



Appendix Two: Highest Needs Review Terms of Reference

Background

The Ministry of Education is doing a “review of supports for children and young people with the highest level of need, including the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme, to ensure they are meeting needs of children and young people, and delivering the intended outcome” under the Learning Support Action Plan Priority 4.

Vision for the Review

The purpose of the Review is to ensure that children and young people with the highest needs for learning support achieve their full potential through positive education outcomes and that they receive the right support, when they need it, and for as long as they need it.

Objectives for the Review

Children and young people and their families/whānau are at the centre of this review. We will take a rights, strengths-based, and mana enhancing approach throughout the review.

Following the first phase of engagement from 27 May to 9 July 2021, the objectives for the review were refined as outlined below:

- Align cross agency work so it is better connected and co-ordinated to ensure children and young people and their family and whānau have access to broader Government supports.
- Identify how best to support children and their families and whānau including how support services are structured and delivered through the Learning Support Delivery Model.
- Develop a strategic, planned system response for specialist services. This strategic framework will identify what the network of provision should look like, the place of each support or service within the network and how they integrate within the wider learning support context.
- Provide a proposed sequenced set of improvements within a short-term, medium-term and longer-term investment plan.
- Use the Learning Support Delivery Model as the mechanism for delivering possible options and solutions.

Overarching Principles of the Review

The Review will be guided by the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and align with the eight Enabling Good Lives (EGL) Principles: self-determination, beginning early, person centred, ordinary life outcomes, mainstream first, mana enhancing, easy to use, and relationship building.

Scope of Review

We propose that the Scope of the Review:

- Take a whole child approach and does not define children and young people by specific diagnosis, disability, disorder or learning difference but instead is focused on what support children and young people require and how they can access the support. This includes those who:
 - currently receive individualised support
 - have an unmet need for individualised support
 - are in settings that have inequitable access to these supports
- Focuses on the children and young people's journey through the education system, from early learning through to supporting the transition from secondary school.
- Includes how children and young people can access supports regardless of where they are learning. This will allow us to address those key tension points being experienced by children, young people and their family and whānau as they move through and across settings.
- Considers the need for fluid boundaries between education settings to encourage and enable stronger working relationships where all schools can better access the expertise held in specialist settings.
- Includes how supports and services are accessed. This would include reviewing current rigid and deficit focused criteria and application processes to determine which children and young people can access supports, the level of support required, and the length of time support is provided.
- Maps the current funding and resourcing arrangements against up-to-date prevalence and forecast data for individualised support to inform options and solutions to move away from the current siloed model of support.
- Evaluates the responsiveness of supports to child/whānau needs and how supports can help children and young people define and achieve successes.
- Includes the need to align services and supports across government agencies for children, young people, and their families/whānau, including the need for culturally appropriate supports.
- Builds knowledge, understanding and capability of people to address and reduce barriers children and young people are experiencing at all levels of the network; centre and classroom level, management level, governance level, resource teacher and specialist level and agency level.

The following is out-of-scope of this review

There are several reviews and pieces of work already underway that are looking to better support a crossover population of children and young people identified as in-scope of this Review. This includes:

- Improving schools use of Universal Design for Learning
- How schools are funded for teacher aides, and career pathways supported
- The review of the Special Education Grant funding
- Disengagement and non-attendance of children and young people, including the review of Alternative Education

While the above issues will be considered within the Scope of the Review, they will be substantially addressed by significant other pieces of work that look at other aspects of the system.

Implications

Recommendations from the Review may have an impact on how services and supports are provided children and young people. They may also have significant policy implications for the Government.

Process and Timing

Phase two of the review will run from September to December 2021. The second phase is to gather information and evidence from engagements, feedback and submissions from a wide range of stakeholders. We will work with the Youth Advisory Group and a Review Advisory Group throughout this phase. We will provide a briefing to Associate Education Minister Hon. Jan Tinetti with a summary from this phase in December 2021. The final phase of the Review from January to September 2022 will develop options and solutions to better support the children and young people identified as in scope of the Review. At the end of October 2022, the Review will report back to Cabinet with recommendations.