

Plunket submission to Health and Disability Review Committee information request

Introduction

All tamariki in New Zealand have the right to the best start in life. That has been at the center of what we do and why we do it at Plunket for 112 years.

Today, Plunket is one of the largest national organisations to deliver health and support services to tamariki and whānau. More than 250,000 tamariki under the age of 5 rely on Plunket for their Well Child/Tamariki Ora health checks, community play groups, car seat installations and safety checks, injury prevention, nutrition, water safety, oral health checks and advice, as well as the Before School developmental assessments.

In 2016, we released *our Plunket Strategy 2016-2021- The journey towards generational change* outlined our new vision ***“In the first 1000 days we make the difference of a lifetime”***. This was based on what we have heard from our people, whānau, families, partners and supporters which guides our approach to everything we do.

Our key themes of *Tamariki, their families, whānau and communities are at the heart of everything we do, High performing Plunket people, and Integrated, collaborative and connected approach*, provides us with a strong vision to not rest on our past but to strive for a better future for all our tamariki.

We know that not all tamariki in New Zealand are getting the best start. We know that Māori have disproportionate levels of health outcomes compared to any other ethnic population. Plunket’s very roots lie in improving outcomes for Maori tamariki – Sir Truby King worked with Maori midwives, Ria Tikini and Mere Harper, in Karitane to improve nutrition and reduce infant mortality rates for Maori. We believe Plunket has a unique opportunity, and more importantly, an obligation to work to improve Māori health outcomes and focus on the wellbeing of Māori whānau and tamariki – and this year our Board has decided to prioritise this ***above all else***. We will outline how this decision is impacting on our work later on.

We sought external expertise to help us understand what this means and how to make it happen. We undertook an ‘equity health check’ process, looking at everything from aspirations to structures, processes and comprehensive approaches to services. We have identified the first steps needed to make our systemic shift towards being a pro-equity organization. We are committed to;

- Strengthen our equity and health goals
- Increase capability throughout the organization
- Set performance expectations and build skills across the organization
- Increase and create accountability of the leadership team
- Introduce processes for pro-equity decision making

As a result of this work, we have also strengthened Māori leadership positions within our organisation.

We have been delivering against our strategy by focusing not only on services but on organisational infrastructure, ensuring we are sustainable and have the right foundations in place to effectively support our service provision.

As a Non-Government Organisation, this focus is critical to ensuring we have the sustainability to deliver our current services and supports but also to invest in change to address inequity. Some key pieces of foundational work we have undertaken are;

- Modernising our governance structure and function
- Implementing a singular electronic Child Health Record to better capture whānau needs and data , all funded through Plunket's own fundraising
- Implementing a financial strategy to ensure we operate as efficiently as possible and understand the true costs to deliver services
- Implementing a Plunket People strategy to ensure all staff and volunteers are well supported. We have launched an online learning platform for all Plunket People.
- Developing a digital strategy to modernise the way whānau can access our services where and when they need it
- Implementing a property strategy that focuses on community need
- Improving our efficiency of assets management such as fleet

What we offer today is a unique combination of services for whānau that are all fundamentally grounded in supporting them to meet their own parenting aspirations. They form a tapestry that whānau can weave in and out of at any point they need.

Plunket Nurses, Kaiāwhina, Parenting Facilitators, Community service co-ordinators and our volunteers are our key connectors to whānau and communities. Our Plunket Nurses and Kaiāwhina conduct health assessments, provide support and are trusted advisors of the community. In many cases they are one of the few (and sometimes only) service providers who can enter the homes of many whānau.

We also provide PlunketLine, our 24/7 helpline for all tamariki health enquiries for all our whānau. Immediate advice and support is the top priority for our PlunketLine nurses, calming the nerves of parents, grandparents and whānau members who have concerns for their tamariki.

We also deliver Family start programmes in two areas.

Our community services provide support, education and activities for our diverse communities, such as 'Plunket In your Neighbourhood' coffee groups, and PEPE (Plunket's parent education) courses. In various regions coffee groups have been created to connect and engage parents to each other and to other community support including marae-based groups.

Parent education courses are run in conjunction with SKIP and Whakatipu parenting resources. Plunket runs well over 700 PEPE programmes and provides 100 pregnancy and antenatal information sessions for parents around the country. Toy libraries and playgroups are also available nationwide.

Many of these are made possible and supported by volunteers and Plunket's own fundraising. We raise almost \$10million a year to support these activities.

As a Tier 1 health and wellbeing organisation, we are able to utilise our national infrastructure to support our partnerships with whānau to deliver locally responsive services.

Key initiatives

The initiatives below provide case studies of the work we are undertaking related to the information request from the Health and Disability System Review.

1) Engaging Whanau – Enhancing our responses to whānau Maori

Engaging Whānau is a new approach by Plunket that aims to identify and build kaupapa Māori services around the needs of whānau Māori and communities.

Whānau Āwhina Whānau Ora

The Whānau Āwhina Whānau Ora project in Hamilton responded to the growing recognition that Plunket needed to do things differently to increase engagement with whānau and better align service delivery with the needs of whānau and Māori communities. The Whānau Āwhina Whānau Ora project is a kaupapa Māori approach to delivering services for whānau Māori who may prefer a culturally responsive and whānau centric approach. Hamilton was selected in part because 33% of Plunket's new baby cases in the area identify as Māori and there is a relatively high number of Māori staff in both leadership and frontline staff roles in Plunket.

Kaupapa Māori approaches are informed by tikanga Māori, principles that acknowledge Māori ways of being and values. These are the pillars Whānau Āwhina Whānau Ora is built on and are vital for the programme to respond to the needs of whānau Māori.

The Whānau Āwhina Whānau Ora team use the Te Wheke model for Māori health (developed by Dr Rose Pere)¹. Two Māori Plunket nurses (PN) and 1 Kaiāwhina currently provide an enhanced service for whānau Māori enrolled with Plunket. In addition to this, cultural supervision to the team is provided fortnightly by an experienced Māori Plunket nurse from Tainui.

The goals of whānau form the basis of the care plan for the client and their whānau. According to the team the most common goals include: getting dental appointments and work done, getting a driver's licence, budgeting, getting immunisations done, having a hearing assessment completed, visiting the GP, attending hospital visits, getting support with housing, access to contraception, access to clothing.

The team link whānau to additional Well Child Tamariki Ora services and to a range of external organisations. They provide transport to appointments and advocacy with services and

¹ <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/Māori-health/Māori-health-models/Māori-health-models-te-wheke>

agencies such as WINZ. Staff often attend appointments of referred services with whānau as a support person.

One of the most significant aspects of the programme's whānau-led approach is that contact with whānau is based on the support whānau need rather than the requirement to meet a set caseload of visits. Freed from the time pressures that previously limited what they were able to do to support whānau, the team talk of having the time and flexibility to provide a quality service to whānau.

Having the time to spend with whānau was key to building relationships of trust, setting and working through whānau goals and gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges whānau face and how they might be best supported to meet these goals. Relationship building with whānau is facilitated by taking a mana-enhancing approach, which is about awahi, being present, listening, respect, caring about their wellbeing and futures, affirming whānau strengths and praising what they are doing well, being non-judgemental and being easily contactable via phone, text and email.

Whirihia – enhancing seamless care for whānau Māori

Whirihia is a two-day wānanga in Hamilton that integrates traditional Māori birthing methods with health promotion messages in a way that empowers and supports whānau. During the two days birthing, parenting skills and whānau support services are covered with tikanga Māori woven throughout. In addition, whānau are also offered workshops for infant CPR training, infant massage and safe sleep/wahakura.

Post-birth, these same whānau will then be introduced to the Whānau Awhina Whānau Ora programme to support them in their Well Child journey and advocate for them to access services to meet their needs. Whānau are asked during the wānanga if they also want to enrol in Tikanga Ririki (a strengths-based Māori parenting programme) that is led by a Plunket Kaiāwhina.

Early engagement in the antenatal period provides a strong opportunity to walk alongside whānau through their journey of parenthood, and how this is approached is imperative to building trust and meaningful relationships and carry these into further Plunket services. It is important that antenatal education acts as the initial platform to begin making positive choices and utilising the appropriate support to enable whānau to give the very best for their tamariki.

Joint care within Plunket as well as with other services is essential. We want to promote a seamless plan of care that whānau feel confident navigating, with our advocacy as needed, right from pregnancy.

Other external service providers outside of health also often attend at the request of whānau and their needs. Examples of services that have attended is WINZ advocates, baby massage, smoking cessation support, whakapapa tracking and support, and many others. There is opportunity for many more community services to be in attendance in the future.

We hope to achieve this confidence through engagement with culturally competent care delivered at the frontline to meet whānau goals. Through the wider Plunket clinical team and eventually our volunteer network, we can ensure that all whānau have the level of service they need to meet their specific goals and improve health and social equity.

Karitane and Camberly

We are currently developing a new kaupapa Māori service in Karitane and Camberly, building on our work in Hamilton. Kanohi kitea co-design workshops have been conducted with whānau and iwi service providers in the Karitāne and Camberley regions to understand the wellbeing outcomes whānau want to achieve, and how Plunket can support these outcomes. The information gathered from the workshops has allowed Plunket to understand the differences and similarities for whānau in their respective communities and situations, and the health outcomes they wish to achieve for their babies and whānau.

The primary outcome of the Engaging Whānau programme is to understand the wellbeing needs for babies and whānau, and facilitate their achievement through building stronger relationships and partnerships with service providers, and local government; ultimately connecting the required services to the whānau.

The information already captured from whānau has set the foundation for discussions with providers and Plunket staff in the respective areas, as we look to identify gaps and opportunities to best support communities.

2) Using data to deliver differently

Whānau Āwhina Ōtautahi – adjusting caseload management and resource allocation

Sometimes change doesn't have to come in the form of new things. It can simply be shifting a lever or two in existing models. This project is all about providing improved care for high need and complex families that more fully meets their needs, provides consistency of care even when they move a lot, and to facilitate provision of more intensive services including interagency work, community connecting and additional contacts.

The Whānau Āwhina, Ōtautahi team is made up of Plunket Nurses and Kaiawhina who work exclusively with the highest and most vulnerable families in the East Christchurch area. They work in partnership and collaboration with other intensive services to ensure families receive wrap around support that improve outcomes while promoting collaboration between health and social service providers.

By changing the way we manage caseloads across Christchurch we have been able to free up these staff to focus on the needs of their clients and the collaborations with other agencies required. The supports they are able to offer include increased home visiting, consistent health professionals even when moving frequently, tracking of high need clients and more intensive work to improve connections in the community and interagency collaboration. The team works closely with the Plunket Postnatal Adjustment Programme and Plunket Parent

and Infant Relationship Service to provide the families with support with mental health and parenting issues.

The team is located in the Loft, a partnership initiative that co-locates child and Whānau health and wellbeing services in eastern Christchurch and works with a partnership model between the providers.

To further support initiatives like this we are in the process of implementing a national online caseload management tool. This tool will be invaluable in supporting our staff in making resource allocation decisions that is responsive to the needs of families.

3) Putting families at the centre of our service

Experiences of Parents Living in Inner City Auckland Project

Parents with tamariki living in CBD (Central Business District) can face many challenges. This research project aimed to document some of these experiences and identify ways that we can better support them.

The project was co-led by Plunket and S.K.I.P. and used a co-design approach. A co-design approach brings in different agencies and customer groups to design and develop ideas that can make a real difference in the community.

This research is important because it helps us to understand some of the challenges families face when raising young tamariki in the CBD. It is also important because this research involved different agencies and incorporated families' voices in the outcomes.

The agencies involved in the design team includes Plunket, S.K.I.P, Auckland Central Library, KINZ Myers Park, YMCA of Auckland, and The Asian Network Inc. Many parents also shared their stories with the project team.

We learnt through this project that;

- challenges living in the CBD include living in small apartments, safety issues, parks not friendly to tamariki under 5s
- The positive experiences include the convenience to different places, baby enjoys seeing buses, ferries, trains etc.
- One common denominator for all families is little or no Whānau support. Some families brought grandparents over from overseas to look after tamariki, which can also cause conflicts.
- Different ideas were brought up including a tiki tour of parents living in CBD and a shared community space for parents.

The project delivered a report written for parents, community agencies, businesses, policy-makers in central and local government and other stakeholders who deliver services and operate within Auckland CBD. This report identifies learnings about inner city living whilst raising tamariki that have been generated by undertaking a parent-led design approach. This has been used to inform and influence other work including Poutokomanawa in Manurewa.

Poutokomanawa in Manurewa

The Manurewa Plunket Whānau Centre was due to be renovated, so the local team took this opportunity to use a different approach in its design and bring to life learnings from The Southern Initiative (TSI).

The co-design of Poutokomanawa (The Whānau Centre was renamed through the process) incorporated whānau centred co-design approach that is based on Maori methodology and principles. The core principles of this approach are:

- Manaakitanga – hosts whānau in a way that empowers them, and removes barriers for participation
- Whānaukatanga – builds meaningful relationships culturally appropriately and engage in way that forms trust.
- Tino Rangatiratanga – gives whānau autonomy over how and in what way they will participate.
- Mana – Ensures a balance of power and acknowledges that whānau are experts in their own lives.
- Ako – Learnings are mutually reinforced

In this project, Plunket staff worked in new ways by prototyping on site and supporting the integration of whānau voice into the design of the renovation. We learnt that whānau are waiting for an invitation to contribute to such projects, and that they offer a valuable contributions to strategic and operational challenges.

Feedback from Plunket staff identified that more whānau are now attending group sessions and clinics, and consequently more clinics are now available at the centre. This has also changed the perspectives of some staff who have previously been resistant to co-designing, they are more open to new ideas and support creative thinking.

The co-design process has gained attention from other Plunket teams such as Bay of Plenty and Whangarei, who are looking to renovate their space.

Strengthening Communities

With the support of the **Tindall Foundation**, we were able to undertake 8 community based projects, all looking at identifying and responding to local need. These projects have been running for over 3 years. We undertook an evaluation to:

- Strengthen communities by supporting projects that identify and respond to community needs
- Discover the key elements for generating positive change and build the body of evidence on developing and delivering community-led initiatives

Key insights to inform the ongoing delivery and potential further development of current and other regional projects. We learnt that:

- Community projects where Plunket clinical and community teams worked effectively together were able to provide accessible and holistic services and support to whānau. Access to holistic support improved whānau wellbeing and relationships.
- Small projects that have been developed and delivered well are likely to make a longer-lasting and sustainable impact in communities than large projects without a clear purpose or target group.
- Authentic and effective engagement with communities and inclusion in the project team of people with local links and community knowledge underpinned the development of relationships between Plunket, local iwi and communities.
- Projects were more effective in reaching whānau when they were flexible, holistic and whānau did not feel pressured to attend.
- A collaborative inter-agency approach was crucial to achieving the outcomes of the overall Strengthening Communities Project. Organisations working together were better able to improve outcomes for whānau than if they were working in isolation.

4) Using technology to improve access and delivery

ePHR

Plunket has invested in an electronic Plunket Health record (ePHR) that captures 86% of all babies in the country (we have over 280,000 records in our dataset). We are actively working with other agencies to seek ways to bring data sets together for improved insights as well as making service referrals and transfers easier for whānau.

One of the potential key benefits of the ePHR is that it will be able to provide us with more detailed information on outcomes, which, in turn, will inform decisions on where and how to direct resources and effort. The ePHR is more effective and efficient in storing and retrieving information compared to a paper-based system. Plunket's nurses and health workers have also been provided with mobile devices to input their clinical data in real-time, removing a time lag in the availability of information. The easy access to information by the nurses – for example on past visits and special needs – directly benefits care provided to the families and children.

Apart from implementing the ePHR, Plunket also expanded its digital WCTO service channels, in response to changes in the way families are using digital technology. For example, in 2017 Plunket introduced live Facebook chats and parenting podcasts.

Breastfeeding support through video conferencing

In 2018, with funding support from **The Wrights Foundation** we developed a video-conferencing service.

The focus of Plunket's Breastfeeding Support via Video Conference is to reach those mothers that are seeking breastfeeding support in the first three months of their child and have

difficulty with accessing other breastfeeding services due to lack of transport, being in remote communities, limited opening hours, cost, and cultural appropriateness.

We wanted to test if the technology was a suitable additional channel on top of our existing Telehealth support.

Our evaluation found that over half the clients have been able to access a Breastfeeding Specialists via video conference on the same or the next day.

Mothers are accessing the service relatively early in their breastfeeding experience, some while still in maternity care units and/or hospitals. Clients' experience of the service is very good and most of their breastfeeding needs are being met.

Our learnings from the evaluation data and client feedback have been used to improve the service in an ongoing way, make decisions as to the viability of video conferencing as a client contact channel, and to identify population groups in need of different/more support.

We also found that we could use the channel for other areas of support, for example sleep.

5) Using data and technology to enhance our learning and our people

The dataset provided by the ePHR has the potential to improve our knowledge and insights into what works to improve the wellbeing of children in New Zealand. The Director of the Better Start Science Challenges in Otago are working with Plunket to realise this potential.

Plunket is also working with officials from Oranga Tamariki, DPMC and ACC to include the ePHR data into the IDI (Integrated Data Infrastructure) within Statistics NZ. Officials are aware of and realise the gap that the dataset will fill for building their 'child wellbeing model' to support government's priorities and WCTO outcomes.

Te Mara

Plunket has recently launched an online learning system for all Plunket People. Te Mara provides online learning modules that can be accessed anywhere anytime. We now have the ability to provide online training and upskilling to our staff who work all around the country.

6) Collaboration

As an NGO, we are in a unique position to bring together the business world, philanthropy, volunteering, academia, NGOs and Government to deliver improved health and social outcomes.

We have started to leverage this through targeted initiatives – for example, we partnered with BabyStart to deliver baby boxes to families who need support. We then leveraged our funding relationship with The Warehouse to develop these baby boxes to support **wahakura programmes** for whānau Māori. Such partners have also supported us to get free safety equipment for whānau, such as bike helmets, safety gates, wall plugs and so forth.

We have been actively involved in a number of collective projects such as Smart Start and Star Well.

We are also able to leverage our workforce to expand what we do when others are in need. For example, we have been able to collaborate with Counties Manuaku DHB to expand our Immunisation Outreach service. We have been able to coordinate Well Child checks with Immunisations not just of tamariki, but of whole whānau while we are there in their home.

Mokopuna Ora

Plunket is part of the Mokopuna Ora collective in the Manawatu. The collective runs wahakura wananga for hapū māmā and their whānau. This wananga provides traditional knowledge for whānau to create wahakura for their pēpi. Many local weavers are involved to teach the whānau and empower them to take the learning into their community and own spaces.

The Loft

Co-locating our Christchurch East team into The Loft has enabled cross agency collaboration, specifically for whānau who have complex needs. We have been able to share information which means whānau are able to access services they need in a coordinated way. This collaboration is partnership based where we share responsibilities for the effective running of the space and shared resources.

7) Leveraging our multi-disciplinary workforce

Our frontline workforce is made up of Nurses, Health Workers, Kaiawhina, Child Birth Educators, Educators, Social Workers, Community Coordinators, Parenting Facilitators, and Volunteers. The collective knowledge and skills of our Plunket People is holistic and whānau centered. Through our People Strategy, we are working to create career and learning pathways across of whole workforce. We are also working to create roles across this diverse workforce that are designed on whānau/community need rather than our organizational need.

We are also focused on better supporting whānau to navigate the supports they need by joining up our services, for example collaborating across our Family Start and WellChild Tamariki Ora teams.

We have been bringing together our Immunization outreach team in Counties Manukau with the delivery of Wellchild Tamariki Ora checks, so we can offer a one stop shop in the home. As a response to the measles outbreak, we have also provided immunizations to the whole whānau, not just their pepi.