



# Mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki

## Focus of this assessment

This assessment examines the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki and how current services and supports within the Oranga Tamariki system aim to meet those needs.<sup>1</sup>



**65,170**

children and young people are involved with Oranga Tamariki<sup>2</sup>



**44%** are Māori\*



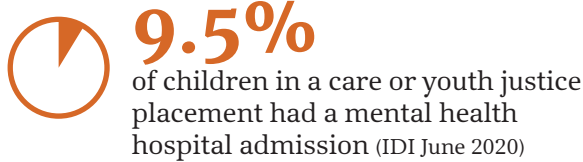
**8%** are Pacific\*



**6%** are Māori and Pacific\*

\*Oranga Tamariki IDI analysis, June 2021

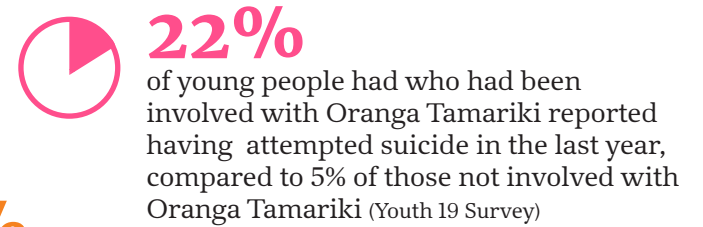
**All children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki are likely to have experienced some level of trauma**



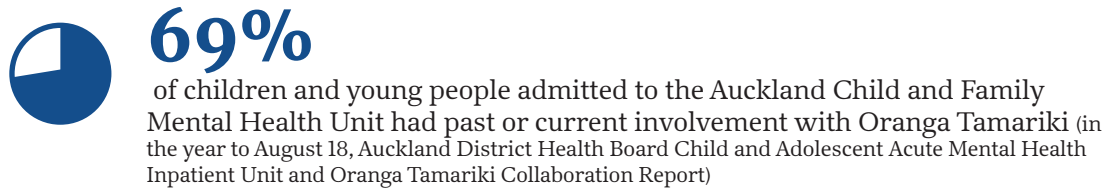
**9.5%** of children in a care or youth justice placement had a mental health hospital admission (IDI June 2020)



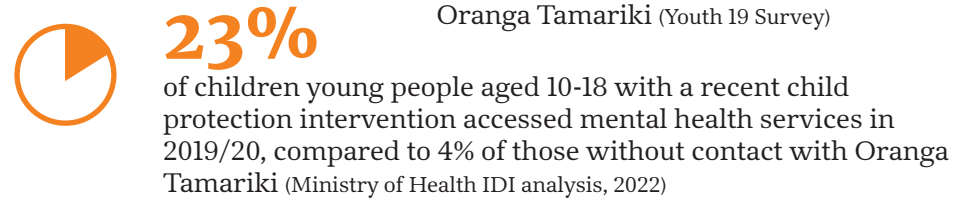
**44%** of young people who had been involved with Oranga Tamariki reported depression symptoms, compared to 21% of those not involved with Oranga Tamariki (Youth 19 Survey)



**22%** of young people had who had been involved with Oranga Tamariki reported having attempted suicide in the last year, compared to 5% of those not involved with Oranga Tamariki (Youth 19 Survey)



**69%** of children and young people admitted to the Auckland Child and Family Mental Health Unit had past or current involvement with Oranga Tamariki (in the year to August 18, Auckland District Health Board Child and Adolescent Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit and Oranga Tamariki Collaboration Report)



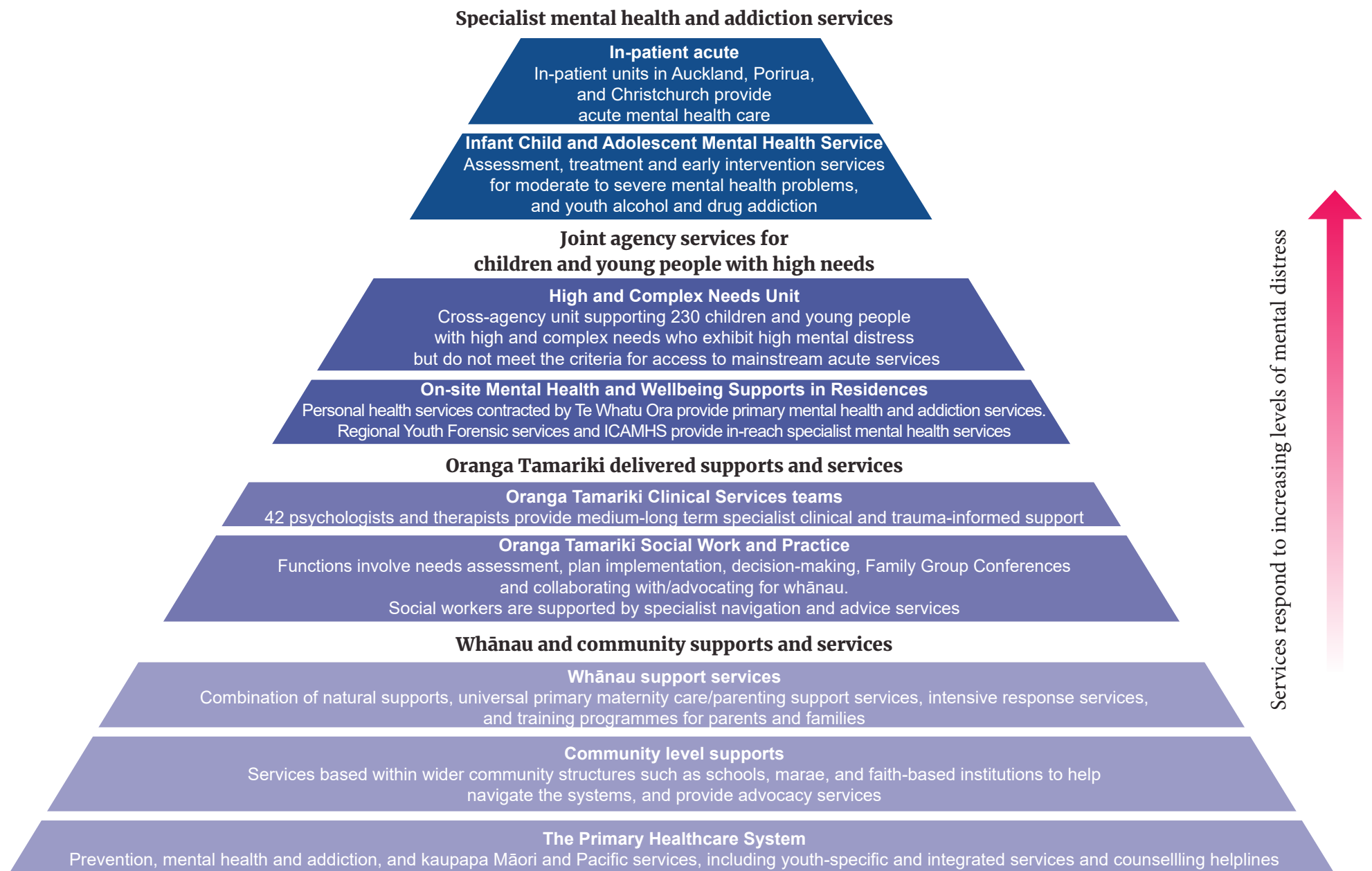
**23%** of children young people aged 10-18 with a recent child protection intervention accessed mental health services in 2019/20, compared to 4% of those without contact with Oranga Tamariki (Ministry of Health IDI analysis, 2022)

Mental wellbeing is one aspect of broader wellbeing, or oranga. Positive mental wellbeing is most likely when the dimensions of oranga are in balance, and people can be described as feeling safe, connected, valued, worthy and accepted, and having a sense of belonging, identity and hope for the future.

The children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki often have high mental health and wellbeing support needs. These needs may be due to a range of interactive factors and complex and challenging life experiences including the experience of trauma (individual, whānau, or intergenerational). These needs are intersectional and often inequitably distributed. Children and young people who identify as Māori, Pacific, disabled, and SOGEISC-diverse (sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristic diverse) are over-represented in the Oranga Tamariki population, and are at greater risk of poor mental health and wellbeing than other children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki.

## Current state

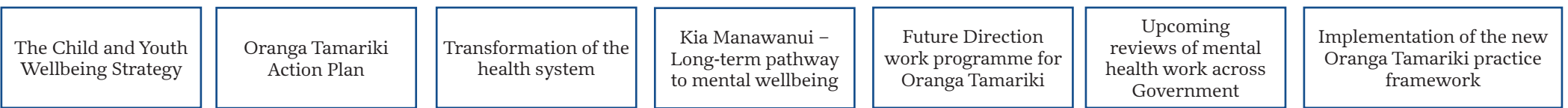
A range of supports and services are needed to address mental distress across the mental wellbeing continuum, ranging from universal and prevention supports and services to specialist mental health and addiction services. Some of the key types of services that children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki and their families and whānau access to support their mental health and wellbeing needs are set out below.



<sup>1</sup>The Oranga Tamariki system refers to the system responsible for providing services or support to children, young people, and their families and whānau under, or in connection with, the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, including but not limited to health, education, and disability agencies. This assessment focuses on health service responses.

<sup>2</sup>Children and young people who are receiving assistance from Oranga Tamariki, or are in the care and protection and/or youth justice systems.

## Government's current efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing include:



## Driving changes to address system gaps and barriers

Supporting communities and people in them to identify and meet their mental health needs is complicated. We've heard that the system is not meeting the mental health and wellbeing needs of children and young people involved with Oranga Tamariki.

Oranga Tamariki has proposed a series of responses that will enable everyone committed to the Action Plan to address multiple issues.

### Key system gaps and barriers

### Focus areas

To drive system change so that needs are met earlier and in a consistently holistic way that is oranga and trauma-informed



This A3 is designed to be an introduction to the full Needs Assessment available on [orangatamariki.govt.nz](http://orangatamariki.govt.nz) or on request from the Action Plan team by emailing [otap@ot.govt.nz](mailto:otap@ot.govt.nz)

### About the Needs Assessments

As part of the Action Plan, we are working on nine in-depth assessments focused on the housing, health, and education needs of children and young people most at risk. It is critical that we have a solid understanding of the experiences and needs of these children and young people so we can make changes where required and make a meaningful difference for children and young people. These assessments will set out very clearly what is going well and what we need to do better.



Child and Youth Wellbeing



ORANGA TAMARIKI  
Ministry for Children