



## Briefing Note: Attendance Service

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins Minister of Education		
CC:	Hon Jan Tinetti Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	23 March 2021	Priority:	Low / Medium / High
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Drafter:	Maria Galvin	DDI:	9(2)(a)
Key Contact:	Katrina Casey	DDI:	
Messaging seen by Communications team:	Yes / No	Round Robin:	Yes / No

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to provide you with further information on the Attendance Service as commissioned by your office.

**Agree** that this Briefing will not be proactively released at this time because there is contractual information provided.

Agree / Disagree

  
Katrina Casey  
Deputy Secretary  
Sector Enablement and Support

22/3/21

  
Hon Chris Hipkins  
Minister of Education

24/3/21

*As part of future consideration I'd like to draw on the lessons from the URF around flexibility and school engagement.*  
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## Attendance Roles and Responsibilities

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1. Non-attendance falls into three categories:
  - a. day to day non-attendance - schools are responsible for following up on this with students and their families
  - b. chronic non-attendance – once schools have done all they can to resolve these cases, they refer them to the Attendance Service
  - c. non-enrolled students. These are students who aren't enrolled at any school or have dropped off school rolls because they haven't been at school for more than 20 consecutive school days. These cases are the responsibility of the Attendance Service to follow up on.

## The Attendance Service

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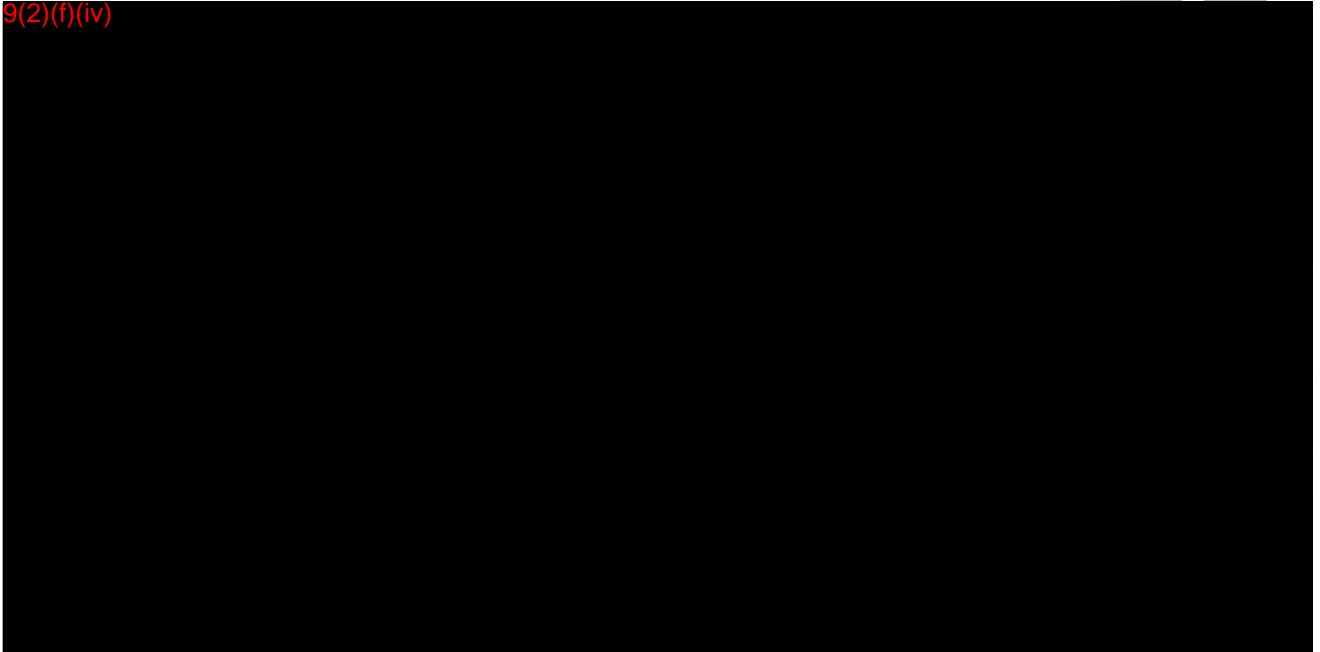
2. The Attendance Service is a national service introduced nationwide in 2013. Information about the previous services (the District Truancy Service (DTS) and the Non-Enrolled Truancy Service), and the transition to the Attendance Service is attached at Annex 1.
3. The Attendance Service primarily works with students aged from six up to 16 years old. The aim of the Attendance Service is to achieve a sustainable return to school for students who are chronically not attending. There are two types of referrals:
  - a. A student who is unjustifiably absent from school can be referred to the Attendance Service for a variety of reasons. For example, when they have been absent for more than three consecutive days without a justifiable reason, when they are intermittently absent (e.g. are regularly absent on particular days of the week), or when they are regularly absent at certain times of the day.
  - b. A student who is not enrolled is referred to the Attendance Service after they have been absent from any school roll for 20 consecutive days. Schools may also submit an immediate referral (i.e. before 20 days) to the Attendance Service for students who they are withdrawing on ENROL; this is particularly important for students who are known to be 'at risk'.
4. The Ministry contracts providers to deliver the service throughout New Zealand. There are 22 Attendance Service providers and some providers subcontract to other organisations including schools and NGO's.
5. Attached as Annex 2 are the details of Attendance Service providers, the service areas they are contracted for, funding allocated to each contract and the number of schools that they are responsible for.

### *Service Description*

6. Providers work with students and their family/whānau to address the root causes of non-attendance, which are often complex. Attendance Advisors/Kaiāwhina will contact and work with whānau in a variety of ways, including through home visits, to identify and support the overcoming of barriers.
7. The Attendance Service looks at all factors contributing to a student's unjustifiable absence or non-enrolment and identifies what school, family/whānau, Iwi, community and government support is required to sustain attendance or transition the student to another legal learning environment.

8. Within the overall service design, each Attendance Service tailors its approach based on local knowledge of what works in its community. Referrals are made to Iwi and other community and government services to address issues that have been identified for a student. Community support is critical to the success of the Attendance Service, and collaboration is necessary to achieve a sustainable return to school, or another learning environment, for students.
9. Attached as Annex 3 is a table showing Attendance Service Performance Measures and Provider Performance.


9(2)(f)(iv)



#### Current work – Exploration of Improvements

11. In 2019, the previous Associate Minister for Education Hon Tracey Martin asked the Ministry to explore a new model of attendance management that may include placing these resources closer to schools.
12. Starting with pilots in Kawerau and South Auckland, the Ministry started to explore options for improvements in the Attendance Service. Different approaches were required, and we worked with schools in both communities to explore options and new ways of delivering the Attendance Service that focussed on:
  - a. how frequent absences could be managed and resourced closer to schools
  - b. the integration of responses to absences and non-enrolment.

9(2)(f)(iv)



#### *Kawerau*

14. Schools in Kawerau decided they wanted a community-wide approach to school attendance managed by one of the schools rather than an external provider that was not based in their community. This resulted in Tarawera High School being contracted as

service provider for the Kawerau Attendance Service. This commenced Term 1 2020.

#### *South Auckland*

15. The Ministry consulted with a group of school leaders over Term 1 and Term 2 2020 to tailor an approach based on their local relationships and on local knowledge of what works in each of their communities regarding attendance. This has resulted in the service being split into two work streams (unjustified absences and non-enrolled):

a. Unjustified Absences

Due to the large number of schools (144) the service area has been divided into five clusters: Howick, Manurewa, Papakura, Franklin and North Waikato. These clusters have a lead school who employs school-based Attendance Advisors/ Kaiāwhina. These Kaiāwhina then manage the referrals for the schools in their cluster.

b. Non-enrolled cases in the whole service area are managed separately by a contracted provider.

16. Splitting the service allows schools to focus on the unjustified absence referrals - ākongā who they have an existing connection with.

#### *Next Steps*

17. The next steps in re-designing the service is engaging with stakeholders, including schools, current Attendance Service providers and Iwi, and undertake a co-design process to determine any changes to the Attendance Service beyond 2021. 9(2)(f)(iv)

18. This work aligns with Priority 6 of the Learning Support Action Plan to improve education for children and young people at risk of disengaging. Priority 6 provides the broad umbrella for work to better support children and young people to stay engaged in their learning through the redesign of the Attendance Service.

#### Proactive Release

19. We recommend that this Briefing is **not** released at this time because it includes contract funding information on the Attendance Service Providers.

#### Annexes

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|----------|---|
| Annex 1: | District Truancy Service (DTS) / Non-Enrolled Truancy Service (NETS) and creation of the Attendance Service |
| Annex 2: | Attendance Service Provider Information   |
| Annex 3: | Performance Measures and Provider Performance   |

9(2)(f)(iv)

## Annex 1 - District Truancy Service (DTS) / Non-Enrolled Truancy Service (NETS) and creation of the Attendance Service

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### ***The District Truancy Service and the Non-Enrolled Truancy Service***

The DTS and NETs were set up in 1996. The DTS supported schools to keep students in school by improving day to day attendance. Schools remained responsible for engaging students, managing day to day attendance and ensuring students attended regularly and could refer any student with an attendance issue to the DTS. The DTS would then seek to locate that student and return him or her to school. DTS Truancy Officers often proactively looked for absent students and returned them to school.

The Non-Enrolled Truancy Service (NETS) was responsible for returning all non-enrolled students in New Zealand to school.

The DTS was reviewed in 2006 and service boundaries aligned with Territorial Local Authorities and a new population-based funding model introduced. This created 76 DTS contracts (56 held by schools and 20 held by community-based organisations). DTS providers were often small. Each was contracted to work with a cluster of schools with clusters ranging from 4 to 163 schools.

Stakeholders perceived the role of the DTS as supporting schools to find truants and respond to the needs of schools. Schools were able to contact the truancy officer directly to request assistance. The role of a truancy officer was difficult to define and the boundaries fluid. There was wide variability in how they operated. Some provided counselling and family support and participated in inter-agency case management initiatives such as ROCKON (Reduce Our Community Kids Offending Now). Others were mostly concerned with finding students and returning them to school.

Services relied on volunteers and additional funding from outside the education sector and some were co-located with other social support services which made the provision of wraparound support more likely.

### ***The Attendance Service – integration and scale***

In 2009, the Minister of Education, Hon Anne Tolley, commissioned work to determine the future shape of truancy management services in response to:

- a growing concern about the rate of truancy (non-attendance)
- principals and providers' perceptions that truancy was being seen earlier (ie in Years 9 and 10 rather than from Year 11)
- a view that mental health issues (e.g. anxiety) were a more significant driver of poor attendance than in the past.

In August 2009, Martin Jenkins completed an evaluation of the DTS.

In September 2009, the Ministry reported to the Minister of Education, on the evaluation findings.

In the interim DTS contracts were varied to introduce improvements and were moved from outputs to outcomes.

### ***Piloting the Attendance Service***

In July 2010, the Minister agreed "in principle" to integrate DTS and NETS into a single service to address the fragmentation of truancy and non-enrolment management and:

- reduce confusion from the fragmentation of current services

- provide a more identifiable point of contact with wider social services
- provide consistent and coherent linkages with other social services and improve referrals for “non-educational concerns” (eg mental health services).

This integrated service was then piloted in Gisborne/East Coast (lead by Ngati Porou and Lytton High School) and South Auckland (lead by the DTS provider Otara Boards Forum and Datacom). The aims of the pilots were to:

- deliver a real reduction in unjustified absences and increased and measurable value for money
- co-construct a new attendance service with the current providers, schools, and social service agencies
- ensure every student is attending school every day, ready to engage in learning
- reduce the time taken to return students to education.

A formative evaluation was completed in December 2011 the evaluation suggested that the integrated service would need to work to instil a culture of continuous improvement, expand the use of data to drive services, and develop greater clarity about the role of the Attendance Advisor/Kaiawhina. The pilots identified tension between being proactive and focusing on closing cases and between providing a wraparound service and meeting KPIs.

The services and stakeholders interviewed supported the idea of an integrated service. The view was that the approach was fundamentally sound and there was limited support for two separate services. The key benefits of an integrated service were identified as:

- more efficient handling of NETS cases (especially if they had been in contact with the AS previously for unjustified absences)
- reduced numbers of non-enrolled cases over time as a result of services working proactively on unjustified absence cases and issues
- improved linkages to other agencies (community and social services) resulting in better outcomes for students.

The integrated Attendance Service was introduced nationwide in 2013.

More details about the previous DTS/NETs found in METIS#1176967.



## ANNEXE 2 – Attendance Service Provider Details

Provider Legal Name	Service Area	Regional Office	Contract End Date	Annual Contract Value	Number of Schools
Mount Albert Grammar School	Auckland Central	Auckland	21/12/2022	9(2)(i)	133
CAPS Hauraki Inc.	Thames/Coromandel	Waikato	21/12/2021		43
Datacom Services Limited	Tauranga	Bay of Plenty	21/12/2021		66
	Bay of Plenty (Eastern)	Bay of Plenty			79
	Central Plateau	Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatu			21
	Whanganui	Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatu			52
	Manawatu-Horowhenua	Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatu			81
	Otago/Southland/Gore	Otago, Southland			229
National Urban Māori Authority	Waitakere/North Shore (Auckland Nth)	Auckland	21/12/2021		180
	Waikato	Waikato			180
	Wellington	Wellington			202
Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services	Northland	Tai Tokerau	21/12/2021		145
Tuakau College	South Auckland B - North Waikato Cluster	Auckland	21/12/2021		12
Pukekohe Intermediate	South Auckland B -Franklin Cluster	Auckland	21/12/2021		30
Kereru Park Campus	South Auckland B -Papakura Cluster	Auckland	21/12/2021		27
Greenmeadows Intermediate	South Auckland B -Manurewa Cluster	Auckland	21/12/2021		33
Howick Primary School	South Auckland B -Howick Cluster	Auckland	21/12/2021		44
Bluelight (Non - Enrolled only) <sup>2</sup>	South Auckland B	Auckland	21/12/2021		0
STRIVE Community Trust	South Auckland A	Auckland	21/12/2021		61

<sup>2</sup> Although they have no schools allocated their service area encompasses all the South Auckland B Schools (146)

Provider Legal Name	Service Area	Regional Office	Contract End Date	Annual Contract Value	Number of Schools
Te Ora Hou Otautahi	Canterbury	Canterbury, Chatham Islands	21/12/2021	9(2)(i)	267
	West Coast, Nelson, Marlborough	Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast			123
Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou	Gisborne East Coast	Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti	21/12/2021		63
Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga <sup>3</sup>	Hawkes Bay/Wairarapa	Hawke's Bay, Tairāwhiti & Wellington	21/12/2021		163
Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki	Taranaki	Taranaki, Whanganui, Manawatu	21/12/2021		93
CKC REAP	Taumarunui	Waikato	31/12/2021		15
Te Kuiti High School	Te Kuiti (Waitomo)	Waikato	31/12/2022		17
Tokoroa Council of Social Services	Tokoroa (South Waikato)	Waikato	31/12/2021		20
Life to the Max, Horowhenua Trust	Levin (Horowhenua)	Wellington	31/12/2021		21
Tarawera High School	Kawerau	Bay of Plenty	31/12/2021		4
Ashbrook School	Opotiki	Bay of Plenty	21/12/2021		13

<sup>3</sup> includes schools in the Wairarapa up to Norsewood which is in the Wellington Education Region



### Annex 3 - Performance Measures and Provider Performance

1. In 2016 contracts had the following Key Performance Indicators

**KPI 1** - All NEN cases open longer than six months have a plan in place to re-engage the student back into a school or legal learning environment.

**KPI 2** - 90% of UA cases processed from State 0 (Loaded for Action) to State 1 (Open) within 1 school day (8 ASA Hours)

*The Provider will not be penalised if they are unable to meet this measure because ASA is unavailable.*

**KPI 3** – 65% of UA cases process from State 0 to State 4 (Closed) within 22 school days.

**KPI 4** - At least 65% of schools in the Attendance Service catchment region are signed up to use the Attendance Service Application.

2. At the end of 2020 ten Providers were still reporting on these measures.

3. The **2020** results are in the table below, along with the number of UA and NEN cases each provider has received.

Provider Legal Name	Service Area	9(2)(j)
Mount Albert Grammar School	Auckland Central	
CAPS Hauraki Inc.	Thames/Coromandel	
Datacom Services Limited	Tauranga	
	Bay of Plenty (Eastern)	
	Central Plateau	
	Whanganui	
	Manawatu-Horowhenua	
	Otago/Southland/Gore	

Provider Legal Name	Service Area
National Urban Māori Authority (NUMA)	Waitakere/North Shore (Auckland North)
	Waikato
	Wellington
Ngāpuhi Iwi Social Services	Northland
STRIVE Community Trust	South Auckland A
Te Ora Hou Otautahi	Canterbury
	West Coast, Nelson, Marlborough
Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Porou	Gisborne East Coast
Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga	Hawkes Bay/Wairarapa
Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki	Taranaki

9(2)(j)

4. 9(2)(f)(iv), 9(2)(j)

5. The table below shows the 2020 results, along with the number of UA and NEN cases each provider has received.

Provider Legal Name	Service Area
CKC REAP	Taumarunui
Te Kuiti High School	Te Kuiti (Waitomo)
Tokoroa Council of Social Services	Tokoroa (South Waikato)
Life to the Max, Horowhenua Trust	Levin (Horowhenua)
Tarawera High School	Kawerau

9(2)(i)

9(2)(j), 9(2)(f)(iv)