

Briefing Note: Update on the Review of Interventions for Students with the Highest Level of Learning Support Needs

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	4 June 2021	Priority:	Medium
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1622052
Drafter:	Kirsty Christison	DDI:	9(2)(a)
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose

The purpose of this Briefing is to provide you with an update on activity to date and an updated timeline for the review of Interventions for Students with the Highest Level of Learning Support Needs.

Agree that this briefing note will be proactively released.

☒ **Agree** ☐ **Disagree**

Summary

1. You have agreed to the direction of travel and process for the Review of Interventions for Students with the Highest Level of Learning Support Needs.
2. Following your feedback, we have brought the timeframe for the Review back from February 2023 to October 2022.
3. We have now begun the first phase of engagement for the Review and a briefing note will be provided in July 2021 which will include a summary of feedback received and a proposed scope for the review.


Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support
3/6/2021


Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education
05/06/2021 type text here

Background

4. The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) is leading the Review of Interventions for children and young people with the highest level of learning support needs (the Review). It is one of the commitments within Priority Four of the Learning Support Action Plan 2019-25.
5. A briefing note on the initial process and timeline for the Review has been provided [Metis 1250363 refers]. You have agreed to the initial direction for this work.
6. At our last meeting, Monday 31 May 2021, you asked us to bring the timeframe for the Review back from February 2023 to October 2022 and requested an updated timeline.

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Update on Phase One Engagement

9. The first phase of engagement to co-design the scope and terms of reference with Treaty partners, the education sector, and key stakeholders, including ākonga, began on 27 May 2021.

10. An invitation to participate with supporting materials has now been sent out to around 80 stakeholders. The engagement materials are attached as Annex One for your reference.
11. The Review team has already started to receive replies through the highestneeds.review@education.govt.nz mailbox which either:
- accept the invitation to participate;
 - request online or face to face meetings;
 - provide written responses to the focus questions, and/or;
 - express interest in the advisory group.
12. We are also arranging for an engagement session with Ngāti Kahungunu through, and with support from the Hawkes Bay/Tairāwhiti Education Regional Office.

Next Steps

13. We will provide you with a Briefing Note summarising feedback from the scope co-design process and the proposed scope of the review received in July 2021.

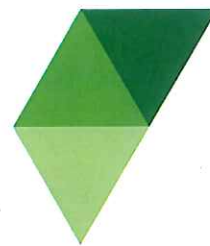
Proactive Release

14. We recommend that this Briefing is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

Annex 1: Phase 1 engagement materials for the highest needs review

Proactively Released



Review of Interventions for Students with the Highest Level of Learning Support Needs

Priority Four of the Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025: Flexible supports and services for neurodiverse children and young people

Review supports for children and young people with the highest levels of need, including the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme, to ensure they are meeting needs of children and young people, and delivering the intended outcome.

Purpose

Learning support responds to a broad range of needs which can be complex, overlap and range in intensity and frequency for each ākonga. Learning support is also about supporting the adults around the child or young person to determine the best types of support within their environments and contexts.

The purpose of this review is to ensure that we are providing the right supports for tamariki and rangatahi when they need it and for as long as they need it to achieve their full potential through positive education outcomes.

Objective for the first phase of engagement (27 May – 9 July 2021)

To co-design and agree on the Scope and Terms of Reference for this review with Treaty partners, the education sector including ākonga, Pacific communities, parents, disabled people and disability organisations.

The Scope and Terms of Reference will then be provided to the Associate Minister of Education, Hon Jan Tinetti.

Problem definition

Learning support is currently delivered within a tiered model of support which increases in intensity depending on ākonga needs and the context they are in. Individualised tailored supports or responses for specific needs and circumstances have evolved over time; each has a specialised focus and most function separately through bespoke criteria and application processes.

The current system of supports is still compartmentalised and fragmented; access to specialists and expertise across agencies is still challenging for parents, whānau and schools and outcomes for ākonga accessing these supports are variable.

Concerns we have already heard

Through past engagements we know there are ongoing concerns about the quality of supports, who can access them, how they are funded and provided, and how long the support is provided for. This includes:

- Appropriate supports being hard to find
- Application processes are overly bureaucratic
- Some ākonga don't meet the criteria for a particular service
- Tamariki are missing out on supports due to significant pressures on services
- Supports start too late or finish too soon

- There's a lack of teacher aide funding
- It's challenging to meet the needs of tamariki and rangatahi who don't qualify for individually funded support such as ORS
- It's difficult to balance the rights-based view for inclusion with some parental preferences for specialist settings
- It's challenging to meet the increasingly complex needs, including behaviour and mental health, of ākonga in our classrooms

What are the objectives for this review?

This review will help to:

- Identify where the problems are within our current networks and systems of support.
- Consider how highly specialised services and supports fit within the flexible, responsive and child-centred approach that is being developed through the Learning Support Delivery Model.
- Examine recent evidence (literature on best practice) for the interventions we provide and test whether they are best placed to meet current needs.
- Identify the most appropriate and effective range of interventions for this cohort of children and young people, including how these interventions are structured, funded and delivered.
- Review the learning support framework to ensure it is delivering the best outcomes for ākonga and meeting our obligation to ensure groups such as disabled ākonga do not experience discrimination through being explicit about taking a rights-based, non-discrimination approach.

This review will be guided by the Ministry's [He Pikorua Practice Principles](#) while aligning with the [principles of Ka Hikitia](#) and the vision and key outcomes in the [Action Plan for Pacific Education](#).

What are the desired outcomes from this review?

This review aims to:

- Address the concerns we have already heard to ensure that all tamariki and rangatahi, including those with the highest and most complex learning support needs, are welcome and their wellbeing, participation, progress and achievement are valued and supported.
- Specifically consider how the supports and services fit together and what gaps or barriers prevent ākonga from accessing the support they need.
- Develop integrated, collaborative and connected solutions on how to achieve agreed outcomes.
- Develop a strategic, planned system response for specialist services supported by up-to-date best evidence.

Current support available for ākonga

Children and young people with the highest level of learning support needs can currently receive individualised support through:

- Ongoing Resourcing Scheme
- School High Health Needs
- Intensive Wrap Around Service
- Day Specialist schools
- Other fundholder schools
- Sensory Specialist schools
- Regional Health schools
- Residential Specialist Schools
- Oranga Tamariki Care and Protection and Youth Justice

We know that there are some children and young people who may not currently fit within the existing set of 'highest needs' provisions. The review will provide opportunities to include wider learning support areas within the scope of this review for those children and young people. For example:

- Behaviour supports
- In-class support
- Stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions regulatory settings
- Transition points – from early childhood education to compulsory schooling, and from compulsory schooling to post-secondary education or employment
- Other tailored interventions that currently operate to support ākonga

Focus Questions for this first phase of engagement (27 May – 9 July 2021)

The objective for this first phase of engagement is to co-design and agree the Scope and Terms of Reference for this review. We would appreciate if you could provide your thoughts on the questions below. This will help us to identify what should be included as in scope of the review.

Question 1: Who are the tamariki and rangatahi we are looking to better support or support differently through this review?

Question 2: To better support the tamariki and rangatahi you have identified in Question 1, what are the non-negotiable things that should be considered within the Scope of the review?

Question 3: Is there anything else that should be considered as the Scope and Terms of Reference are developed?

Next steps for the Review team

At the end of this first engagement phase (July 2021) a Cabinet paper will be provided to the Associate Minister of Education, Hon Jan Tinetti proposing the Scope and Terms of Reference for the Interventions Review.

The Review team will then focus on information gathering and analysis through further engagement, including other agencies. Following this, a summary of engagement analysis identifying key areas for change will be completed and provided to the Associate Minister at the end of 2021.

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The review team will keep you informed as the work progresses.