



**Listening, learning, changing**  
**Mā Whakarongo me Ako ka huri te tai**  
Crown Response to the Abuse in Care Inquiry

# Crown Response for the Abuse in Care Inquiry: Half Year Report 2026

1 July 2025 – 31 December 2025

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# Support available

We acknowledge the courage of survivors, their whānau and supporters who have shared their experiences to inform this work. This report discusses sensitive subject matter, including references to abuse, systemic failings, and other difficult matters. Details of support services are provided below. These services are available to anyone who may need assistance.

## Survivor Experiences Service

The Survivor Experiences Service is available for people who were abused in State, faith-based, or other forms of care, as well as for a survivor's whānau. It aims to provide a confidential and supportive space for survivors and their families to share their experiences of abuse or for records support.

Survivors and whānau can contact the Survivor Experiences Service to organise a time and place to share their experiences or for support requesting care records:

- call 0800 456 090
- text 8328
- email [contact@survivorexperiences.govt.nz](mailto:contact@survivorexperiences.govt.nz)

To find out more about the Survivor Experiences Service, visit their home page on [survivorexperiences.govt.nz](http://survivorexperiences.govt.nz)

## Telephone helplines, services and support

Below is a list of some of the telephone helplines or services that offer support, information and help. All services are free.

### Alcohol and Drug Helpline

[www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz](http://www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz)

0800 787 797 or online chat for people dealing with an alcohol or other drug problem; 10am to 10pm

### Anxiety phone line

[www.anxiety.org.nz](http://www.anxiety.org.nz)

0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)

### Are You OK

[www.areyouok.org.nz](http://www.areyouok.org.nz)

0800 456 450 for 24/7 specialist family violence support

### Depression Helpline

[www.depression.org.nz](http://www.depression.org.nz)

0800 111 757 or free text 4202 (to talk to a trained counsellor about how you are feeling or to ask any questions)

### **Kōnae**

[www.konae.org.nz](http://www.konae.org.nz)

A website hosted by the Citizens Advice Bureau as a guide to help people who have been in care access records created by organisations involved in decisions about guardianship or care

### **Lifeline**

[www.lifeline.org.nz](http://www.lifeline.org.nz)

0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)

### **Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Aotearoa New Zealand**

[www.malesurvivor.nz](http://www.malesurvivor.nz)

Support services for male survivors of sexual abuse. Refer to website for the support organisation nearest to you or call: 0800 044 334, Text: 4334

### **Need to talk?**

[www.1737.org.nz](http://www.1737.org.nz)

Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor

### **OUTline NZ**

[www.outline.org.nz](http://www.outline.org.nz)

0800 688 5463 (OUTLINE) provides confidential telephone support for sexuality or gender identity issues; 9am to 9pm weekdays, and 6pm to 8pm weekends)

### **Safe to talk**

[www.safetotalk.nz](http://www.safetotalk.nz)

(Available 24/7) 0800 044 334, free txt 4334, email [support@safetotalk.nz](mailto:support@safetotalk.nz)

Free and confidential information and support from trained counsellors for people affected by sexual harm in any way

### **Skylight**

[www.skylight.org.nz](http://www.skylight.org.nz)

0800 299 100 for trauma, loss and grief; 9am–5pm weekdays

### **SNAP Aotearoa New Zealand – Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests**

[Home - Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests](#)

Providing peer support for women and men wounded by religious and institutional authorities (priests, ministers, bishops, deacons, nuns, coaches, teachers, and others)

### **Suicide Crisis**

[www.lifeline.org.nz/services/suicide-crisis-helpline](http://www.lifeline.org.nz/services/suicide-crisis-helpline)

Helpline 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)

### **Telehealth services**

[www.whakarongorau.nz/telehealth-services](http://www.whakarongorau.nz/telehealth-services)

Government-funded free to the public, 24x7 national telehealth services, run across seven digital channels

### **Victim Support**

[www.victimsupport.org.nz](http://www.victimsupport.org.nz)

This free service provides emotional and practical support, information, financial assistance, referral to other support services and advocacy for the rights of victims

### **Youthline**

[www.youthline.co.nz](http://www.youthline.co.nz)

0800 376 633, free text 234 or email [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz) or online chat

# Introduction

This report provides an update on the Crown’s progress in responding to the Royal Commission into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions (the Royal Commission) for the period 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025. The updates have been provided by the agencies leading and supporting the Government’s response.

In June 2025, the Government released the Crown Response Plan, which describes how the Crown will respond to the Royal Commission. The first Crown Response Annual Report, published in September 2025, provided a summary overview of progress up to June 2025.

Further information about the Government’s response to the Royal Commission and about our response to the findings is available at: [Our work | Ā mātou mahi | Crown response to the Abuse in Care Inquiry](#).

The Crown Response Plan and Annual Report are available on the Crown Response to the Abuse in Care Inquiry website: [www.abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz](http://www.abuseinquiryresponse.govt.nz).

## How to read this report

This report follows the three objectives in the Crown Response Plan, with each objective including a summary of the work undertaken during this six-month period and the main areas of activity:

1. **Objective One** – Address the wrongs of the past
2. **Objective Two** – Make the current care system safe
3. **Objective Three** – Empower those in care, their families, whānau, and communities

## Developing a system-wide view of progress

The Crown Response Office is developing a clearer way to present a system-wide view of progress against the Royal Commission’s recommendations. This will make it easier to understand what has changed, what work is still underway, and the status of each recommendation.

A “system-wide view” means looking at overall progress across all agencies together, rather than assessing progress one agency at a time. This will help build a more accurate overall picture. The approach will:

- show how the status of recommendations has changed over time;
- provide a clear and consistent view of recommendations to show what has been done, what is still underway, and why; and

- strengthen governance and accountability through clear and consistent reporting.

To support accountability, we will establish an automated tracker to determine when a recommendation's response or status should be updated. The tracking system will show, up to date information, the current response and status for each recommendation. Work to build this system will begin early 2026.

# At a Glance

## What happened from July to December 2025

- The Responding to Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Act 2025 was enacted, making changes across several Acts to improve safety and wellbeing for people in care.
- The State Redress New Zealand website was launched and a Redress Implementation Plan was published, so survivors can find out about the government's work to improve how State redress works: [www.redress.govt.nz](http://www.redress.govt.nz).
- Advisory, advocacy and engagement mechanisms continued to be enhanced for children and young people in Oranga Tamariki care and their whānau.
- A Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) was appointed in September 2025 by the Lead Coordination Minister for the Government's Response to the Royal Commission's Report into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions (Lead Coordination Minister).
  - The MAG was established to provide the Lead Coordination and other Ministers with independent advice on the Crown's response to abuse and neglect in care.
  - The members have a range of lived experience of care, as well as people with professional and cultural expertise.
- Planning progressed to assess and improve mental health inpatient units.
- Work continued on the Care Records Framework, and the Kōnae records support service expanded, connecting over 1,000 survivor/care experienced people with their record requests from relevant agencies or organisations since it launched.
- Cabinet directed the Crown Response Office to progress a cross-agency work programme to build and strengthen care safety, including care safety requirements and expectations, and workforce initiatives.
- The Crown Response Office and care agencies worked on initiatives for the first drawdown of tagged operating contingency funding (funding set aside for future decisions) to build a diverse, capable, and safe care workforce.

## What is happening next

- Continue implementing the Redress Implementation Plan, including work to improve personal apologies, support for survivors, and common policies.
- Progress the Redress System for Abuse in Care Bill through Parliament.
- Continue the cross-agency work programme on making the care system safe, and workforce initiatives (Budget 2025).
- Planning continues to improve mental health inpatient units, overseen by the Mental Health Infrastructure Oversight Group.
- A second round of Survivor Support and Recognition funding will provide \$2 million for non-government organisations and local authorities to care for unmarked graves. Applications will be approved and funding allocated by early April 2026<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> There is an error on page 26 of the Crown Response Plan. Recommendation 19 of Whanaketia is an “Accept Intent” recommendation, and its status is Underway. Funding has been made available through the Survivor Support and Recognition Fund to local authorities to carry out this work, including caring for and/or memorialising unmarked graves.

## OBJECTIVE ONE:

# Address the wrongs of the past

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This objective includes the Royal Commission's recommendations to address the wrongs of the past. It includes its recommendations to provide redress for abuse and neglect in care and to acknowledge and memorialise victim and survivor experiences, including through public apologies.

## Progressing the Crown response

Between July and December 2025, agencies across the redress system continued work to make payments, processes and access to information more consistent and coordinated.

### Provide redress for abuse and neglect in care

#### *Purpose, functions & scope of a redress system*

During this period, agencies put building blocks in place to support a joined-up, survivor-focused redress system. This included:

- The launch of a State Redress New Zealand website in October 2025 to provide one place for survivors to find information about improvements to the State redress system.
- The continued development of an Integrated Operating Model (how agencies will work together) to support a coordinated redress system. This includes:
  - a State Redress Management System to manage and track the workflow of redress claims;
  - new shared approaches to how agencies work together, designed to make services more consistent and easier for survivors to navigate; and
  - engagement with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to identify what is needed for safe, appropriate information sharing of survivors' information.
- Ongoing work to improve how the system responds when a survivor's experience spans more than one agency by developing common policies and processes.
- A system-wide monitoring and reporting framework, with implementation planned from June 2026.
- Cabinet's decision in May 2025 to introduce a presumption against making financial redress payments to survivors with certain serious violent and/or sexual offences and who have been sentenced to five years for that offence. In October 2025 the Redress System for Abuse in Care Bill to formalise the presumption was introduced to Parliament. While the legislation is being considered, an interim process is in place for redress applications submitted from 9 May 2025. All survivors seeking financial redress from 9 May 2025 will be required to consent to a criminal record check by an independent redress assessment unit.

#### *Key numbers for July to 31 December 2025*

**New claims received:** 1,818. This included 1,060 claims from July to September 2025 and 758 claims from October to December 2025.

**Settlement offers made:** 896. This included 394 offers from July to September 2025 and 502 offers from October to December 2025.

**Eligible claims on hand:** 5,357, up from 4,943 at 30 September 2025.

**Care records requests received:** 1,070.

**Care records requests fulfilled:** 859.

**Care records requests in progress:** 334, down from 577 at 30 September 2025.

**Survivors who received top-up payments:** more than 1,500 new registrations, an increase from 2,004 to approximately 3,937

**Confirmed eligible applications:** increased from 825 to approximately 1,973

**Total top-up payments made:** increased from \$3 million to almost \$18 million.

More information on State Redress can be found at: [www.redress.govt.nz](http://www.redress.govt.nz).

### *Redress for torture at the Lake Alice Child and Adolescent Unit*

On 16 December 2024, Cabinet agreed to provide redress to survivors of torture at the Lake Alice Psychiatric Hospital Child and Adolescent Unit. The redress scheme closed for new registrations on 30 September 2025.

Redress included:

- a one-off payment;
- a new apology from the Prime Minister and Minister for Mental Health explicitly acknowledging torture; and
- access to support and rehabilitation services.

Two pathways were available:

- Expedited payment: a fixed \$150,000 for eligible survivors.
- Individualised assessment: payment amounts determined by the independent arbiter, Hon Paul Davison KC.

As at 31 December 2025:

- 105 survivors registered for the expedited pathway, with \$15.56 million paid to 104 survivors; and
- 37 survivors received arbiter determinations, with \$7.77 million paid to 34 survivors

Support services for eligible survivors remain available until June 2026.

## **Acknowledge victim and survivor experiences**

### *National Day of Reflection (12 November 2025)*

The National Day of Reflection on 12 November 2025 provided an opportunity for survivors, whānau, and communities to come together to remember and reflect.

A \$1 million National Day of Reflection Community Fund supported locally led events, with:

- grants of up to \$10,000 for local events;
- grants of up to \$25,000 for regional events; and
- additional funding for support accessibility.

A total of 62 events were held across the country, including several online events. Information about the 2025 National Day of Reflection Fund record of grants is available on the Community Matters website [here](#).

#### *Survivor Support and Recognition Fund (SSRF) Round Two*

Announced as part of the National Day of Reflection on 12 November 2025, SSRF Round Two opened on 13 November 2025.

The contestable fund supports:

- non-government organisations and community groups to deliver support and services to survivors of abuse in care; and
- local authorities to identify, memorialise, and care for unmarked graves.

A total of up to \$2.7 million is available:

- \$2 million for non-government organisations and community groups (up to \$50,000 per application); and
- \$700,000 for Local Authorities.

Applications close 27 February 2026 and decisions are expected in March, with funding distributed in early April 2026.

#### *Working with the Survivor Experiences Service (SES)*

The Crown Response Office continued working closely with the SES. This included:

- supporting the appointment of new Board members;
- updating the Board's Terms of Reference; and
- progressing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Crown Response Office, the Department of Internal Affairs, and the SES Board to ensure timely and meaningful survivor input into the Crown Response Plan.

## **Summary:**

Work during the period focused on developing more consistent and coordinated approaches to redress processes, payments, and access to information. Detailed quarterly progress reports for the period 1 July – 31 December 2025 are available on the State Redress New Zealand website at: [Publications and Information - Redress New Zealand](#).

## Objective One Status across the Crown Response

Status	Count	Percent (%) of Recommendations
Completed	24	28%
Underway / Ongoing	49	58%
Not Started	12	14%

## OBJECTIVE TWO:

# Make the current care system safe

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This objective includes the Royal Commission's recommendations to make the current care system safe. It includes recommendations for care system leadership, to monitor, report and provide oversight of the care system, and ensure:

- the care system has safeguards against abuse and neglect in care, and safety-focused policies, processes and places
- the care system has a workforce that is appropriately regulated and has the right capacity and capability
- that contemporary abuse and neglect in care are responded to appropriately.

## Progressing the Crown response

Between July and December 2025, government agencies continued work to improve how the care system is organised and run. This work focused on:

- **Care system leadership:** making it clear who is responsible for what across the system and strengthening cross-sector leadership and accountability.
- **Monitoring, reporting and providing oversight:** Improving how services are checked, monitored and held to account.
- **Ensuring safety-focused care environments (policies, processes and places):** improving the safety of the places where children, young people and vulnerable adults receive care, including improving policies and processes.
- **Building a safe and capable workforce: making sure people who** work in care have the right training, skills and support.
- **Identifying and responding effectively to abuse and neglect when it occurs.**

## Care system leadership

### *Functional review of the care system*

A review of the 18 functions that the Royal Commission said should be brought together in a Care Safe Agency was completed. The review examined where each of the 18 functions were located to identify any gaps or weaknesses in the functions.

Cabinet agreed to an approach for a dedicated care system leadership function to:

- provide care system leadership
- drive and implement changes to make care services safe, including the allocation of resources (such as the Budget 2025 contingency funding) to effect change
- oversee and drive the work programme to analyse and respond to the Royal Commission's 'care safety' related recommendations.

Agencies also continued work on system-wide safety settings and looked at potential changes to Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and WorkSafe New Zealand settings to improve protections in care environments.

### *Safeguarding in the care system*

The Crown Response Office is leading cross-agency work to build and strengthen care safety. This work builds on the functional review and includes developing care safety requirements and expectations across all care providers and including a clearer definition of the Crown's duty of care.

Agencies are working on how the system identifies and responds to harm. This includes investigations by Oranga Tamariki's Child Protection Investigation Unit (CPIU) and additional audits through the Disability Support Services Enhanced Audit Programme. Further

safeguarding work is also underway across the system, with next phases guided by decisions arising from the functional review. This work will support clearer expectations and more consistent safety practice across care providers and settings.

## Monitor, report and provide oversight

### *Functions and powers of independent monitoring and oversight entities*

The Ministry of Health progressed work to bolster oversight of compulsory mental health and addiction care. They did this by increasing the capacity, expertise, and availability of independent statutory roles including District Inspectors and Review Tribunals. Key progress included:

- appointing additional District Inspectors to improve monitoring and national coverage, bringing the total to 41 nationally; and
- building clinical advisory expertise within the Office of the Director of Mental Health.

Legislative work also continued. The Mental Health Bill is awaiting its second reading. It supports a more rights-based and recovery-focused approach to compulsory care and responds to Royal Commission recommendations.

The Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Legislation Amendment Act 2025 came into effect on 1 August 2025. The Act strengthens oversight of the Oranga Tamariki system, by making the Independent Children’s Monitor more independent (by moving it from a departmental agency to an independent Crown entity with a small multi-member board). The Act also returned to a single Children’s Commissioner, providing a more visible advocate for children and young people.

### *Care placements close to family, whānau and community*

Oranga Tamariki established the *Integrated Safe Care Response* programme. This programme supports the Budget 2025 initiative “Recognising and Responding to Abuse of children and young people in Care” and aims to ensure all children and young people in care are safe, supported, and receive care tailored to their needs. Pilots are expected to start in early 2026.

As part of the Budget 2025 initiative, \$6.0 million over four years, with ongoing funding of \$1.5 million per annum was allocated to Disability Support Services to strengthen processes for recognising and responding to abuse in care. This investment includes the Enhanced Audit Programme, which provides additional audits of the quality of services delivered by contracted care providers. A strategic audit partner has been identified, and the programme will be developed and delivered from 1 January 2026. The initial focus for the enhanced audit programme will be on community residential group homes.

## Ensure safety-focused policies, processes, and places

### *Care standards and duties that are monitored and enforced*

Work continued across Oranga Tamariki sites to strengthen compliance with the National Care Standards, which set out what children and young people in care should experience. The National Care Standards Action Plan remains active, with regular check-ins and reporting across sites. Most focus areas have improved since the plan began, but more work is needed to fully meet the Standards. More information about the Standards can be found at: [National Care Standards | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#).

### *Care facilities and design features*

Agencies continued work to ensure care environments are safe, modern, and fit-for-purpose.

- Budget 2025 provided \$50 million to assess and improve mental health inpatient units to ensure care settings are safe and responsive to people's needs. Planning for this work progressed with Health New Zealand developing an assessment framework. This programme is being overseen by the Mental Health Infrastructure Oversight Group.
- Oranga Tamariki advanced infrastructure remediation across residences, including work to meet Building Act, Healthy Homes, and seismic standards.

This work is intended to ensure safe environments for children and young people.

## Building a safe and capable workforce

### *Workforce strategy*

Oranga Tamariki continued developing its *Social Work and Professional Workforce Strategy*. This included analysing findings from the mid-2025 *Time Used Study* to better understand social worker capacity and what affects frontline practice.

Oranga Tamariki's Child Protection Investigation Unit continued its independent programme of investigations to support early identification of practice issues and wider risks in the care system.

### *Care workforce*

Budget 2025 set aside \$70.88 million over four years to build a safe and capable care workforce. Three workstreams were established:

- Workstream one: Workforce capability – ensuring the care workforce has the right skills and capabilities to prevent, identify, report and respond to abuse and neglect in care settings. This workstream is led by the Ministry of Social Development.
- Workstream two: Workforce suitability – ensuring the care workforce is regularly and effectively checking the safety and suitability of people working in care settings. This workstream is led by the Ministry of Health.
- Workstream three: Reporting and visibility – ensuring incidents of alleged/suspected abuse and neglect occurring within care settings are reported and responded to appropriately.

This workstream is led by Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education.

#### *Employment practices, induction and training*

Oranga Tamariki held a series of wānanga with more than 600 leaders to embed the Te Toka Tūmoana<sup>2</sup> and Va'aifetū<sup>3</sup> practice models. This work is now part of business as usual.

Oranga Tamariki also progressed its *Professionalisation of the Residential Workforce* project. This includes preparation for new training pathways, qualifications, and workforce supports to improve consistency, practice quality, and safety in residential care settings.

New Zealand Police continue to progress advanced training aligned with Royal Commission recommendations. This includes developing training to support better engagement with neurodivergent people and strengthening trauma-informed practice and human-rights-based approaches. New Zealand Police continue to undertake a full review of the Police Manual.

#### *Frontline technology systems upgrade*

Oranga Tamariki continued work on the Frontline Technology System Update, including procurement of its new technology platform. Oranga Tamariki also invested in improvements to current tools, including digitising the *All About Me* plan, which outlines the individual needs of each child and young person in care. This is expected to be completed by mid-2026.

## **Identify and respond effectively to abuse and neglect when it occurs**

#### *Mandatory reporting*

The Royal Commission recommended clearer legal rules for mandatory reporting, where needed, so abuse and neglect are reported consistently across State and faith-based care settings. Mandatory reporting means certain organisations and workers must report abuse or neglect when they become aware of it.

As part of Workstream three of the Building a Safe and Capable Workforce project, described above, agencies are examining workforce reporting pathways and response and information sharing processes across care settings. This work will consider options for mandatory reporting of abuse in care settings and ways to ensure reports are handled consistently and transparently across care settings.

Alongside this, work is also underway on mandatory child protection training (via a phased implementation) in response to the 2022 Dame Karen Poutasi review. Cabinet agreed to all the recommendations in Dame Karen Poutasi's report in October 2025. The Crown Response Office, Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki, Department of Corrections, and Ministry of Education are working together to align this with the Crown Response.

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<sup>2</sup> Te Toka Tūmoana is Oranga Tamariki's practice model for working with Tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori across all areas of practice, including youth justice, care and protection, adoptions and caregiver recruitment and support.

<sup>3</sup> Va'aifetū is Oranga Tamariki's practice model for working with Pacific children, young people and families across all areas of practice – youth justice, care and protection, adoptions and caregiver recruitment and support. It is for Pacific and non-Pacific staff.

A joint agency response to the Independent Children’s Monitor’s report, *Towards a stronger safety net to prevent abuse of children*, was published at: <https://aroturuki.govt.nz/reports/safety-net>.

### *Prosecution Guidelines*

Prosecution Guidelines explain how prosecutors should make decisions, so people are treated fairly and the law is applied the same way across the country. Before the revised Solicitor-General’s Guidelines came into effect on 1 January 2026, New Zealand Police trained prosecutors and frontline staff on the updated Guidelines. This training includes messaging on taking the least restrictive action appropriate to the circumstances and the people involved i.e. “Applying the New Zealand Police Adult Resolution Decision-Making Framework to make fair, consistent, least restrictive resolution decisions.”

### *Criminal and Civil Justice Legislation*

Legislative changes to strengthen protections for vulnerable adults were progressed and finalised during the reporting period. In line with the Royal Commission recommendation, the Crimes Act 1961 was amended to include disability in the definition of a vulnerable adult. This change was made through the *Responding to Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Bill* and received Royal Assent on 24 October 2025.

The Ministry of Justice is maintaining a specialist list of legal aid lawyers with experience in abuse in care cases, to support survivors to access appropriate legal representation. This information is available [here](#).

## Summary:

Across this period, agencies focused on:

- strengthening how the care system is governed and checked;
- building a safer and more capable care workforce;
- improving care environments (places where care happens); and
- progressing major legislative and operational work to strengthen safety in the system.

### Objective Two Status across the Crown Response

Status	Count	Percent (%) of Recommendations
Completed	9	12%
Underway / Ongoing	30	48%
Not Started	36	40%

## OBJECTIVE THREE:

# Empower those in care, their families, whānau and communities

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This objective includes the Royal Commission's recommendations to support and empower those in care, their families, whānau and communities. It includes recommendations to improve recordkeeping and access to records, prevent entry into State care, and to listen to the voices of those in care, their families, whānau and communities.

## Progressing the Crown response

Between July and December 2025, agencies continued work to strengthen how people in care, their whānau, and communities are listened to and supported. This included improving how people with lived experience contribute to decisions, how people access their care records, strengthening disability-related work and developing early-intervention approaches that prevent children entering State care.

### Improve recordkeeping and access to records

#### *Recordkeeping and access to records*

In October 2025, Parliament passed changes to strengthen how care records are managed. The *Responding to Abuse in Care Legislation Amendment Act 2025* amended the *Public Records Act 2005* to:

- allow more frequent reaudits of care records;
- require agencies to prepare action plans to address issues; and
- allow Archives New Zealand to carry out its own independent audits.

These changes help ensure care records are stored safely, managed properly and can be accessed when required.

Agencies continued work to put the Care Records Framework into practice. This framework sets expectations for how care records should be created, stored, shared and protected.

Archives New Zealand:

- recruited a new team to support monitoring and help agencies meet the new standards;
- began development of new guidance and standards;
- worked with the Care Records Working Group to draft and consult on detailed guidance for agencies;
- created new audit and survey questions to measure improvements in recordkeeping; and
- set up a helpdesk for care records enquiries.

Work also continued on how long care records should be kept and when they can be safely disposed of. Consultation feedback on disposal settings is still being analysed. The Department of Internal Affairs has completed around 79% of its review of disposal rules.

For survivors and care experienced people, information and support about how to access records from relevant agencies or organisations, continued to improve through:

- the Kōnae website; and
- the SES Records Support Service, which helps people locate and request care records.

More than 1,000 requests have been made by care experienced people to record holding agencies through the Kōnae website since the service launched in May 2025.

Individual agencies also improved their own recordkeeping systems:

- the Ministry of Social Development and other care agencies supported improvements among contracted care providers and aligned their guidance with the new framework; and
- work continued to improve redaction guidance (how sensitive personal information is removed before records are released).

## Prevent entry into State care

### *Social, educational and prevention campaigns and programmes*

The Social Investment Agency and the Crown Response Office worked with agencies to design how the Budget 2025 prevention funding should be used and to confirm which groups are eligible.

Care Ministers approved “mothers and primary caregivers who experience harm from substance use in the year before and/or after a child’s birth, and their children in the early years” as a priority target cohort for the funding, to be allocated through the Social Investment Fund.

26% of mothers who experienced harm from substance abuse or addiction in the year before giving birth in 2007 later entered State care as adults. For mothers who also presented with mental illness, this rose to 51%. Their children also had very high rates of entry into State care. This group is currently underserved, with few specific services available.

This priority cohort will be included in Round Two of the Social Investment Fund’s New Investment Pathway. Registrations of Interest will take place in early 2026, with funding decisions to be made and publicly announced in mid-2026.

The Social Investment Agency will work with successful providers to put strong evaluation plans in place, so the wider sector can learn from what works.

### *Gloriavale*

Agencies continued to work together to monitor safety and strengthen oversight of the Gloriavale community. This included:

- WorkSafe New Zealand responding to a new health and safety concern and completed a workplace assessment;
- Oranga Tamariki and community agencies maintaining regular on-site engagement to support safeguarding and respond quickly to concerns;
- Police continuing to provide investigative oversight through senior district leadership;
- Health New Zealand continuing to provide health services and support to the community;
- Ministry of Education issuing a notice to cancel the school’s registration due to serious concerns about student safety. The matter is now before the High Court; and

- agencies continuing work with families on education planning and maintaining an active presence at the school.

## Listen to the voices of those in care

### *Those in care, family and whānau to participate in care decisions*

Across the system, agencies continued to include survivor and whānau voice in decision-making and to improve access to care records.

Oranga Tamariki’s external advisory groups help ensure a range of community perspectives are reflected in its work. Engagement with lived experience communities has expanded, with the Youth Advisory Group and Rainbow Advisory Group now midway through their two-year terms, and new members appointed to the Disability and Pacific Advisory Groups for the 2026–2028 term.

Work continued to better capture and use lived experience:

- findings from Te Tohu o te Ora and Ka Rere Ngā Wheako were published as part of the Oranga Tamariki annual report, providing insights into the experiences of children, young people and whānau; and
- a new Voices Insights Library was established within Oranga Tamariki to help staff use lived experience information in policy and practice;
- Oranga Tamariki continued Phase One of its Disability Programme, which aims to improve outcomes for disabled children, young people, parents and caregivers. Work included:
  - piloting targeted caregiver support;
  - developing disability capability training;
  - creating new disability indicators and support flags;
  - improving transition support; and
  - strengthening understanding of disability-related obligations.

The Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha, continued to encourage an accessible redress system for disabled people who are survivors. This includes providing alternate formats of information (audio, Braille, Easy Read, large print, and New Zealand Sign Language) and a website offering practical tools and examples to support people to make their own decisions, launched in July 2025, and promoted across State care and redress agencies.

### *Complaints processes and information sharing*

As part of the Budget 2025 initiative to strengthen how abuse in care is recognised and responded to, \$2.8 million has been allocated over four years for Disability Support Services to improve its quality management system to better manage critical incidents and complaints. The initial focus is improving the collection, analysis, and reporting of critical incidents and complaints data. Business needs have been identified to support system design and, as part of a

wider Ministry of Social Development IT programme, the system will include both provider-facing improvements, and back-end data management.

Oranga Tamariki prepared a terms of reference to begin a review of its feedback and complaints model.

## Summary:

Across this period, agencies worked to:

- strengthen participation and the voices of those with lived experience;
- improve access to care records;
- advance disability-related initiatives; and
- progress prevention focused work to reduce the need for State care.

### Objective Three Status across the Crown Response

Status	Count	Percent (%) of Recommendations
Completed	3	11%
Underway / Ongoing	9	57%
Not Started	16	32%