



Briefing Note: Budget investments in Learning Support (2017-2020)

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
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Purpose of Report

This report provides information on recent investment in learning support, current cost pressures and service gaps, and potential initiatives for future investment. It includes a summary of direct investments in learning support and cost and demand adjustments from Budget 2017 to Budget 2020 (Annex 1) and an overview of Ministry learning support service delivery from 2017/18 through 2020/21 (Annex 2) showing the impact of these investments.

Agree that this Briefing will not be proactively released at this time because it relates to potential future Budget bids.

Agree / Disagree

Summary

- The baseline for learning support expenditure increased from an estimated \$972.6 million in 2017/18 to \$1,227.7 million in the current financial year (2020/21).
- The new funding has been invested across a range of learning support services to address cost pressures, demand pressures, service gaps and *Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025* priorities.
- The prevalence of learning support needs and demand for services are growing; however, funding for most learning support services and interventions is capped. There is no mechanism in place to automatically adjust funding in response to demand for most learning support services and interventions.


Katrina Casey
Deputy Secretary
Sector Enablement and Support

12/3/2021

Hon Jan Tinetti
Associate Minister of Education

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Impact of Budget investments on the estimated baseline for Learning Support

1. The total spending on learning support in 2019/20 was \$1.1 billion [METIS 1245009 refers]. The baseline for learning support expenditure increased from an estimated \$972.6 million in 2017/18 to \$1,227.7 million in the current financial year (2020/21).
2. The 2017/18 baseline figure is an estimate only. This was the first financial year when learning support encompassed what was previously known as Special Education as well as other services (such as alternative education) that support ākonga who face barriers for a variety of reasons not related to disability, including disengagement and behavioural issues.
3. The calculation for the 2017/18 baseline is based on the deduction of cumulative budget increases from the 2019/20 actual figures. A financial model for learning support has been developed; however, it was not applied retrospectively.
4. The baseline figures include funding for all learning support initiatives and interventions including:

Funding provided directly to early learning services and schools

- Teacher salary costs and operational funding costs for specialist schools, Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) specialist teachers and Resource teachers such as Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb)
- School operational grant funding components including Special Education Grant (SEG), Targeted Funding for Educational Achievement (TFEA) and Targeted at Risk (TARG)
- Early Childhood Education equity funding components.

Services and supports provided or contracted by the Ministry

- Ministry delivered learning support interventions and services such as Positive Behaviour for Learning School-Wide and core services such as the Early Intervention Service
 - Contracted services (e.g. Service Academies, Attendance Service, alternative education)
 - Allowances such as Boarding Allowances, Special Education Transport Assistance
 - Scholarships and study awards for learning support specialist roles.
5. Table 1 below shows the annual adjustment to the learning support baseline from the cumulative Budget increase. The cumulative Budget increase includes both direct investments in learning support initiatives and indirect investment through cost adjustments to operational grants for schools and early childhood education. A breakdown of the new direct and indirect funding for each year is in Annex 1.

Table 1: Breakdown of annual adjustment to the learning support baseline following Budget increases (\$m)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Baseline	954.7	972.6	1033.1	1107.7	1227.7	1253.9	1266.7
Cumulative budget adjustment (B17 - B20)	17.9	60.5	74.7	120.0	26.2	12.8	15.5
Adjusted Baseline	972.6	1033.1	1107.7	1227.7	1253.9	1266.7	1282.2
% increase / decrease	1.9%	6.2%	7.2%	10.8%	2.1%	1.0%	1.2%
COVID-19 time limited funding			2	93.5	7.5	0.2	-

6. The **baseline** calculation does not factor in additional funding for annual cost adjustments in future years (2021/22 onwards) such as increases to operational funding components or increases in teacher salary costs.
7. The **adjusted baseline** is not simply calculated by adding the new funding from each Budget to the baseline. The total funding over four years for each initiative is noted in Annex 1, which shows that the distribution of new funding across years is not always consistent. Funding can vary year to year. It may increase, decrease, or stop entirely depending on its intended purpose. The **cumulative budget adjustment** in Table 1 above accounts for these fluctuations in funding levels from year to year.
8. The **COVID-19 time limited funding** in Table 1 above is allocated to support children and young people with learning support needs, through the Urgent Response Fund, ORS COVID-19 Response Fund, providing technology support for children with learning support needs and supporting the re-engagement and attendance of at-risk ākonga.
9. Any further investments in Budget 2021 and beyond will add to this baseline total.

Overview of Budget investments in Learning Support (Budget 2017- Budget 2020)

10. New funding appropriated since 2017 has been invested across a range of learning support services and the tiers of support to address cost pressures, demand pressures, service gaps and *Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025 (Action Plan)* priorities.
11. A total of \$1,170.9 million over four years has been invested directly into learning support initiatives from Budget 2017 to Budget 2020. A detailed list of these initiatives and the annual totals can be found in Annex 1. The table below categorises the new funding initiatives to show broadly where direct investments in learning support have been made.

Table 2: Budget investments in learning support by category (Budget 2017- Budget 2020)

Category	\$m
Learning Support Coordinators	217.3
Support for children and young people with High Needs (ORS, School High Health Needs Fund, IWS, Residential Special Schools, In Class Support) and Behaviour services	362.3
Early Intervention services	49.1
English Speakers of Other Languages	78.3
Funding for Population growth	68.5
Improving Education for At Risk Students	12.9
Increase in learning support teacher aide contribution rates	59.3
Sensory Schools and New Zealand Sign Language	40.1
Technology support for children with learning support needs	4.1
Other Learning Support interventions including Incredible Years Autism, Oral Language Literacy initiative, enhanced support for gifted learners	17.6
Cost and demand adjustments e.g. for the Special Education Grant (SEG) component of operational grants and cost adjustments for early learning subsidies	158.3
COVID-19 Time Limited Funding	103.2
Total Budget 2017 to Budget 2020 investments over four years	1,170.9

12. The \$1,170.9 million total in Table 2 is not directly visible in Table 1. Table 2 shows the total value of all investments over four years in learning support between Budget 2017 and Budget 2020 excluding capital investment. The **cumulative budget adjustment** line in Table 1 breaks this new investment down by financial year. The annual figures in this line take account of the year to year variance in the distribution of new funding, which is not always consistently spread across the four-year period.
13. Alongside the increased investment, we have been working with schools and kura to introduce the Learning Support Delivery Model (LSDM) and implementing a tiered model of support. Together these initiatives have changed the way learning support services are provided and how learning support specialists work with teachers and whānau to respond to the needs of children and young people.
14. Within this approach, learning support is conceptualised as a tiered model, with supports that may be universal, or targeted or individualised. Universal supports involve school or cluster wide approaches to support all learners including developing inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.
15. Targeted support could be support from a Resource teacher or an in-school intervention such as a social skills group. Individualised support is provided to a small number of learners who require intensive support such as assistive technologies or ORS. A child or young person may receive support from any or all tiers, according to their needs.

Addressing cost and demand pressures

16. Budget 2017 and successive Budgets have addressed significant cost and demand pressures in areas such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Sensory

Schools and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), ORS and the Ministry's core specialist services.

Population growth

17. The impact of population growth on the demand for learning support services has been addressed through new funding. This is based on forecast numbers of ākonga in early learning and schooling each year and funding is allocated to areas of greatest need and demand. The following funding was provided over four years:
- \$ 29.6 million through Budget 2019, and
 - \$ 38.9 million through Budget 2020.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

18. Demand for ESOL support consistently exceeded forecast student numbers. In 2017, 43,400 students received ESOL support, by 2019 this increased to 49,000. In 2019, the number of students needing ESOL support was projected to reach 62,000 by 2023. To cater for this projected growth in demand, the following funding was provided, each over four years:
- \$9.4 million through Budget 2017,
 - \$34.5 million through Budget 2018, and
 - \$13.2 million through Budget 2019.
19. In addition, \$21.2 million over four years was provided through Budget 2020 to cover ESOL cost pressures due to increasing costs of teachers and teacher aides.
20. Demand for ESOL support may decrease in the short term due to the impact of COVID-19 on immigration.

Sensory Schools and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL)

21. A total of \$40.1 million over four years was invested in Sensory Schools and NZSL in Budgets 2018 and 2019 to address demand pressures due to population growth, cost pressures in specialist services and to continue NZSL services which were previously funded by time-limited funding.

Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)

22. A total of \$296.7 million has been invested in ORS, which is broken down as follows:
- \$133.5 million through Budget 2018 (over four years),
 - \$132.2 million through Budget 2020 (over four years), and
 - \$31.0 million time-limited funding through Budget 2020 (2020/21 only).
23. Budget 2018 funding was invested in ORS to address demand pressures in this service. The table below provides a snapshot of the increase in number of students supported through ORS over the past ten years.

Table 3: Snapshot of the increase in the number of students supported through ORS over the past ten years

Year	Number of students	Percentage of the population
1 July 2010	7,390 students	1%
1 July 2017	9,049 students	1.19%
1 July 2020	10,160 students	1.2%

24. Average teacher aide hours for ORS verified students were increased in Budget 2020. Teacher aide hours increased from:
- an average of 10 hours to 13 hours per week for High Needs, and
 - an average of 17 hours to 20 hours per week for Very High Needs students.
25. The \$31 million ORS COVID-19 Response Fund has provided additional teacher aide support for 2020/21 only. Parents, whānau and the education sector value the support teacher aides provide which is contributing to the demand for more teacher aide support.

Ministry core learning support services

26. The Ministry's core learning support services (including the Behaviour, Communications and Early Intervention Services) have also benefited from increased investment during this period. With the additional funding, the number of Ministry learning support specialist staff has increased by 149.30 FTE between 2017/18 and 2020/21.
27. Across our core services, the increased investment along with changes to learning support delivery has led to:
- a 9.6% overall increase in the number of ākonga supported,
 - a 35.7% overall decrease in the number of children and young people on waitlists, and
 - a reduction in overall wait times between 2017/18 and 2019/20 (Annex 2).
28. However, for 2020/21 we are experiencing increased demand for support for some services. The number of children and young people on the waitlists for Early Intervention services is 46.5% higher than 2019/20, while demand for the Communication service has increased by 6.9%.

Budget 2017 – filling service gaps in early intervention

29. Budget 2017 funding was directed to new early intervention initiatives including the Oral Language and Literacy (OLLi) initiative, Incredible Years Autism (IYA) and the Expansion of the Behaviour Service (EBS).
30. OLLi is a programme to build teachers' skills and confidence so they can work with young children who need help with literacy and oral language. Ministry-employed speech language therapists deliver the programme in early learning services in low socio-economic communities in eight regions. OLLi provides support across the universal, targeted and individual tiers:
- *Universal:* supporting all kaiako/teachers in the early learning service to design, implement and evaluate a curriculum that promotes oral language as an integral part of literacy learning and development for all children
 - *Targeted:* delivering the Hanen ABC and Beyond programme to kaiako/teachers to help them explicitly develop language and literacy skills in young children who need more support with their language
 - *Individual:* working with kaiako/teachers to provide additional tailored support for a few children who need more specific help with language.
31. Since it began in 2018, OLLi has delivered support to 473 early learning services and 903 kaiako/teachers.

32. IYA is a 14-session programme for parents, and the Incredible Years Helping Children with Autism is a separate 6-session programme for teachers, of children aged 2-5 on the autism spectrum. The Ministry has provided IYA programmes to 542 parents and 658 kaiako/teachers to build parent and teacher capabilities so together they can support the child's emotional regulation, positive social interactions and language development.
33. The \$34.7 million EBS initiative provided funding over four years for an additional 57 staff including psychologists, early intervention teachers, special education advisors, kaitakawaenga (Māori cultural advisors) and service managers. The number of psychologist internships temporarily increased from 21 places in 2017 up to 32 places in 2021 to help meet our future psychology workforce needs. From 2022 the number of internship places drops back to 21 places a year.
34. A flexible funding pool was created as part of this initiative to give regional offices more flexibility to tailor behaviour and wellbeing support to the needs of children aged 0-8 and their whānau. This has enabled learning support specialists to trial new ways of working through the LSDM and to work across the tiers of support.
35. All three initiatives included funding for robust evaluations which are currently underway. The findings will inform decision making on future investments within the next two years.

Funding for Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025 priorities

36. The first tranche of 623 LSC roles is the most significant investment in the Action Plan priorities to date, providing support to students in 1,052 schools working in 124 clusters from early 2020. Budget 2019 included:
- \$217.3 million in operating funding over four years to cover salary and related costs, and
 - \$95 million in capital expenditure to create suitable working spaces in schools for this first tranche.
37. Through new funding in Budget 2019, an enhanced support package has been provided for up to 500 gifted ākonga by increasing access to learning opportunities. This funding also provides teachers with opportunities to study gifted education at post-graduate level.

Current gaps in learning support provision and cost pressures

38. Despite these investments, there are still significant pressures across learning support services and gaps in service provision that need to be addressed to ensure the right support is available to meet the needs of ākonga.

Learning Support Action Plan 2019-2025

39. The Action Plan outlines the priorities and actions that are widely accepted as the ones that will make the greatest difference to ensuring that children and young people get the right support, at the right time. Most of these priorities require additional resources, and only some have been partially funded, as follows:
- a. *Priority 1 - Learning Support Coordinators (LSC):* The first tranche of 623 FTE roles has been funded. The Government has indicated its intention to provide LSCs to all schools, subject to Budget decisions. This will require funding for an additional 1,052 roles to work in approximately 1500 schools.

- b. *Priority 2 - Screening tools:* The Action Plan commits to the development of pre-school and school entry assessment tools so that learning support needs are identified earlier and more consistently. To date, screening tools have not yet been fully designed and we have discussed your preferred approach to supporting successful transitions into school. The roll out of new tools has not been costed and would be subject to additional funding.
- c. *Priority 3 - Early Intervention:* The Ministry is working on processes to improve early intervention services, which are subject to demand and population growth cost pressures, and the increasing prevalence of some conditions. We are also investigating whether additional types of services may be needed. Any further strengthening of early intervention is subject to additional funding.
- d. *Priority 4 – Neurodiversity:* The commitments to build the capability of early learning services and schools to teach and respond to neurodiverse learners through new teaching resources, and to progressively implement new supports and programmes, are both subject to funding.
- e. *Priority 5 – Gifted:* The Ministry is working to design flexible supports for gifted children and young people, including supports that take account of Māori concepts of giftedness. We have funding for current activities [METIS 1245009 refers].
- f. *Priority 6 – Ākonga | learners at risk of disengaging:* At Risk learners are some of the most vulnerable in the system, and experience multiple disadvantages. The Government has publicly committed to co-designing with educators, Māori, Pacific families and whānau, and communities, a more adaptable, flexible system of at-risk provision that better meets individual needs and is integrated with schools. This redesign work is subject to funding.

Cost pressures

- 40. Currently, slightly more than half of learning support funding is from a series of fixed funding pools that do not automatically increase as the school population increases or decreases or as collective agreements increase the wages of learning support staff. In these cases, funding increases are subject to annual Budget processes. Ongoing cost and volume pressures are managed through a mix of prioritising need and new ways of working to address needs and to utilise all the resources in schools and communities more effectively.

Population growth

- 41. As the population grows the number of children and young people needing support increases. The prevalence of some conditions is increasing, and the education system is now more able to identify and respond to specific challenges that children face, which in the past may have gone undetected and not supported appropriately. In addition, we are seeing an increase in issues related to anxiety, wellbeing and mental health.
- 42. While the prevalence of need is increasing, funding for learning support services and interventions is capped. Other costs in the education system, such as operational funding and entitlement staffing, are automatically adjusted for population growth. There is no mechanism in place to automatically adjust funding for learning support services and interventions in response to increases in demand.
- 43. At the same time the cost of delivering or contracting services increases over time as a result of price increases. Without additional funds the Ministry's ability to maintain current levels of service provision will be eroded.

44. Additional funding is also needed to meet the increase in demand for services as the population increases. Currently this requires a budget submission each year and can be subject to scaling. 9(2)(g)(i)

9(2)(f)(iv)

Potential initiatives for future investment

47. Table 4 below provides a summary of existing cost pressures that may require additional investment through future Budgets.

9(2)(f)(iv)

9(2)(f)(iv)

Proactive Release

50. We recommend that this Briefing is not released at this time because the content relates to potential future Budget bids.

¹ All figures are indicative only and various scaling options can be considered. Figures are based on costings over four years. All figures are GST exclusive.

Annexes

- Annex 1: Learning Support Budget investments (Budget 2017 - Budget 2020)
Annex 2: Overview of Learning Support core service delivery (2017/18 - 2020/21)

Proactively Released

Annex 1: Learning Support Budget investments (Budget 2017- Budget 2020)

Budget 17 initiatives

Learning Support initiatives 2017						
Bid Title	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	² 4 year total
Incredible Years Autism	0.7	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.1	4.2
Oral Language Literacy initiative	1.1	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	6.0
Expanding Behavioural Services Initiative	5.2	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.4	34.7
In-Class Support for Students with High Learning Needs	2.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	15.5
English for Speakers of Other Languages (cost pressures)	3.6	5.8	-	-	-	9.4
Learning Support – Meeting Increasing Costs	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	2.9
Total Operating Funding	13.4	23.5	18.1	17.7	17.3	72.7

Learning Support Funding for other initiatives					
Title	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 & outyears	Total
Early Childhood and Schooling – Meeting Increased Demand	3.9	4.1	4.9	5.5	18.3
Operational Grant Funding Increase for schools	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.2	4.1
Total Operating Funding	4.5	5.2	6.0	6.7	22.4

² The four-year total (2017/18 – 2021/20) is provided to match Treasury reporting. 2021/22 is excluded from the four-year total. However, it has been included to show the drop in EBS funding in the outyears as the phasing for this initiative was changed.

Budget 18 initiatives

Learning Support initiatives 2018					
Bid Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 & outyears	5 year Total
Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)	22.3	30.0	37.2	43.9	133.5
Te Kahu Tōi intensive wraparound service	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	4.8
Early Intervention Services	5.1	5.3	5.6	5.6	21.5
Learning Support - English for Speakers of Other Languages (Schooling)	1.3	9.6	11.0	12.6	34.5
Learning Support - Sensory Schools and New Zealand Sign Language	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	30.2
Learning Support – Teacher Aide Funding Rates	5.7	11.8	17.9	23.9	59.3
Total Operating Funding	43.1	65.4	80.4	94.8	283.8

Learning Support Funding for other initiatives					
Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	5 year total
Early Childhood and Schooling – Meeting Increased Demand	5.0	5.4	6.2	7.0	23.5
Cost Adjustment for Subsidies for Early Learning and Schools' Operational Grant	0.7	1.5	1.5	1.5	5.2
Total Operating Funding	5.7	6.9	7.7	8.5	28.7

Capital funding					
Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 & outyears	5 year total Opex
Early Intervention Services	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS)	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Learning Support – Teacher Aide Funding Rates	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total Capital Funding	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6

Budget 19 initiatives

Learning Support initiatives 2019						
Bid Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 & outyears	5 year total
Increasing Learning Support Funding in line with Population Growth and Demand Growth	-	3.9	5.1	8.4	12.2	29.6
Early Intervention Services (cost pressure)	-	6.1	6.2	6.2	6.2	24.8
Improving education for at risk students (cost pressure)	-	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.6	7.8
English Speakers of Other Languages (cost pressure)	0.6	0.3	1.3	4.4	6.5	13.2
Te Kahu Toi Intensive Wraparound Service (cost pressure)	-	1.3	2.1	3.6	4.8	11.8
Residential Special Schools (cost pressure)	-	2.2	2.6	2.6	2.6	9.8
Increasing access to assistive technology (cost pressure)	0.2	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.2	4.1
Maintaining access to education for deaf and hard of hearing children and young people (cost pressure)	-	1.4	2.4	2.8	3.3	9.9
Learning Support Coordinators	-	27.9	63.0	62.0	64.4	217.3
An enhanced support package for gifted learners	-	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.6
Te Kura's Big Picture programme	-	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	5.1
Total Operating Funding	0.8	47.7	87.6	95.1	104.7	335.8

Learning Support Funding for other initiatives						
Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 & out years	5 year total
Early Childhood and Schooling – Meeting Increased Demand	-	6.6	7.7	7.8	9.0	31.0
Cost Adjustment for Subsidies for Early Learning and Schools' Operational Grant	-	0.7	1.4	1.4	1.4	4.9
Total Operating Funding	0	7.3	9.1	9.2	10.4	35.9

Capital funding						
Title	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 & outyears	5 year Total Capex
Learning Support Coordinators	-	4.8	33.3	42.8	14.3	95.0
Total Operating Funding	0	4.8	33.3	42.8	14.3	95.0

Budget 20 initiatives

Learning Support Initiatives 2020						
Bid Title	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 & outyears	5 year total (from 19/20)
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	-	5.0	5.2	5.5	5.5	21.2
School High Health Needs	1.6	3.1	5.0	4.9	4.9	19.7
Funding for Population Growth	-	4.5	5.5	8.0	20.8	38.9
Extending the pilot of the CORS Category (Starting July 2021)	-		0.6	0.6	0.7	1.9
Increasing Ongoing Resourcing Scheme teacher aide hours cost pressure	-	19.0	-	-	-	19.0
Increasing Ongoing Resourcing Scheme teacher aide hours	-	44.8	33.1	33.1	33.1	144.2
Supporting the re-engagement and attendance of at-risk ākonga	-	2.9	-	-	-	2.9
Technology support for children with learning support needs	-	1.0	-	-	-	1.0
Operating Contingency: Targeted Support for At-Risk Ākonga		9.0	7.5	0.2		16.7
Early intervention: Te Kōhanga Reo	-	1.1	1.2	0.3	0.3	2.8
Total Operating Funding	1.6	90.4	58.2	52.7	65.4	268.3

Learning Support Funding for other initiatives						
Bid Title	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 & outyears	5 year total (from 19/20)
Changes in Demand	-	16.0	15.4	15.5	18.1	65.1
Cost adjustment for Schools' Operational Grant	-	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.7	6.1
Total Operating Funding	0	17.0	17.1	17.2	19.9	71.2

Learning Support related initiatives						
Bid Title	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 & outyears	5 year total (from 19/20)
Urgent Response Fund	2.0	50.0	-	-	-	52.0
Total Operating Funding	2.0	50.0	-	-	-	52.0

Annex 2: Overview of Learning Support core service delivery (2017/18-2020/21)

Early Intervention

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21 (to 31 Dec 2020)
Number of ākonga learners supported	14,414	▲	15,109	▲	15,831	▲	12,359
Number of ākonga learners on the waitlist	2,552	▲	2,714	▲	1,567	▼	2,301
Average wait times	98.81 days	▲	105.39 days	▲	104.21 days	▼	79.92 days

Behaviour Service

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21 (31 Dec 2020)
Number of ākonga learners supported	4,377	▲	4,714	▲	4,883	▲	4,209
Number of ākonga learners on the waitlist	510	▲	447	▼	300	▼	306
Average wait times	41.83 days	▲	49.12 days	▲	53.19 days	▲	36.56 days

Communication Service

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21 (31 Dec 2020)
Number of ākonga learners supported	7,090	▲	7,540	▲	7,792	▲	6,814
Number of ākonga learners on the waitlist	855	▲	882	▲	652	▼	697
Average wait times	74.13 days	▲	73.15 days	▼	72.43 days	▼	51.57 days

Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (Ministry funded schools only)

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21 (31 Dec 2020)
Number of ākonga learners supported ³	5,562	▲	5,830	▲	5,962	▲	5,745
Number of ākonga learners on waitlist	66	▲	52	▼	42	▼	45
Average wait times	23.75 days	▼	22.07 days	▼	16.54 days	▼	10.79 days

³ These figures do not include students who are supported by ORS through fundholder schools and EISSP.

Core services: combined total

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		Percentage increase / decrease from 2017/18 to 2019/20
Number of ākonga learners supported ⁴	31,443	▲	33,193	▲	34,468	▲	9.6% increase
Number of ākonga learners on waitlist	3,983	▼	4,095	▲	2,561	▼	35.70% decrease

⁴ These figures do not include students who received ORS through fundholder schools (e.g. specialist schools) and EISSP.