranga Tamariki, who've been in his life since he was 11.

He's stopped asking them for a clothing grant because he never got anywhere. Instead he's taken it to Larry. *"He actually goes hard, I don't know how. He tries to do it, if he can't he tries to do it out of his own pocket or tries something. It's mean."*

In the future he'd like to be a car mechanic. Or maybe do concreting which he's tried before. There's schooling on offer where he is, but he's not interested.

*"I just don't take it on board. They try to teach me but yeah, we're criminals, we don't do that shit,"* he says.

Nor is he interested in learning about things Māori. Only the gym engages him.

But he needs a plan for when he gets out. He's got something in mind but is waiting for his Family Group Conference so he can raise the option of [programme] - *"instead of sitting in here for six months behind bars you're out in the bush for six months."* But he's already done it once so suspects he won't get a second chance.

The conferences usually involve the police, social, workers, lawyers, *"all the people you stole from or robbed from"* and whānau.

He's not that interested in a Family Group Conference, he says. *"I just want to know when I'm getting sentenced and when I get out, that's all I know."*

<sup>23</sup> All names and identifying details have been changed

He'll probably go back to his mum's when he leaves, he says. But he doesn't have a court date – he suspects because there might be more charges laid. If he's turned 18 before court different rules apply and he might face jail. If not *"I'll be happy. I'll be stoked."*

### Lots of dumb sh\*t.<sup>24</sup>

His mum, his girlfriend and the daughter he has never seen are the most important people in his life, Myka says unhesitatingly when asked. He'd like to live with the last two but instead will be with his mum when he leaves the Youth Justice facility where he is spending three months while awaiting sentence. He blames Oranga Tamariki.

Sixteen now, Myka has been in Oranga Tamariki care since he was 12. He's not a fan. He says they're stopping him doing lots of things he wants to do, from living the life he wants.

If it was up to him, he'd be living with his girlfriend, seeing his daughter nearly every day, and spending lots of time at the gym.

And it will be just as bad when he comes out. *"They want to put me in all these activities I don't even want to do, which makes more chance of me running away."*

Right now, there's nothing to do so he and other residents do *"lots of dumb shit, fight all the time."*

He knows that when he leaves it will be with a plan, but it too is full of *"dumb shit"*. That possibly reflects his lack of engagement in Family Group conferences, where *"I just say what they want to hear so I can get out quicker."*

He doesn't rate his social worker, who most of the time he wants to punch over. It was the social worker, he says, who stopped him seeing his girlfriend when he was out. Why, he wonders, was he spending time talking to and doing stuff for her when *"you should be doing shit for me?"*

He believes the social worker also saw him charged with breaching the rules, lied in court about how much was being done to help him - saying there is a plan when there isn't - and, he maintains, is responsible for him spending longer in the Youth Justice facility.

He's not particularly interested in finding out about his whakapapa, nor in having any more people involved in supporting him as the plan for his future is documented.

Due for sentencing the day after interview Myka appears not to know there's a transition support service, or that he can get support from a transition worker until he turns 21. He's resigned to still being under Oranga Tamariki oversight. He believes access to his daughter will be as little as an hour a fortnight. *"Set up for failure,"* he says.

Asked whether Oranga Tamariki can improve the way it supports him, or people like him, he has a ready answer. *"Leave me the f\*\*k alone."*

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<sup>24</sup> All names and identifying details have been changed

There was one positive in his plan, Myka acknowledges. He'd done day one of a mechanic's course before falling foul of the law, and he's keen to pick it up again.

He'd like to think that in a few years he'll have a job, a house and a car, and help look after his kids. First step in achieving that, he says, *"is staying out of here."*

### The importance of a partner<sup>25</sup>

Van is 17. He's been coming to places like this since he was 12, he says. Prior to that he was in Oranga Tamariki care from a young age.

Living in a Youth Justice facility his hopes for the future seem to rest on whether his partner will still be there for him when his sentence ends. Otherwise, he thinks life inside is as good an option as any. His partner, he says, *"is the person that's made me want to actually feel free and want to be out there in the freedom. If I didn't have her I would just want to do the rest of my life inside, because I don't really have love for my friends that much."*

She's also been through the system, but she's 18 now, and in charge of her own life. He worries that while he's locked up she's cooling off. And while he thinks she should be involved in the plans made for him, she's not.

He finds the Youth Justice residence pretty structured, with lots of rules and too far away from his whānau for them to be able to visit much. Placing him at a distance from some relationships that changed him is probably going to see him return to his old self, he says. *"It's not really helping that much."*

Van knows he has to stop doing crime if he wants to change his life. But he's not taken with what's on offer to help him with that. None of the courses appeal, but he accepts he'll have to pick the best of a bad lot.

*"I just want to be at home and try find my own way for a job or something. Just with my missus and not always having social workers around. They just want me to do that kind of stuff, but it doesn't help me. It doesn't help me, none of this stuff. I already know what I'm up to."*

He's had one Family Group conference since he's been here – his parents were there, and *"all the professionals"* – lawyer, social worker, co-ordinator. And the cops. It wasn't really helpful, he says, with people *"catching feelings, getting angry...That is not their job, to get angry. Their job is to try and do their best and not take it to heart...they're getting paid for it but they're taking it to heart now, saying with a tone that I've fucked up and everything."* He thinks he might have been offered, transition support, but he's not really engaged.

Asked what more he thinks Oranga Tamariki could do to help, he wants them to be better at listening. They do listen, he says, but not well enough and without understanding that to him the relationship with his partner is everything.

<sup>25</sup> All names and identifying details have been changed

He'll probably go to whānau when he gets out – though he's hopeful his partner might come up with another option. His mum's, where he's been lots, and his dad's, are where he feels comfortable. He knows the authorities don't think they are the safest, but *"every time I run I just go back to them."*

## 9. Opportunities to strengthen transition from Youth Justice residence

Synthesis of information from interviews and survey identified opportunities to strengthen transition from Youth Justice residences.

Rangatahi characteristics influenced their attitudes to transition support and their transition needs. The 17 rangatahi we spoke to had their own unique situations and perspectives of their lives. Key features that varied by individuals included their:

- Progress through the Justice system (being on remand or sentenced)
- Their history of care with Youth Justice and Oranga Tamariki
- Developmental or education challenges (trouble paying attention, limited ability to read and write)
- Level of engagement with their plans for release and/or transition plans
- Connection to their whānau
- Trust and willingness to ask for help.

### 9.1. Progress through the Justice system influenced transition planning

First time offenders with limited experience with Oranga Tamariki were more intimidated by being in a Youth Justice residence and the prospect of prison. They often had somewhere stable to go when leaving Youth Justice.

Rangatahi on remand were worried about what would happen and if they would end up in prison. Long waits to be sentenced limited their ability to move forward and create plans as they were unsure of their immediate future. FGCs were pushed back due to the unknowns around sentencing or needed to be held again due to the length of time or change in circumstances since a plan was developed. In contrast rangatahi who had been sentenced had a release date and could develop a plan.

**Opportunities:** Although futures are uncertain there is an opportunity for transition workers to work with rangatahi to build a relationship with them and help support their wellbeing through a stressful time. If the rangatahi are 16 or nearing 16 years old, entry to Youth Justice could be a helpful time to push for a referral to a

transition service. Transition workers could start to build relationships with rangatahi over this time, providing a good foundation for transition planning.

**Opportunities:** Supported accommodation providers who offer intensive social support alongside accommodation may be the best option for rangatahi with nowhere to go, at least in the short-term. Supported accommodation offers rangatahi opportunities to develop life skills while in a safe housing situation. Sufficient appropriate places are needed for rangatahi leaving Youth Justice residences.

## 9.2. **Rangatahi with long experiences of care were often returning to a negative home environment or did not have anywhere to go**

Some rangatahi said they had been in care for years, often from a very young age and in and out of Youth Justice for the last four to five years. Their experiences of care and Youth Justice had been normalised and it was what they knew. These rangatahi were often returning to an environment with more negative influences or did not have a whānau home they could return to. Finding a caregiver was very difficult for some.

**Opportunities:** Developmental and/or educational challenges

Some rangatahi we interviewed presented with some possible developmental challenges. We noticed they:

- Struggled to read consent and information about the interview (we read through these with them)
- Struggled to comprehend some of the questions we asked which other similar aged rangatahi understood
- Struggled to pay attention, were easily distracted, often fidgeting and poor recall (such as names, why I'm here, where I'm from).

**Opportunities:** Rangatahi all attend classes while in Youth Justice and this could be a good time to assess the learning needs of rangatahi as they may not be accessible and open to engaging with education professionals while in the community. Knowing what challenges rangatahi face in their learning can be a helpful place for transition workers to start when trying to help plan their futures and what will work.

If rangatahi struggle to read or write then classroom based work may not be appropriate or feasible. Many rangatahi described wanting practical skills and wanting employment related to construction, driving etc. Although basic literacy is required for many of these occupations, there is an opportunity to look for innovative ways to build literacy and numeracy by leveraging off the practical activities wanted by rangatahi.

### 9.3. **Realistic plans have the potential to increase rangatahi engagement with their plans**

Some rangatahi had not engaged with their transition plan and did not feel their plan was achievable. Others were willing to engage and work towards their plan.

One of the key factors rangatahi and staff spoke about was the willingness of the rangatahi to want to live a different life. Most rangatahi interviewed wanted to stay away from Youth Justice and not commit more crime. However, some still felt crime was very likely to happen in their future and considered that being a criminal was part of their identity.

**Opportunities:** Rangatahi who felt their voices were heard during the planning process were more likely to engage with their plans and have plans that reflected their goals.

Plans also need to be realistic and achievable for rangatahi otherwise the plan becomes something else where they have failed. There is a balance between having a plan that is agreed with the judge and police and being realistic and achievable for the rangatahi.

### 9.4. **Connection to their whānau and children provides opportunities for holistic support**

Some rangatahi did not have much contact with their whānau and did not want to involve them in their lives. For others, their whānau are a big part of their lives and they want to return to them, regardless of why they are in care. Many described the importance of their fathers and the frequent absence of them in their lives. If rangatahi had children, the children were a motivation to improve their outcomes.

Whānau attachment and situations highlighted the need for holistic support for the whānau to help strengthen the whānau.

*...So if you've got a trained team, that can actually work with mum and her abilities or disabilities ... is that something that transitional mentor can do? (Youth Justice staff)*

**Opportunities:** Whānau, including partners, are very influential and may also need holistic support for the issues in their lives to enable rangatahi to return to a more positive whānau environment. Children are a motivation for rangatahi who are parents. Young parents may need support for parenting including anger management, discipline without violence and the basics of living, food, cleanliness, healthy living Supporting rangatahi to learn parenting skills and to parent also has the potential to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. Incorporating parenting and relationship skills into pre-transition and transition support is likely to also benefit those not already parenting.



#### 9.5. Willingness to ask for help is built on trust in the transition worker

Rangatahi histories of being let down by whānau and systems contributed to a lack of trust and being unwilling to engage with transition workers. Most rangatahi spoke about asking someone from their whānau for help and some said they talked to their social worker or transition worker for specific kinds of help.

Willingness to seek help was also associated with rangatahi perspectives of crime. For some rangatahi committing crimes was part of their lives and it was what they did with their friends or when they were bored.

**Opportunities:** Transition worker match for rangatahi needs, and transition worker stability and reliability were described by Youth Justice staff as essential to build rangatahi trust. If rangatahi felt let down by a transition worker, re-engaging would be difficult.

Transition support is voluntary for rangatahi leaving care but there is an argument for offering transition worker support alongside a parole officer for rangatahi leaving Youth Justice care. The transition workers working with rangatahi leaving Youth Justice must have the necessary skills and experience. This requirement alongside the need for intensive support will influence the ratio of rangatahi to transition workers and may require acknowledgement in funding models.

## Appendix 1: Interview guide

### Introduction text

This kōrero is to hear from you about what it means to be living in Youth Justice residence. We would like to hear about how you and your whānau have been supported and about your transition support needs. We would also like to hear how you think Oranga Tamariki care could be improved to support you, others in Youth Justice residences and your/their whānau.

Everything you say in this interview will be confidential – nobody else will know what you have said to us. Oranga Tamariki won't have any information that identifies you, and they won't know whether you take part or not. You can decide not to answer any questions you're not comfortable with or stop the interview any time you want.

What you say will be combined with what everyone else we speak to says and used to write a report for Oranga Tamariki. We may want to write some details about your experiences as a story in our report. We will change details including your name to make sure no one except the researchers will know it is about you.

If you have questions about Oranga Tamariki or Transitions, please call their Transition Support Service 0800 number – 0800 55 89 89.

If it's okay with you, I'll record our conversation so that I can listen to you now and take notes later.

To say thank you for your time and participation in this session you will receive a koha in the form of a \$50 Warehouse voucher (if by phone or VC record address).

### A. About you - Belonging, identity and connection

- A1. Can you tell us what it's like for you living in a Youth Justice residence?
  - a) Were you in Oranga Tamariki care before you came to the residence?
- A2. Who are the important people in your life?
  - a) How are they involved in your care, currently?
  - b) How would you like them to be involved?
- A3. Do you know about your whakapapa/(family line)/ tikanga Māori?
  - a) Is this something you would like to learn more about?
  - b) In what ways have you been supported to learn more about your culture?
  - c) What else would help?

### B. Planning for transition

We would like to understand what kind of support you need leading up to you turning 18.

- A1. Do you know what will happen for you when you turn 18?
- A2. What/who is the most useful in helping you prepare? Why? *Prompts: was there anyone that gave you helpful information, was there a service that helped you get your ducks in a row*
- A3. Have you had a family group conference to discuss your plans for leaving care?

Those who did:

- a) Who was there – was there anyone else you would have liked to be there? *Probe to explore whānau involvement and whether that was to the extent the young person wanted*
- b) Was it helpful? Why/why not?

If Not: What other sort of meeting did you have?

- A4. Did you end up with a plan for when you turn 18?
  - a) What did you think about the plan? Do you think it included what you thought you needed?
- A5. Were you asked if you wanted to see a transition support service?
  - a) Was a transition service explained to you?
  - b) What did you think the transition service would be like? How do/did you think a transition service would help you?
  - c) Did you understand the difference between your Oranga Tamariki social worker and the Transition Worker? What were your expectations for each role?
  - d) Was the transition worker at your FGC? What difference did it make having them there? Would you have liked them to be?
  - e) What choice did you have about the transition service?
  - f) Would you like to have had a choice? *Probe: Kaupapa Māori options.*
- A6. Were any other services or people discussed with you that would be able to guide you through or prepare you for transition when you turn 18?

### C. Planning for the future

- C1. What are your hopes and dreams? For yourself? Your family and others that are important to you? *Probe to explore education, training, reconnection with whānau etc*
  - a) What do you need to achieve these goals?
  - b) Do you have a plan in place?
  - c) How are you being supported to achieve these?
- C2. Who and/or where would you go to for help generally if you need help?
  - a) If young person provides answer/s: What about that person/service makes you feel you can go to them for help?
  - b) If no answer: Why? (Prompt: no knowledge of support available, difficulty asking for help, stigma asking for help, concerns of privacy, minimisation of problems, preserving autonomy and self-worth...) Tell the young person about the Transitions call line and VOYCE.
- C3. Where do you live at the moment (or where do you plan to live after you leave YJ)?
  - a) Who will you live with?
  - b) Will this arrangement meet your needs (explore safety, adequacy of housing and people they live with)
  - c) Was it difficult to find somewhere to live? (Explore whether the social worker or transition worker discussed accommodation options)
  - d) Does where you live affect other aspects of your life such as finding work?

### D. Closing

- C1. In what ways can OT improve the support they give to rangatahi in youth justice residences?
- C2. What advice would you give to another young person like you leaving Oranga Tamariki care?
- C3. Do you have any final messages you would like us to take back to Oranga Tamariki.

## Appendix 2: Just Sayin' Fact Sheet

Just Sayin' survey findings for young people eligible for a transition worker. The survey is based on only 24 rangatahi in Youth Justice residences<sup>26</sup>. Some percentages are based on a sub-sample of the 24 hence results are indicative, and percentage differences between the two groups may not be robustly extrapolated to other rangatahi in Youth Justice residences.

Holistic needs assessment	Not in YJ	Current YJ
	n=129	n=19
	n=202	n=5
[In care] Does Oranga Tamariki help make things better for you? (3-yes, I think so, and 4-yes, definitely on 4-point scale)	61%	44%
[In care] Does your Oranga Tamariki social worker do what they said they would do? (3-most of the time, to 4-all of the time, on 4-point scale)	65%	50%
[In care] Is your Oranga Tamariki social worker there when you need them? (% yes)	66%	56%
[In care] I think my Oranga Tamariki social worker understands what kinds of support I need after I leave care (% yes)	65%	68%
[In care] Are you worried about anything that will happen when you leave care? (7-10 on 10-point worry scale – serious worries)	24%	33%
[In care] Do you feel you can talk to your social worker at Oranga Tamariki about your worries? (3-yes, I think so, to 4-yes, definitely, on 4-point scale)	53%	50%
Transition planning	Not in YJ	Current YJ
	n=129	n=19
	n=202	n=5
[In care] Have you had a conversation with anyone at Oranga Tamariki about what you need when you leave care? (% yes)	49%	74%
[In care] Have you been at a family group conference where people talked with you about what you wanted to do when you leave care? (% yes)	68%	68%
[In care] Do you have a copy of your plan for leaving care? (% yes)	30%	22%
[Not in care] Did anyone talk with you and work out a plan for when you left care? (% yes)	62%	80%
[Not in care] When you left care had you been part of an FGC to discuss your future? (% yes)	68%	80%
[Not in care] Did you have a copy of your plan for leaving care? (% yes)	42%	40%
Do you feel you get to have a say in important decisions about your life? (3-most of the time, to 4-all of the time, on 4-point scale)	78%	61%
Are the important people to you from your chosen whānau or family involved in planning what happens with your life as much as you would like? (% yes)	56%	52%

<sup>26</sup> And 331 rangatahi not in Youth Justice residences.

<b>Transition worker support</b>	<b>Not in YJ</b>	<b>Current YJ</b>
<b>Currently has a TW</b>	<b>n=199</b>	<b>N=15</b>
Have you been asked about whether you want to see a TW? (% yes)	85%	75%
Currently has a TW (% yes)	60%	63%
Used to have a TW (% yes)	17%	0%
Have you talked with a TW – this might be a social worker or someone else at another type of organisation? (% yes)	80%	67%
Do you think your Transition Worker understands what kinds of support you need? (% yes)	81%	67%
Are you worried about anything in your life just now? (7-10 on 10-point worry scale – serious worries)	27%	32%
[Of those with a TW] Do you feel you can talk to your TW about your worries? (3-yes, I think so, to 4-yes, definitely, on 4-point scale)	78%	73%
[Of those with a TW] Does your Transition worker do what they say they would do? (3-most of the time, to 4-all of the time, on 4-point scale)	81%	67%
[Of those with a TW] Is your TW there when you need them? (% yes for people who have a TW)	80%	67%
[Of those with a TW] Does your TW help make things better for you? (3-yes, I think so, to 4-yes, definitely, on 4-point scale)	81%	47%
<b>Improving outcomes for young people as they transition from Oranga Tamariki care</b>	<b>Not in YJ</b>	<b>Current</b>
<b>Not in care</b>	<b>n=202</b>	<b>n=5</b>
[Not in care] Lives in the same place as when they were in care	28%	60%
Lives in unstable accommodation (includes: living rough, in garage, couch surf, in car or van, motel)	9%	13%
Agrees with the following statements (7 to 10 agreement on a 0-10 scale)		
I have somewhere warm to live	84%	78%
I feel like I belong	70%	65%
I feel safe where I live	84%	87%
I feel settled where I live	75%	70%
I feel accepted for who I am by the people I live with	78%	83%
Agrees with the following statements (4 to 5 agreement on a 5-point scale)		
I have friends I trust	57%	65%
I feel safe with my friends	69%	83%
My friends accept me for who I am	72%	96%
If you were going through a difficult time and needed help, do you have someone you could turn to? (% yes)	76%	83%
Has an adult they could turn to for help	68%	74%
<b>Young people have an improved sense of identity and belonging</b>	<b>Not in YJ</b>	<b>Current YJ</b>
To what extent do you feel secure in your identity? (3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale)	72%	87%
To what extent do you feel proud of who you are? (3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale)	72%	77%
Do you have as many chances as you would like to connect with your whakapapa whānau? (% yes)	69%	61%

Do you know your whakapapa (ancestry)? (3-I think so, to 4-definitely on 4-point scale)	54%	57%
Do you want to know more about your ancestry or whakapapa? (% yes)	51%	43%
Are you being supported to find out more about your ancestry/ whakapapa? (% yes - of those who wanted to know more)	54% n=167	50% n=10
<b>More young people are healthy and recovering from trauma</b>	<b>Not in YJ</b>	<b>Current YJ</b>
How do you feel about your life in general? (4-very good, to 5-excellent on 5-point scale)	40%	30%
<b>Self-reported difficulties (% often or always)</b>		
Do you have any difficulty seeing?	19%	9%
Do you have difficulty hearing?	10%	13%
Do you have any difficulty doing physical activities?	6%	0%
Do you have difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating?	34%	35%
Do you have any emotional, psychological or mental health conditions?	38%	17%
Washington scale disability (has <b>at least one</b> response of often or always for the categories: Difficulty hearing, seeing, doing physical activities, learning remembering or concentrating, emotional psychological or mental health conditions)	59%	50%
Washington scale disability (has <b>two or more</b> responses of often or always for the categories: Difficulty hearing, seeing, doing physical activities, learning remembering or concentrating, emotional psychological or mental health conditions)	28%	21%
Are you receiving the health support you need? (% yes of those who indicated poor or fair for any of the Te Whare Tapa Whā questions)	56%	70%
In the last 12 months, has there been any time when you wanted or needed to see a doctor or nurse (or other health care worker) about your health, but you weren't able to? (% yes)	34%	30%
<b>More young people have the life skills they need to thrive as adults</b>	<b>Not in YJ</b>	<b>Current YJ</b>
To what extent do you feel hopeful about your future? (3-reasonably to 4-very on 4-point scale)	72%	77%
Are you getting the support you need to learn the skills you want to learn? (% yes)	61%	71%
<b>More young people are in education, employment or training (in the past 12-months)</b>	<b>Not in YJ</b>	<b>Current YJ</b>
In education or training	49%	91%
Achieved NCEA Level 1 or higher (of total sample)	68%	48%
Achieved NCEA Level 2 or higher (of total sample)	48%	9%
NEET	19%	9%
<b>Young people feel supported to be parents</b>	<b>Not in YJ</b>	<b>Current YJ</b>
All survey participants who were parents (% yes)	16%	23%