

Child Protection Protocol: Joint Operating Procedures

September 2026

Purpose

The role of the New Zealand Police (Police) is to investigate criminal offending, hold offenders to account, and prevent future offending.

The role of Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) is to support any tamaiti (child) or rangatahi (young person) in New Zealand whose safety and wellbeing is at significant risk of harm now, or in the future. Oranga Tamariki also works with rangatahi who may have offended or are likely to offend.

Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) manages the New Zealand health system, including hospital and specialist services, as well as primary and community care, with functions delivered at local, regional, and national levels.

The Child Protection Protocol: Joint Operating Procedures (CPP) are implemented when Police or Oranga Tamariki consider a report of concern or complaint that may constitute a criminal offence, that meets the definitions as set out in this document, and when there is a role for Police and Oranga Tamariki.

The CPP exists to ensure timely, coordinated, and effective action by Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ so that:

- tamariki and rangatahi are kept safe
- offenders are held to account wherever possible
- child victimisation is reduced
- health impacts are assessed and addressed.

Police, Oranga Tamariki and Health NZ each have their own processes for assessment and investigation, including medical interventions, which are not encompassed within this document. The CPP outlines how we will work in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau or family, and sets out the process for working collaboratively at a local level. As a formally agreed national level document, it will be followed by all Oranga Tamariki and Police staff, and by Health NZ staff

where they are consulted by Police or Oranga Tamariki under the terms of the CPP.

This agreement replaces the 2021 Child Protection Protocol.

Principles

The CPP is guided by the following principles:

- the wellbeing and best interests of tamariki and rangatahi are the first and paramount consideration¹
- we work together to keep tamariki and rangatahi safe and free from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- we work in partnership to prevent further harm, exploitation, and victimisation to tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau or family
- we promote the wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi by working together with their whānau or family, hapū, iwi or family group, other agencies, and the community.

Responsibilities under the CPP

To achieve an effective working relationship, we need to:

- understand each other's roles in care and protection including the CPP process
- have dedicated CPP contacts
- establish effective ways to communicate with each other.

To support local relationships and communication, Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ will ensure the specific CPP roles of each agency are reflected in organisational policies, practice or clinical guidance, and procedures where relevant. Each party will be responsible for the allocation of resources to give effect to the CPP.

Oranga Tamariki are responsible for:

¹ Section 4A(1) Oranga Tamariki Act 1989.

- addressing the immediate safety of tamariki and rangatahi, alongside Police and Health NZ
- completing a holistic, thorough social work assessment of both short and long-term risks, needs and strengths of tamariki and rangatahi, and their whānau or family, alongside a Police investigation
- taking action to ensure the ongoing safety and oranga (wellbeing) of tamariki and rangatahi
- facilitating and assisting child victims and their whānau or family to engage with support services, together with Police.
- quality assurance processes to ensure that the protocol is being followed, and that tamariki and rangatahi are receiving a quality service
- participating in and approving any changes made in reviews of the CPP
- supporting the annual national CPP training by advising on and endorsing training content and making staff available to participate where relevant.

Police are responsible for:

- addressing the immediate safety of tamariki and rangatahi, alongside Oranga Tamariki and Health NZ
- recording and investigating alleged offences
- holding offenders to account wherever possible
- facilitating and assisting child victims and their whānau or family to engage with support services, together with Oranga Tamariki
- quality assurance processes to ensure that the protocol is being followed, and that tamariki and rangatahi are receiving a quality service
- participating in and approving any changes made in reviews of the CPP
- supporting the annual national CPP training by advising on and endorsing training content and making staff available to participate where relevant.

Health NZ is responsible at a national level for:

- participating in and approving any changes made in reviews of the CPP
- supporting the annual national CPP training by advising on and endorsing training content and making staff available to participate where relevant.

Local Health NZ districts remain responsible for:

- addressing the immediate safety of tamariki and rangatahi receiving health care, alongside Oranga Tamariki and the Police
- continuing to provide paediatric assessments according to agreed clinical guidelines and processes, within the limitations of service resourcing.

Local Health NZ districts may:

- nominate a local Child Protection Protocol lead
- attend local CPP consults (meetings to decide if a case is to be progressed under the CPP or CPP meetings).

For clarity, local Health NZ districts are *not* required to nominate a local CPP lead or attend CPP consults or meetings but *may* attend these according to local workloads and availability.

Staffing

Each Oranga Tamariki site will have an identified Oranga Tamariki CPP contact who is available to consult with Police on all CPP cases.

Police District Child Protection Teams/Portfolio holders will have an identified Police CPP contact allocated to each Oranga Tamariki site in their area.

Health NZ will advise the details of the local CPP lead where one has been identified. In the absence of an identified lead, the local or on call Paediatrician should be contacted.

Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ will exchange the contact details for their CPP contacts (where identified). An alternative CPP contact must be identified when these staff members are on leave or unavailable.

If a case is referred under the CPP outside of normal business hours, the CPP contacts from Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ will ensure that arrangements are in place for urgent consultation as required.

Communication

Police and Oranga Tamariki must consult on all cases referred under the CPP.

In addition, Oranga Tamariki and Police will hold a dedicated CPP meeting. This will be held at least monthly, or more frequently as required to discuss all current CPP cases.

Health NZ are not required to participate in CPP consults or to attend CPP meetings. However, this agreement enables participation. This may be for the purpose of discussing a specific matter, or Health NZ can be a regular participant if this is supported locally by all three agencies. The parties recognise that CPP representatives will become privy to personal information about CPP cases. Parties agree to keep this information confidential and only disclose or use it for the purposes of this Protocol and where authorised by the Privacy Act 2020, the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, the Official Information Act 1982 or other legislation.

To ensure that meetings are productive and focused, the following standing agenda items for the CPP meetings have been agreed:

- update the CPP case list with any new referrals
- discuss updates for each case
- advise on any outcomes or case closures
- discuss any operational issues.

One set of agreed formal minutes, using the meeting minutes template (Appendix 1), will be taken for each meeting held and circulated to Oranga Tamariki and the Police. Health NZ will also receive a copy of minutes when Health NZ staff have participated.

Discussions regarding individual tamaiti or rangatahi at the CPP monthly hui need to be recorded in the respective Police and Oranga Tamariki files.

When to use the CPP

The CPP is the joint process that is followed when Oranga Tamariki and Police are responding to complaints or reports of concern that allege actions or behaviour that may constitute a criminal offence, and where there is a role for both parties. These actions or types of behaviour fall into three categories:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- neglect.

Other prosecutable offences of ill treatment or harm, that would fall under all or a combination of physical, sexual and neglect, should also be discussed under the provisions of CPP. These include:

- Child Trafficking
- Child Forced Labour (including Domestic Servitude)
- Online Sexual Exploitation of Children, including Exploitation and Harmful Digital Content (for the purposes of this protocol there needs to be an identified New Zealand based victim).
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Child Forced Marriage
- Fraudulent and Illicit Adoption
- Exploitation of children in the context of family violence
- Deliberate or prolonged concealment of a child.

The definitions for these types of abuse within the CPP are listed below. Any case may be referred under the CPP at any time if new information means the case may meet the CPP definitions. It is important to remember that these definitions are specific to the CPP context and are designed to assist staff to decide if the CPP is the correct process to follow.

When a wider multi agency response is required

From time to time responding to a child's safety and wellbeing under the protocol may require involvement from agencies other than Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ. This could include matters relating to a

child's education, the provision of adult services or areas that require particular specialist assistance or advice.

Where a need for multi-agency involvement is identified, Oranga Tamariki and Police will work together to:

- identify and consult with other relevant agencies
- obtain and share relevant information
- convene a multi-agency hui if required
- incorporate agreed multi agency actions into CPP plans
- hold review meetings and maintain regular engagement with agencies as required
- review multi-agency actions as part of regular CPP meetings.

CPP definitions

Physical abuse

Physical abuse within the CPP is when the actions of an offender result in, or could potentially result in, physical harm or injury being inflicted on te tamaiti or rangatahi. This is also known as a non-accidental injury.

There are three areas to consider in determining whether physical abuse meets the definition for referral as a CPP case:

1. the action (of the abuse)
2. the injury inflicted (outcome or result)
3. the circumstances (factors in the case).

Any single action and/or injury listed below will meet the threshold for referral as a CPP case.

1. Any of these actions (methodology, how it was done)

- blow or kick to the head
- shaking of an infant
- strangulation
- use of an object as a weapon (e.g. broom, belt, bat, etc.)
- attempted drowning.

OR

2. Any of these injuries (outcome or result of suspected abuse)

- bone fracture
- burn
- concussion or loss of consciousness
- any injury that requires medical attention
- any bruising or abrasion when the:
 - tamaiti is very young, e.g. infant not yet mobile; and/or
 - position and patterning make it unlikely to be caused by play or another tamaiti or accident.

In circumstances where the initial action or injury does not meet the definition as outlined above, consideration of the following circumstances or factors may warrant referral as a CPP case.

3. Any other action (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping etc) and/or injury (bruising, cuts, welts etc) in combination with one or more of the following circumstances or factors:

The vulnerability of te tamaiti or rangatahi, especially:

- preverbal tamariki
- tamariki under 5 years
- have special consideration of non-verbal tamariki 3 years and under who may present with injuries, bruising or are exposed to harm
- age and vulnerability of pre-pubescent tamariki
- disability in any age
- tamariki or rangatahi being used as a form of power and control.

More than one offender, such as:

- both parents/carers
- multiple family members
- a family member or someone else known to te tamaiti or rangatahi

History of abuse, with consideration of:

- other incidents of concern, escalation of abuse
- multiple, previous, similar events, including consideration of previous family harm events.
- previous non-accidental death of a sibling, tamaiti or rangatahi in household
- abuse undertaken in public or in front of non-relatives.

A high degree of violence, with consideration of:

- a complete loss of control by the alleged offender, such as a frenzied attack
- enhanced maliciousness or cruelty in the abuse
- the degree in relation to age and vulnerability of victim
- forcible removal of tamariki or rangatahi from a parent or carer.
- perpetrators of violence placing tamariki or rangatahi at risk of harm through their actions.

The offender's history and background, considering:

- severe and frequent family violence
- serious or extended criminal history.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse within the CPP is an act involving circumstances of indecency with, or sexual violation of te tamaiti or rangatahi, or using te tamaiti or rangatahi in the making of objectionable material.

For example:

- physical contact such as rape, penetration, or oral sex
- non-penetrative acts such as kissing, rubbing, touching or masturbation
- forcing or enticing te tamaiti or rangatahi to take part in sexual activities whether or not te tamaiti or rangatahi is aware of what is happening

- encouraging te tamaiti or rangatahi to look at sexually offensive materials or behave in a sexually inappropriate way
- grooming te tamaiti or rangatahi in preparation for sexual abuse (this may be done via the internet).

Underage sexual conduct:

The law states that engaging in sexual conduct with tamariki or rangatahi under 16 years is a criminal offence. These cases will meet the threshold for referral as a CPP case (see further investigation considerations).

Neglect

Neglect within the CPP is when a person intentionally ill-treats or neglects te tamaiti or rangatahi or causes or permits te tamaiti or rangatahi to be ill-treated in a manner likely to cause te tamaiti or rangatahi actual bodily harm, injury to health or any mental disorder or disability. The ill-treatment or neglect must be serious, and avoidable.

For example:

- not providing adequate food, shelter, or clothing
- not protecting te tamaiti or rangatahi from physical harm or danger
- not accessing appropriate medical treatment or care ²
- allowing te tamaiti or rangatahi to be exposed to the illicit drug manufacturing process
- allowing te tamaiti or rangatahi to be exposed to an environment where volatile, toxic, or flammable chemicals have been used or stored. ³

Other prosecutable offences of ill treatment or harm

Child Trafficking

Is the arranging, organising, or procuring of the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons for exploitation e.g. forced

² These cases need to be managed in accordance with Schedule 3 to the Memorandum of Understanding between Oranga Tamariki, the Police, and District Health Boards 2021.

³ Refer to prosecution policy in the joint standard operating procedures for children and young persons in clandestine laboratories.

labour, child marriage, abduction, sexual exploitation, slavery (refer s 98D, Crimes Act 1961).

Child Forced Labour (including Domestic Servitude)

Refers to the engagement of any tamaiti or rangatahi in labour through threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power (refer s 98AA, Crimes Act 1961).

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (commonly referred to as FGM) is the term used for a practice that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitals or injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (refer s 204A & s 204B, Crimes Act 1961).

Child Forced Marriage

Child forced marriage is any formal or informal union between te tamaiti or rangatahi under the age of 16 with an adult or another tamaiti or rangatahi, or under the age of 18 without the express agreement of a Family Court Judge. It is considered a form of forced marriage because of the impossibility for te tamaiti or rangatahi to give full, free, and informed consent (refer s 207A, Crimes Act 1961).

Fraudulent/Illicit Adoption

This refers to a person(s) attempt to either illegally adopt a child or illegally give up te tamaiti for adoption. This may be an adoption involving improper inducement, false documentation or forced consent where children are misrepresented as orphans, or corruption or coercion is used to facilitate adoption (refer s 27A, Adoption Act 1955).

Online Offending Against Children including Exploitation and Harmful Digital Content

Examples include grooming, online harassment, live streaming, creation of illicit imagery (including AI generated), coercion and blackmail of tamariki or rangatahi for exploitative purposes. Further, the sharing or circulation of graphic violent material involving tamariki or rangatahi, and the creation, advertising, sale, or distribution of self-harm related videos or other exploitative harmful digital content involving tamariki or rangatahi. For the purposes of this protocol there needs to be an identified New Zealand based victim.

Exploitation of children in the context of family violence

Tamariki and rangatahi exploited by adult perpetrators of family violence as a form of exercising power and control over victims, or to shield the perpetrator from accountability.

Deliberate or prolonged concealment of a child

Deliberate or prolonged concealment of the whereabouts of a tamaiti or rangatahi by a parent, carer or other adult may constitute significant emotional, psychological, and developmental harm by disrupting relationships, safety, education, health care, and access to support for the tamaiti or rangatahi. The risk of harm, including physical harm to te tamaiti or rangatahi is likely to be increased where concealment occurs in the context of other factors such as coercive control, severe alienation, extremist or anti-authority beliefs, and intense social isolation of te tamaiti or rangatahi.

Cases that do not require or no longer require a CPP response

Not all care and protection concerns require a response under the CPP. In cases where the CPP criteria is not met, this must be clearly case noted. This document sets out the criteria for those that do. If the concerns do not meet the CPP definitions, this does not mean that the role of Police and Oranga Tamariki is at an end. Oranga Tamariki will consider whether an assessment should be undertaken to understand and address any safety or wellbeing concerns.

Police will ensure that any family violence cases that do not fall within the CPP are referred to the District/Area Family Violence Coordinator or equivalent for follow up.

There will be some cases that are initially identified as CPP, but new information means the CPP definitions are no longer met, or there is no longer a role for Police or Oranga Tamariki. This does not mean that the role of Police, Health NZ or Oranga Tamariki is at an end, but that the CPP is no longer the correct process for investigation.

The CPP process

This section sets out the process to be followed by Oranga Tamariki, Police and, where applicable, Health NZ in CPP cases.

Each case will consist of the following steps:

- 1. Referral**
- 2. CPP consultation**
- 3. Agreement on the Initial Joint Investigation Plan**
- 4. Create case record**
- 5. Investigation**
- 6. CPP meeting**
- 7. Closure**

Step 1 – Referral

Oranga Tamariki

When Oranga Tamariki receives a report of concern which they believe meets, or may meet the CPP definitions, they will send the national CPP referral form to Police.

Referrals can be made in the following ways:

- a phone call between local staff, followed by an electronic CPP referral form to the Police Crime Reporting Line (CRL) at roc@police.govt.nz
- an electronic CPP referral form to CRL at roc@police.govt.nz

Police

When Police receive a complaint which they believe meets, or may meet the CPP definitions, they will send the national CPP referral form to Oranga Tamariki.

Referrals can be made in the following ways:

- A phone call between local staff followed by an electronic or digital referral form, found on the Oranga Tamariki Website: [Reports of Concern](#)
- an electronic CPP referral form to the Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre at contact@ot.govt.nz

Health New Zealand

If a Health NZ employee is concerned about the safety or wellbeing of tamariki or rangatahi, they will:

- refer and be guided by their Child Protection Policy and procedures
- make a report of concern to Oranga Tamariki if they believe this is warranted
- call Police on 111 if they have serious and imminent concerns about the safety of tamariki or rangatahi
- Concerns raised through a report of concern, or reported to Police through calling 111, will be directed into the CPP process when they meet the CPP criteria.

Note referrals **to** Health NZ from Police or Oranga Tamariki will continue to follow local processes, usually a phone call to the local paediatrician on call, who will determine whether te tamaiti or rangatahi needs assessment, by whom, where and when. Emails are not appropriate for acute referrals.

Step 2 – CPP Consultation

The local level CPP contacts from Police and Oranga Tamariki will consult about the CPP referral. Health NZ may be invited to contribute to this consultation. This consultation may occur at the same time as the case was referred. This consultation should be clearly evidenced and recorded on the nationally agreed template in the respective case management systems.

The consultation should:

- share relevant information or intelligence about the case including the background of any previous involvement or known concerns for the whānau or family and details of notifiers
- consider whether any other agency, including Health NZ, has information that could assist with determining whether this is a CPP case (see further investigation considerations)
- discuss any action required to secure the immediate safety of te tamaiti or rangatahi
- consider any urgent health or clinical responses, or a role for Health NZ

- confirm if the referral meets the CPP definitions
- confirm if there is a role for Oranga Tamariki, Police, or Health NZ.
- **If the case is confirmed as a CPP case:**

Proceed to Step 3.

If the case is not confirmed as a CPP case:

We may determine that the case does not meet the CPP criteria when:

- the alleged offending does not fall within the definitions, or
- there is no role identified for Oranga Tamariki or Police.

In these cases, the following steps apply:

- Oranga Tamariki and Police will record the case in their respective case management systems and clearly record the outcome of the consultation.
- Police may continue an investigation role outside of the CPP process to determine if there is any ongoing role in terms of prosecution or prevention.
- Oranga Tamariki may complete an assessment of care and protection concerns (refer to further considerations section) to determine if there is any ongoing role in terms of care and protection.
- Health NZ, where involved, will consider whether any follow-up, referral, or support through health services is appropriate and confirm this as part of the agreed next steps.
- Oranga Tamariki and Police will confirm if any referrals for support are required and agree who will complete this. Refer to section on "Support for child victims and their whānau or family".

Step 3 – Agreement on the Initial Joint Investigation Plan

The CPP contacts from Oranga Tamariki and Police will discuss the case and agree on an Initial Joint Investigation Plan (IJIP). The purpose of the IJIP is to ensure we work together to secure the immediate safety of te tamaiti or rangatahi and to ensure any evidence is collected.

Oranga Tamariki will record the IJIP on the nationally agreed template and forward a copy to Police as soon as practicable. This should be done within 24 hours. In some circumstances it may be agreed between the consulting Oranga Tamariki and Police CPP contacts that Police record the IJIP and forward to Oranga Tamariki.

The IJIP must consider the following:

- the immediate safety of te tamaiti or rangatahi involved and any other tamariki or rangatahi who may be identified as being at risk
- referral to a medical practitioner and authority to do so
- the management of the initial interview with te tamaiti or rangatahi if te tamaiti or rangatahi has disclosed child abuse to an independent and responsible adult, te tamaiti or rangatahi should then be referred directly for a specialist child interview
- whether a joint visit is required due to the risk of further offending, loss of evidence, the alleged offender is likely to be hostile, any concerns for staff safety etc.
- If photographs of possible injuries to tamaiti or rangatahi are received or taken, discussion with a health professional concerning referral for further assessment must occur
- any further actions agreed for Police and/or Oranga Tamariki including consideration as to what other information other agencies, including Health NZ, might hold
- when and how much information will be shared with others, including parents, and/or carers, and who will be responsible for doing so
- if the decision is that this matter does not need to be progressed under the CPP, who needs to be informed and who will be responsible for doing so.

Once a safety plan is developed by Oranga Tamariki, this must be shared with Police.

The tasks outlined in the IJIP will be reviewed via the CPP meeting to ensure they have been completed as agreed. It is expected that the CPP contacts will communicate any significant updates which occur in the intervening period.

Step 4 – Create the CPP case record

CPP case record

Oranga Tamariki will create a CPP record in their electronic case management system.

Police will confirm that the case is recorded as a CPP case in their electronic case management system (NIA).

Health NZ will record relevant information in the clinical record of the person it pertains to.

Step 5 – Investigation

The CPP contacts from Oranga Tamariki and Police are responsible for ensuring that any agreed actions specified in the IJIP are completed.

The CPP case investigation will then follow normal procedure as per each party's child protection investigation plans.

Police will undertake an investigation of any potential criminal activity. Oranga Tamariki will complete an oranga framed assessment of the risks, needs and strengths of tamaiti or rangatahi and their whānau or family alongside the investigation.

Oranga Tamariki are responsible for ensuring the overall safety and wellbeing of te tamaiti or rangatahi has been assessed.

When deemed appropriate by Health NZ, Health NZ will provide a clinical assessment upon receipt of a referral or request from Police or Oranga Tamariki. This would be according to agreed clinical guidelines and processes, within the limitations of service resourcing.

If Health NZ determine a clinical assessment is not appropriate following a referral, they will inform the referrer (the Oranga Tamariki or Police staff member who made the referral) as soon as that decision is made, and no later than 7 days after receipt of the referral.

Where other agency involvement is required, additional multi agency processes can be initiated by Oranga Tamariki and / or Police as part of the investigation process.

Step 6 – CPP meeting

CPP meetings will be held at least monthly or more frequently as required between the Oranga Tamariki and Police CPP contacts. Health NZ is entitled but not required to attend CPP meetings.

Oranga Tamariki will make the CPP Case List available to Police, and to Health NZ if attending, prior to the CPP meeting.

To ensure that the CPP meetings are productive and focused, the following standing agenda items have been agreed:

- review and update the CPP Case List to ensure all cases are recorded
- confirm parties have a copy of the agreed IJIP for each case
- ensure all the agreed actions from the IJIPs have been completed
- case update on the progress of the Oranga Tamariki investigation
- case update on the progress of the Police investigation
- record any further tasks including whether further information sharing or multi agency planning is required with other agencies
- agree any plans to communicate with tamariki or rangatahi and whānau or family about the process and progress of each organisation's work
- advise any case investigations which have been closed and the outcomes
- discussion of any concerns or issues.

Case updates and further tasks will be recorded in the respective case management systems and in the ongoing investigation plans as managed by Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ.

See Appendix 1 for CPP meeting minutes template.

Step 7 – Closure

When a CPP investigation is completed by either Oranga Tamariki or Police, they will advise their case outcome to parties during the CPP meeting or earlier as required. This will be recorded in the CPP meeting minutes. Case closures will be recorded in the respective case management systems.

Agencies must agree who needs to be informed of the decision to close, including parents and/or carers, and any other agencies who have been part of the plan, and who will be responsible for doing so.

Support for child victims and their whānau or family

Any allegation of harm or abuse managed under the CPP can have a significant impact and long-lasting consequences for tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau or family. It is important that we consider what therapeutic, and other supports may be required for te tamaiti or rangatahi and their whānau or family.

Support

When considering what support may be required, the following factors should be considered:

- what support is required to protect tamariki or rangatahi who make a disclosure
- any disability support needs
- any trauma or intergenerational trauma tamariki or rangatahi and their whānau or family may have experienced
- the Māori principles of oranga; wairua – the dimension of spiritual wellbeing; hinengaro – the dimension of intellectual and mental wellbeing; ngākau – the dimension of emotional wellbeing; tīnana – the dimension of physical wellbeing; whānau – the dimension of family wellbeing⁴
- what support and services are required to ensure people can engage and communicate in their preferred language
- how to manage any potential contact between tamariki or rangatahi and the alleged perpetrator
- the support needs of parents and whānau or family especially those caring for te tamaiti or rangatahi
- whether a referral to other services is required
- ensuring the right service is engaged at the right time

⁴ [Te Whare Tapa Whā: Mason Durie](#)

- whether a whānau or family reconciliation or restorative process is required
- how safety planning may provide for ongoing safety
- how to best keep tamariki or rangatahi and their whānau or family informed of processes and progress
- how to support tamariki and rangatahi when a criminal prosecution is unsuccessful
- how to ensure tamariki or rangatahi and whānau or family are engaged with, or know how to engage with, support services before a case is closed.

Where a need is identified, Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ (when involved) will work with other professionals to facilitate and assist te tamaiti or rangatahi and their whānau or family to access and engage with services to address any immediate and long-term needs. Where Oranga Tamariki are no longer involved, Police may wish to consult with Oranga Tamariki and/or Health NZ about the best support service.

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) should be the point of first contact for accessing support services for child victims. There is ACC-funded support for victims and their whānau or family following sexual abuse or physical assault.

Whānau or family should be supported to make an ACC claim.

email: sensitiveclaims@acc.co.nz

phone: 0800 735 566

web: findsupport.co.nz

Support during criminal prosecution

When tamariki or rangatahi are going through a criminal court process there are a variety of ways we can provide support. It is important that we agree who is best placed to provide this support and ensure it forms part of our joint planning.

Oranga Tamariki

Throughout the investigation process, Oranga Tamariki will be undertaking a holistic oranga focused, trauma informed assessment. This will build an

understanding about harm and risk of harm, safety, protection in the context of whakapapa with oranga as the frame. This will also include any support to be provided to te tamaiti or rangatahi and their whānau or family. Oranga Tamariki will also consider what support may be required if criminal prosecution is to occur.

Where a need is identified, Oranga Tamariki will work with other professionals to facilitate and assist te tamaiti or rangatahi and their whānau or family to access and engage with specialist support services to address any immediate and long-term needs. This may include support during criminal prosecution.

If Oranga Tamariki are still involved with te tamaiti or rangatahi at the time of the criminal prosecution, they will identify the most appropriate person to support te tamaiti or rangatahi through this process based on their needs and wishes. This could be their social worker, carer, parent, or other whānau or family member, close friend, or independent advocate.

Police

During criminal court processes, Police will ensure that tamariki or rangatahi and their whānau or family meet the prosecutor or Crown Solicitor before a court hearing or trial, be shown the courtroom, and given appropriate resource material to assist with preparing for court.

Tamariki or rangatahi and whānau or family will be provided information on having appropriate support persons present during the criminal court process. This could be their carer, parent, or other whānau or family member, close friend, or independent advocate.

Assistance or support by a community agency for te tamaiti or rangatahi and whānau or family may also be required. Where Oranga Tamariki are no longer involved, Police should provide advice and assistance to whānau or family. Police may wish to consult with Oranga Tamariki about the best support service.

Further investigation considerations

Dependent on the circumstances of each case, there may be a need to take the following guidance into account during a CPP investigation.

Tamariki and rangatahi in the care of Oranga Tamariki

Any concern or allegation of abuse or harm for tamariki or rangatahi who are in the care or custody of Oranga Tamariki must be recorded as a report of concern. Where these allegations meet the CPP definitions this must be managed in accordance with the CPP process and will require the completion of an investigation.

For Oranga Tamariki this means that the investigation must be completed in its own investigation phase in CYRAS, not under the open intervention phase of te tamaiti or rangatahi.

If during the investigation it is agreed that the concern or allegation does not meet the CPP threshold, the concern or allegation should continue to be investigated with a focus on safety and wellbeing for te tamaiti or rangatahi.

In these situations where the CPP threshold is not met during an investigation, the case can be changed to a Child and Family Assessment to support the continuation of an oranga framed assessment of te tamaiti or rangatahi.

Family violence

Family violence is also referred to as Family Harm within Police, and means violence (physical, sexual, or psychological abuse) inflicted on a person by someone that the person is, or has been, in a family relationship with.⁵ Exposure to family violence has a significant and negative effect on tamariki and rangatahi, whether they witness it, or are direct victims of it.⁶

For CPP cases where the abuse has occurred within a family violence context, it is important that these cases are referred to the appropriate family violence multi-agency forum for consideration.

For Police, the CP Team must advise their District/Area Family Harm lead of any CPP cases that are family violence. This referral process will be actioned by entering a tasking to the District/Area Family Harm Lead for bringing the CPP file to their attention.

⁵ Family Violence Act 2018, s9.

⁶ Joint Findings of Coroner C D na Nagara as to Comments and Recommendations – Flaxmere Suicides, 6 May 2016.

When working with whānau or families who have experienced family violence, careful consideration should be given by Oranga Tamariki to assessing the cumulative effect of psychological harm, including the current impact of past and/or present violence. This includes assessment of prior reports of concern which did not meet the threshold for further action to be taken. Attention must also be given to any indicators of the exploitation of tamariki or rangatahi in the context of family violence.

This is important as the physical and psychological consequences are highly individualised and can vary from intense and immediate, to cumulative and long lasting. There is research which demonstrates that tamariki and rangatahi living with violence in their families are at increased risk of experiencing physical or sexual abuse.⁷

Suicide risk

Oranga Tamariki , Police and Health NZ need to be vigilant and responsive to potential suicide risk when working with CPP cases.

It is important that we recognise that many of the tamariki, rangatahi, whānau or family that we work with will have experienced multiple and enduring traumas, including historical and intergenerational, and this will impact their development and wellbeing. We know that exposure to high levels of family violence including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse has been linked to the risk of self-harm and suicide.

It is important we work in a trauma-informed way which includes:

- understanding and recognising all forms of trauma
- working closely together to respond effectively
- preventing further trauma by providing the support and resources required for healing and recovery
- understand and recognise trauma in a way that encompasses Māori principles of wellbeing and supports oranga.

⁷ Farmer, E. & Pollack, S. (1998). *Substitute Care for Sexually Abused and Abusing Children*. Chichester: Wiley; Edleson, J. (1999). Children's witnessing of adult domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14(4)839-70; Cawson, P. (2002) Child Maltreatment in the Family: The Experience of a National Sample of Young People. In C. Humphreys, & N. Stanley (eds) (2006) *Domestic Violence and Child Protection: Directions for Good Practice*. Jessica Kingsley: London.

Any relevant consideration or action undertaken in response to suicide risk should be documented.

The following resources may be useful:

[Are you worried someone is thinking of suicide?](#)

[Tihei mauri ora: Supporting whānau through suicide distress](#)

[Preventing suicide and self-harm | Practice Centre | Oranga Tamariki](#)

Underage sexual conduct

In these cases, the discretion about whether to charge remains with the Police. Oranga Tamariki will still need to consider if there are care and protection concerns, irrespective of the decision to prosecute or not.

Both parties will consider each case on its own merits taking all the circumstances into account. During the CPP consultation, the factors to be considered include:

- What is the age difference between the two parties?
- Are there power and control dynamics in the relationship?
- Is there predatory, exploitative, or coercive conduct by the offender?
- Is the victim vulnerable due to disability, intoxication, or other factors?
- What is the consequence of the offending on the victim?
- Has there been publicity or bragging about the offending?
- Have they used social media to humiliate or threaten the victim?
- What is the scale of the offending?
- Are there multiple victims?⁸
- Is the offending part of an organised group?

Disabled tamariki and rangatahi

Careful planning will be required when the victim is a tamaiti or rangatahi with a disability. It will be useful to refer to Oranga Tamariki practice tips for engaging and communicating with disabled tamariki and rangatahi.

⁸ Refer to the Mass Allegation Investigation Joint Operating Procedures 2017.

Oranga Tamariki has Regional Disability Advisors who can be contacted for assistance.

Information sharing

Information sharing between Oranga Tamariki and Police

Police and Oranga Tamariki may share information under section 66C of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. It may be used where information is required for a purpose specified in that section, which broadly relates to the safety and wellbeing of tamariki.

During an investigation, Police may require copies of the social worker documentation created from conversations with tamariki and rangatahi. This documentation can be provided by the Oranga Tamariki Social Worker under the Privacy Act 2020 (IPPI).

Information sharing with Health NZ

Relevant information shared with Health NZ will be recorded in the health records of the individual concerned, following Health NZ policies and procedures for the collection and storage of health information.

If Oranga Tamariki or the Police do not wish certain information to be stored in health records, then that should be made explicit when the information is provided, and the information destroyed or returned to the source.

If the health professional has acted based on that information, they should record in the clinical record that their actions were informed by personal information provided by the Police and/or Oranga Tamariki.

There is an expectation that te tamaiti or rangatahi or their representative will be consulted about their information being shared:

- if it is appropriate and practical to do so
- provided this creates no further risk for te tamaiti or rangatahi
- provided doing so will not compromise a Police investigation or prosecution.

Information sharing with other professionals

As part of our planning, we need to consider whether we gather information from, or share information with, other agencies. Other professionals can give us different insights into the whānau or family situation. Gathering information gives us a bigger picture of what is happening for te tamaiti or rangatahi and their whānau or family and sharing information may enhance our collective ability to keep tamariki or rangatahi safe.

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

ACC may hold important information on accidental injuries that may be reconsidered if ACC reports on all whānau or family members are gathered.

For ACC information contact the **Safety Response Team:**

Safety.response@acc.co.nz

Phone line: 04 816 7240

Hours: 0700–1530

Remember a case can always come back for another CPP consultation if new information means the case may now meet the CPP criteria.

Cumulative harm

Cumulative harm is the outcome of two or more episodes of abuse or neglect experienced by tamariki or rangatahi and results in a diminished sense of safety, stability, and wellbeing.

When considered in isolation, each episode of abuse or neglect may not be thought of as being seriously harmful, but the cumulative effect of several incidents may be sufficient to be described as seriously harmful and require further attention.

When completing a CPP consultation look at other incidents which on their own may not have been considered abuse. Look for patterns such as ongoing concerning behaviours or care of te tamaiti or rangatahi, numbers of past injuries within the whānau or family, ongoing family violence. Consider whether these factors may contribute to a case meeting the CPP criteria.

Children admitted to hospital with suspected or confirmed harm, abuse or neglect

Any CPP case where te tamaiti or rangatahi has been admitted to hospital with suspected or confirmed harm, abuse or neglect will require collaboration between Oranga Tamariki, Police and the District Hospital.

These cases need to be managed in accordance with Schedule 1 to the Memorandum of Understanding between Oranga Tamariki, the Police, and District Health Boards 2021.

Mass allegation investigation

A mass allegation investigation (MAI) is an investigation into a CPP case that involves three or more tamariki and rangatahi (excluding sibling groups) by the same offender or by a connected group of offenders.

The tamariki and rangatahi involved may be linked through a range of different circumstances including:

- a whānau or family member
- a group or activity they participate in such as a sports club, church group, hobby club or holiday programme
- a facility they attend such as kindergarten, childcare or a school
- their care arrangements such as residences or group homes.

In the case of a MAI or suspected MAI please refer to the Mass Allegation Investigation Joint Operating Procedures 2017.

Abuse within an educational setting

Any CPP case where the alleged abuse has occurred within an education setting and the alleged offender is an adult, will require collaboration between Oranga Tamariki, Police, Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Ministry of Education. These cases need to be managed in accordance with Schedule 1 to the Memorandum of Understanding between Oranga Tamariki, New Zealand Police, the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Ministry of Education 2015 – *Managing abuse allegations involving an adult working within an education setting*.

Any CPP case where the alleged abuse has occurred within an educational setting and the alleged offender is a tamaiti or rangatahi, will require collaboration between Oranga Tamariki, Police and the relevant education facility. It may be that the school or educational facility is invited to be a part of the CPP investigation using a multi-agency approach.

Conflict resolution

It will not always be clear which cases meet the definitions of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect within the CPP context. Staff are encouraged to use the CPP consultation process to discuss these cases and attempt to reach a resolution about whether the CPP process should be used.

Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ shall attempt to resolve all disputes and differences in relation to the performance of this protocol at a local level, for instance at the regular CPP meeting.

Escalation

Any issue which is unable to be resolved at the local level will be referred as per the escalation pathway set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between Oranga Tamariki–Ministry for Children, New Zealand Police and the District Health Boards (now Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora).

Training and professional development

Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ commit to provide annual, joint training for all staff involved in CPP cases.

In addition, it is expected that each party provides an induction for all new staff which covers the CPP and its practical application.

Further professional development may occur between the parties as locally identified and agreed. This should include more advanced training for experienced practitioners.

Quality assurance

To provide confidence that the parties are meeting the requirements of the CPP, Oranga Tamariki, Police and Health NZ will each put in place their own monitoring, reporting and assurance systems for CPP activity.

The results of each party's respective quality assurance processes are shared to inform joint professional development and continuous practice improvement.

Review of CPP

The next CPP review must be commenced by May 2028.

A party may also initiate a review of this protocol by giving three months' written notice to the other parties. Notwithstanding the notification period, a review may be commenced at any time agreed by all three parties.

Signatories

Signatories to the Child Protection Protocol: Joint Operating Procedures will be:

Signed on this day, 9th of September 2026



Amanda Malu
Secretary for Children
Oranga Tamariki



Richard Chambers
Commissioner
New Zealand Police



Dr Andrew Brant
Acting Chief Executive
Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora

Glossary of terms

Child Forced Labour (including Domestic Servitude)

Refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power.

Child Forced Marriage

Child forced marriage is any formal or informal union between te tamaiti or rangatahi under the age of 16 with an adult or another tamaiti or rangatahi, or under the age of 18 without the express agreement of a Family Court Judge. It is considered as a form of forced marriage because of the impossibility for a child to give full, free, and informed consent.

Child Trafficking

Is the arranging, organising, or procuring of the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons for exploitation e.g. forced labour, child marriage, abduction, sexual exploitation, slavery (refer s 98D, Crimes Act 1961).

CPP Record

Individual electronic record that records the details of the CPP case.

CPP Case List

A complete list of all CPP cases that are open to either Oranga Tamariki, Police or both. This list is generated by Oranga Tamariki⁹ and is reviewed at least monthly during the CPP meetings.

Crime Reporting Line (CRL)

The Crime Reporting Line is a centralised call handling centre for Police Service. It initiates action on CPP cases that are received from Oranga Tamariki. Each case is then placed in the appropriate district CRL drop box to be uplifted by the District Child Protection Team.

Family violence / Family Harm

Family violence means violence (physical, sexual, or psychological abuse) inflicted on a person by someone that the person is, or has been, in a family relationship with.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (commonly referred to as FGM) is the term used for a practice that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitals or injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

Fraudulent/Illicit Adoption

This refers to a person(s) attempt to either illegally adopt a child or illegally give up a child for adoption.

Initial Joint Investigation Plan (IJIP)

An initial plan jointly created by Oranga Tamariki and Police to record agreed actions on the agreed template.

Medical practitioner

A health practitioner who is, or is deemed to be, registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand continued by section 114(1)(a) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 as a practitioner of the profession of medicine.

Neglect

Neglect is when a person intentionally ill-treats or neglects te tamaiti or causes or permits te tamaiti to be ill-treated in a manner likely to cause te tamaiti actual bodily harm, injury to health or any mental disorder or disability. The ill-treatment or neglect must be serious and avoidable.

Online Offending Against Children including Exploitation and Harmful Digital Content

Examples include grooming, online harassment, live streaming, creation of illicit imagery (including AI generated), coercion and blackmail of tamariki or rangatahi for exploitative purposes. Further, the sharing or circulation of graphic violent material involving tamariki or rangatahi, and the creation, advertising, sale, or distribution of self-harm related videos or other exploitative harmful digital content involving tamariki or rangatahi. For the

purposes of this protocol there needs to be an identified New Zealand based victim.

Oranga Tamariki CPP contact

The Oranga Tamariki staff member with responsibility for overseeing CPP cases on a site.

Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre

The Contact Centre is the first point of contact for people to connect to services within Oranga Tamariki. Social workers in the Contact Centre receive, assess, and refer child protection concerns to a variety of pathways that includes Oranga Tamariki or community responses. The Contact Centre operates 24 hours, seven days a week.

The number is 0508 326 459 and the email address is contact@ot.govt.nz.

Oranga Tamariki site

Local Oranga Tamariki office where care and protection social workers are situated.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when the actions of an offender result in or could potentially result in physical harm or injury being inflicted on te tamaiti. This can also be known as a non-accidental injury.

Police CPP contact

Police officer designated with responsibility for overseeing CPP cases in that station.

Rangatahi

A person of or over the age of 14 years but under 18 years

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is an act involving circumstances of indecency with, or sexual violation of, te tamaiti, or using te tamaiti in the making of sexual imagery.

Specialist child interview (SCI)

A recorded interview that can be used as part of an investigation where te tamaiti or rangatahi has, or may have been, abused or witnessed a serious crime. It may later be used as evidence in Court.

Te tamaiti (singular), tamariki (plural)

A person under the age of 14 years.

Whānau

Family, extended family who share whakapapa with te tamaiti (i.e., they are linked by bloodline), and any others who may be defined as part of their whānau.

Whāngaia Ngā Pā Harakeke

National framework where police, iwi and qualified kaiāwhina work in partnership to attend to and reduce family harm.

List of acronyms**ACC**

Accident Compensation Corporation

CPP

Child Protection Protocol: Joint Operating Procedures

CP Team

Child Protection Team, Police

CRL

Crime Reporting Line, Police

CYRAS

Oranga Tamariki electronic case management system

FVIARS

Family Violence Interagency Response System

IJIP

Initial Joint Investigation Plan

ISR

Integrated Safety Response (to Family Harm / Family Violence)

MAI

Mass Allegation Investigation

NIA

Police electronic case management system

RoC

Report of concern

SCI

Specialist child interview

APPENDIX 1: CPP MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE

CPP Meeting Minutes Template

Date:

Venue:

Attendees:

Apologies:

Standing agenda items:

- review and update the CPP Case List to ensure all cases are recorded
- confirm parties have a copy of the agreed IJIP for each case
- confirm that all the agreed actions from the IJIPs have been completed
- case update on the progress of the Oranga Tamariki investigations
- case update on the progress of the Police investigations
- update on Health NZ actions (if relevant)
- record any further tasks including whether further information sharing is required with other agencies
- agree any plans to communicate with tamariki or rangatahi and their whānau or family about the process and progress of each organisation's work
- advise any case investigations which have been closed and the outcomes
- discussion of any concerns or issues.

CASE NAME	UPDATE