

# **Intensive Transition Mentor Service**

## **Service Specification**

## Publication details

### Publication status

In July 2024, this version of the service specification was released to potential partners. It was subsequently published on the Oranga Tamariki website in September 2024.

Service specifications will be updated as required – depending on the nature of the update, it may or may not require a contract variation. While Oranga Tamariki will make best efforts to inform all relevant partners of any updates, it is safest to check back to the list of service specifications published on the website, to ensure you are using the current version. All current specifications are published under [Service providers/Information for providers and partners/Service Specifications/Guidelines](#).



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# Section 1: About this service specification

## 1.1 What is the purpose of this service specification?

This service specification is for agencies (partners) partnered with by Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) to provide the intensive transition mentor service (service) that operates within the military-style academies programme (programme) to support teenagers and their whānau.

This service specification forms part of the Outcome Agreement with Oranga Tamariki. It sets out the mutual responsibilities, overarching principles and minimum outcomes for the support. The ways that partners achieve these outcomes will depend on their philosophy, their unique approach, and the needs of the teenagers and whānau they support.

**Note: this specification is about the service in its pilot form.** Oranga Tamariki makes no commitment to continuing to purchase the service or any similar service when the pilot ends. If Oranga Tamariki does decide to do this, it intends to carry out an open procurement process before engaging any partner to deliver that service, and these service specifications may be updated. Also note that, because this service is a pilot, there will be evaluation requirements that are summarised here but yet to be finalised in detail.

## 1.2 Working together

Both the partner and Oranga Tamariki bring valuable expertise to this working relationship. The parties acknowledge the relationship principles included in the Outcome Agreement Terms and Conditions, which include the commitments to:

- act honestly, reasonably and in good faith
- communicate with each other openly and in a timely manner

### 1.2.1 Escalation

If either the partner or Oranga Tamariki has a question or concern about whether the other party has met a responsibility outlined in this service specification or about whether the actions of the other party are best suited to the support of the teenager and their whānau, they should escalate it by applying the above relationship principles.

Step one of escalation is to discuss and handle the matter promptly at the local level by discussing directly with the people involved. Only then if needed, step two is for either party to escalate the discussion to their supervisor.

If the question or concern is about the safety of anyone involved in the service, including teenagers and their whānau, this should be raised and handled immediately. (See also Section 5: Incident reporting.)



## 1.3 Definitions

### Word or phrase

### Definition and comments

mentor

Short for “intensive transition mentor”. This is the professional Youth Worker provided by the partner to deliver this service by working directly with teenagers and their whānau.

programme  
service

Short for the “military-style academies programme”

Short for “Intensive Transition Mentor Service”

teenager

Young person aged aged between 15- and 18-years-old (up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday). Refers to young people of all cultures, unless otherwise specified.

Note: used in this specification to refer to the male teenagers who enter the service.

whānau

Whānau encompasses the immediate and wider family and support network of the teenager. It specially includes a teenager’s siblings, as they are also at risk of offending. Refers to families and whānau of all cultures, unless otherwise specified.



# Section 2: About the service

## 2.1 Context: the military-style academies programme

The intensive transition mentor service sits within a wider context. It plays a crucial role within the military-style academies programme.

The mission of the programme is: “to deliver a military-style academy that inspires sustained change by providing a therapeutic and mana-enhancing experience, that results in stronger whānau and community, and reduces re-offending.”

In essence, teenagers are placed into the programme for up to 12 months. This is made up of a 12-week residential component in a secure youth justice residence, followed by sustained rehabilitation support for the remainder of the programme as the teenager transitions and reintegrates into the community. Throughout this whole process, the teenager receives multi-disciplinary supports to develop and realise their “My Good Life Plan”.

## 2.2 About the mentor service

Each teenager is assigned a mentor for the programme. The same mentor works consistently with each teenager and their whānau, at a 1:1 ratio, as a continuous relationship holder. This cannot be a shared role with one or more mentors.

Alongside the Oranga Tamariki social worker (social worker), the mentor works intensively and in-person with both the teenager and their whānau throughout both the residential and community phases of the programme. The mentor is a consistent and pro-social role model.

The mentor’s overarching purpose is to intensively support the teenager’s reintegration back into the community and into a supported environment that enables the teenager to achieve the goals and commitments detailed in their “My Good Life Plan”.

The service is designed to proactively and intensively offer caring, consistent and relevant support that meets the circumstances, preferences and full range of needs of the teenager and their whānau. The teenager and their whānau are to be supported in ways that uphold and enhance their mana, rights and hauora (health and wellbeing). Needs are considered holistically, to include physical, mental and emotional, spiritual, family and social needs, and according to cultural and indigenous models such as Te Whare Tapa Whā.

*For more details about the mentors themselves, and the expectations of how they are to carry out this role, see Section 3.2: The mentors provided by the partner.*

## 2.3 About the teenagers

The teenagers are likely to have complex emotional and behavioural challenges. The teenagers need to be physically and psychologically able to complete the programme that involves physical training, education and challenges that may be difficult for some. Therefore the programme cannot accept teenagers with some physical disabilities or with complex mental health conditions. The teenager’s suitability for the programme’s requirements and demands is discussed with the social worker, teenager and their whānau.



Because of the layout of the facilities and the staff resourcing of the residential part of the programme, the programme cannot accept teenagers who were born or identify as female.

A Judge may refer teenagers into the programme, and therefore into this service, if the teenager has been assessed to meet all the following criteria:

- They are male and aged between 15- and 18-years-old (up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday)
- They have carried out at least two separate and proven offences that carry a 10-year maximum imprisonment penalty or higher
- They were aged 17 or under at the time of offending
- They are considered likely to re-offend seriously and/or repeatedly
- There is evidence of previous interventions that have failed to reduce offending
- They are subject to a Supervision with Residence Order (SWR)
- They are considered to be an appropriate fit within the cohort of teenagers going through the programme together

## **2.4 Outcomes of the service**

### **2.4.1 Overarching objective**

The service sits within the programme. One overarching outcome of the programme is to “Make a difference” – that is, to create both immediate and long-term positive outcomes for the teenagers, their whānau, and for communities resulting from the residential and community components of the programme.

For the community and wider society, including the victims of crime, the longterm objectives are:

- improved community cohesion and trust through enhanced public safety, reduced crime and perception of fair and restorative processes
- greater community trust in the criminal justice process
- longer term healing of whānau, communities and society, by reducing the intergenerational effects of crime

The service is an integral part of the programme and therefore an integral aspect of achieving the overarching “Make a difference” outcome.

### **2.4.2 Specific outcomes of the service**

For the teenager:

- Engaged in education, training, or employment
- Engaged in positive activities
- Increased cultural/spiritual connections
- Improved relationship with whānau
- Improved/increased pro-social outlook regarding offending, and a reduction in offending
- Improved physical health/wellbeing



For the whānau:

- Improved parenting skills and/or supervision
- Sibling engagement in education and other pro-social activities
- Improvement in the meeting of their material needs, including housing, food, entitlements, etc





# Section 3: Roles and responsibilities of the partner and Oranga Tamariki

## 3.1 The partner

### 3.1.1 Organisational management

The partner needs to meet [Social Services Accreditation](#) Level 2, as managed by [Te Kāhui Kāhu](#), and to maintain this approval level. As per this accreditation, the partner has full responsibility in managing its own organisation, including:

- policies and procedures
- general financial responsibilities, including day-to-day costs and insurances
- applying all relevant legislation
- recruiting, vetting, training, managing and reviewing its staff, ensuring that mentors who deliver this service meet the minimum skills, knowledge and attitudes outlined in Section 3.2: The mentors provided by the partner
- providing a safe practice environment for its staff and ensure that the service is delivered by appropriately trained, experienced and supported Youth Workers
- actively maintaining strong working relationships with other agencies and community supports within its region, to be well equipped to refer and connect teenagers and their whānau to additional supports that are right for them

### 3.1.2 Contractual obligations

The partner has full responsibility for:

- meeting the requirements of the Outcome Agreement, which includes all the information in this service specification
- monitoring and recording its performance under this contract, reporting to Oranga Tamariki in the methods and timings detailed in the Outcome Agreement and this service specification (see Section 4: Reporting)
- raising or escalating any concerns to Oranga Tamariki at any point in time as considered necessary for any reason

## 3.2 The mentors provided by the partner

### 3.2.1 Competencies

Mentors delivering this service need to have the following minimum skills, knowledge and attitudes. These can be demonstrated in part by holding a relevant and recognised Youth Work qualification or by demonstrating their depth of experience.

- Suitably qualified and experienced Youth Worker, professional mentor or coach. Examples of suitable qualifications include the New Zealand Certificate in Youth Work (Level 3 or 4), a Bachelor of Youth Development, or a similar qualification in a Māori context



- Skilled and experienced in working with high-risk young people with offending behaviour
- Experienced in offering therapeutic support, helping teenagers resolve their emotional, behavioural and psychological issues, and facilitating self-awareness, self-expression and personal growth
- Responsive to all core aspects of identity, which may include culture, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and expression, any cognitive or physical disability, migrant experience and religious or spiritual beliefs
- Experienced in personal dysregulation management, regarding how people manage or control their emotions, impulses and behaviours. This involves strategies to help the teenager and whānau develop emotional regulation skills and adaptive coping mechanisms
- Experienced in modelling and supporting pro-social behaviour, in terms of the connections and social relationships that the teenager builds to give them a sense of belonging to a community that promotes moral and ethical values
- Comfortable engaging whānau while the teenager is in residence, and experienced in working with family dynamics and complexity
- Offer trauma-informed practice, recognising the impact of past or present exposure to traumatic experiences on the teenagers and their behaviour. This approach aims to empower the teenagers, foster positive relationships, and ensure that interventions are sensitive to individual needs and experiences, to reduce the risk of re-traumatising

### **3.2.2 Time and travel commitments**

Mentors delivering this service need to be able to meet the following commitments.

All these commitments include the mentor organising their own hours to suit the circumstances and needs of the teenager and whānau, which means that they must be available to work outside standard business hours. They will need to work evenings, weekends and public holidays. They might also be called on at very short notice.

For example, whānau members might only be available in evening or weekends, and the teenager may have a regular high-risk period such as Friday afternoons and evenings.

Note: Contact hours/time means the time the mentor spends with the teenager or their whānau (including face-to-face, via technology etc).

#### **During the 12-week residential component:**

- for the last 10 weeks of the residential component, work part time (0.5 FTE), for a total of 20 hours per week over five days, of which at least 10 hours are contact time
- travel regularly to Palmerston North for face-to-face meetings with the teenager in residence. Ideally this is weekly, however the minimum is one travel trip per fortnight



### **During the first six months of the community component:**

- work full time (1 FTE), for a total of 40 hours per week over five days, of which 30 hours are contact time
- travel as necessary for face-to-face meetings with the teenager and the whānau, to a maximum of six travel trips

### **During the remaining months of the community component:**

- work part time (0.5 FTE), for a total of 20 hours per week over five days, of which 15 hours are contact time
- travel as necessary for face-to-face meetings with the teenager and the whānau, to a maximum of three travel trips

### **3.2.3 Tasks**

#### **During the 12-week residential component, the mentor:**

- prioritises whānau engagement, to build trust and the strong foundation of a supportive relationship with the whānau in their community setting, including through face-to-face and virtual meetings
- builds trust and the strong foundation of a supportive relationship with the teenager at the residence, including through face-to-face and virtual meetings
- takes part in residential activities with the teenager
- supports both the teenager and their whānau to fill out and/or share their respective “My Weekly Update” cards
- works closely with the teenager and whānau to identify any immediate needs arising from the teenager’s time in residence and communicates these needs with the social worker and multi-disciplinary team for response as appropriate
- works closely with the whānau in preparation for their teenager’s return home or to the community
- attends the Transition Hui
- meets and communicates with the multi-disciplinary team, Transition Lead and social worker as required to inform transition planning. Shares what supports and services may be available in the home community to support successful transition

#### **During the first six months of the community component, the mentor:**

- takes on the role of a trusted “go-to” and support person for the teenager
- takes on the role of a trusted “go-to” and support person for the whānau
- works with and supports the social worker to act as the face of the multi-disciplinary team responses
- is accountable for any commitments made in the teenager’s plan that require the support of the mentor role to action/complete
- works alongside and supports Oranga Tamariki to meet statutory obligations
- intensively supports the teenager to comply with Court requirements and achieve their goals and commitments as expressed in their “My Good Life Plan”



- holds the teenager accountable using strengths-based approaches to keep them engaged and working towards their goals. While each plan will be tailored and individualised, this may include supporting:
  - essential life skills development, particularly those identified as skills to sustain or those identified as requiring support and/or practice
  - links to education, training or employment
  - maintenance of fitness, adventure, or hobby aspects learnt in the residential component such as attending the gym, martial arts, sports or other activities
  - encouraging cultural, spiritual and other pro-social activities that foster a sense of self, identity, belonging and connection
  - fostering emotional and holistic wellbeing, including supporting mindfulness practices the teenager may have developed through the residential component
  - encouraging building of social skills and development of positive/pro-social relationships with whānau and peers
  - revisiting “kitbag” learnings captured in plans and discussing these with the teenager, including the teenager’s identified coping strategies
- encourages mutual teenager and whānau engagement
- enables whānau to support the teenager to transition back to their community, and to take shared responsibility for transition components of plans
- works with whānau to keep up their commitments in the plan to support their teenager to achieve their goals
- supports the teenager and whānau if the teenager re-offends, aiming to get the teenager back on track
- meets and/or communicates with the local multi-disciplinary team, Transition Lead and social worker, as required – this could be daily, because risk of re-offending is reduced through information sharing, review/update supports, and providing coordinated and immediate responses to emerging risks and needs
- communicates very frequently, potentially daily, with the social worker and local multi-disciplinary team about the teenager’s engagement and progress with their plan and goals.
- appropriately responds to, and urgently notifies the social worker, about any reoffending or breaches of conditions.
- keeps records of outcomes achieved and any barriers as required

**During the remaining months of the community component, the mentor:**

- continues the above activities but to a less intense level – the focus is now on offering stable, wrap-around support to ensure the teenager’s enduring success in the community

Throughout the service, the mentor should also be open to engaging in any professional development opportunities that arise within the context of the service.



## **3.3 Oranga Tamariki**

### **3.3.1 Organisational management**

Oranga Tamariki will carry out its roles and responsibilities according to the operational policy and practice guidance, which partners are welcome to view on the [Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre](#).

### **3.3.2 Contractual obligations**

Oranga Tamariki has full responsibility for:

- providing the financial commitment detailed in the Outcome Agreement
- reviewing the partner's reports and raising any requests for further information
- responding quickly to any matters of escalation, or to any reported allegations of harm or of critical or serious incidents that arise during and as a direct result of participation in this service
- raising or escalating any concerns to the partner at any point in time as considered necessary for any reason

In general, Oranga Tamariki is always available and willing to work in partnership with the partner for any sharing of learnings, or additional discussions or guidance as requested by the partner.



# Section 4: Reporting

## 4.1 Reporting overview

Reporting ensures accountability to Government for the funding provided under an Outcome Agreement. The contractual reporting outlined below is necessary to meet the obligations set out in the Outcome Agreement for this service, and to report what has been achieved.

Partners should note that the mentor will also be involved in more frequent operational reporting, including through their regular meetings with the multi-disciplinary team, the Transition Lead and the social worker.

Partners should also note that, because this service is a pilot, there will be evaluation requirements. While the details are yet to be finalised, it is expected that the contracted evaluator would have a series of interviews with the mentor over the course of the programme, likely to total no more than eight hours. There may also be reporting templates to be completed at regular points, likely to total no more than two hours.

Please note:

- The layout of the below reporting material is indicative – an electronic contractual reporting format will be provided
- A separate report needs to be filled out for each teenager supported by the partner
- To maintain teenager privacy and confidentiality, refer to the teenager by their first initial and age, eg John aged 14 is referred to as J14
- Contact hours are defined as the time that the mentor spends with the teenager or their whānau (including face-to-face, via technology etc)

**Table 1: Contractual reporting overview**

Timeframe	Reporting	Due	Period covered
Monthly	Mentor contact and non-contact hours	10th of the following month	Monthly, 12/8/24–30/6/25
Quarterly	Narrative reports (focusing on the most recent quarter)	10/10/24	12/8/24–30/9/24
		05/12/24	12/8/24–30/11/24
		10/4/25	12/8/24–31/3/25
		10/7/25	12/8/24–30/6/25



**Table 2: Monthly reporting content and format**

Reporting month	Mentor name	Teenager ID	Contact hours	Non-contact hours	Brief context

**Table 3: Quarterly reporting content and format**

1.	Has the teenager remained engaged in the service? (Y/N)
2.	Has the teenager reoffended? (Y/N)
3.	Describe (briefly) the actions taken by the mentor to support the teenager to maintain their commitments outlined in plans. What commitments have been achieved?
4.	Describe (briefly) the actions taken by the mentor to support the teenager to achieve their goals identified in plans. What goals have been achieved, or what are the successful steps the teenager has taken towards achieving their goals?
5.	<p>Have any of the following outcomes occurred for the teenager? Please answer Yes or No to each and provide a brief explanation. If some of this is covered in your response to questions 3 and 4, you can say refer to the above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Engaged in education, training, or employment</li> <li>– Engaged in positive activities</li> <li>– Increased cultural/spiritual connections</li> <li>– Improved relationship with whānau</li> <li>– Improved/increased pro-social outlook regarding offending, and a reduction in offending</li> <li>– Improved physical health/wellbeing</li> </ul>
6.	Describe (briefly) actions taken by the mentor to support the whānau (include the specific actions of, or the specific role of the mentor, where other professionals were also involved).
7.	<p>Have any of the following outcomes occurred for the whānau? Please answer Yes or No to each and provide a brief explanation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improved parenting skills and/or supervision</li> <li>– Sibling engagement in education and other pro-social activities</li> <li>– Improvement in the meeting of their material needs, including housing, food, entitlements, etc</li> </ul>
8.	If the number of contact and non-contact hours differs from the number that is contracted, explain the reasons for this difference.



## Section 5: Incident reporting

The mentor might be the first person to become aware of an allegation that a teenager in the service has been harmed, or that a critical or serious incident has occurred involving the teenager. Or, the mentor might have been trying but unable to contact the teenager for a longer time that feels usual.

Harm is defined as: “ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation. This includes, but is not limited to, actions or omissions that cause emotional, physical or sexual harm, or sexual harassment.”

Critical or serious incidents include death; suicide attempt; hospitalisation; assault; involvement in the manufacture, cultivation or supply of controlled drugs; wilful property damage; inappropriate sexual behaviour; the use of alcohol or possession or use of Class C drugs; hunger strikes or other serious eating-disorder-related incidents; occasions that involve calling on emergency services for assistance, eg needing the Fire Service to gain access to a rooftop or a locked room; the teenager is missing or absconded.

If the mentor is the first person to become aware of any of the above, their responsibility is as follows.

### **Immediately:**

- support the teenager’s safety and wellbeing through any essential urgent and appropriate response
- phone and speak to the social worker. It is the social worker’s statutory role to carry out the correct processes from that point
- if the mentor cannot get through to the social worker urgently, they should speak to someone at the Oranga Tamariki national contact centre, which is open 24 hours on 0508 FAMILY/0508 326 459

### **In the short and medium term:**

- work with the social worker as required to plan and carry out a coordinated response to protect the teenager, their whānau, and anyone else at risk

**Document ends**

