The Intensive Case Manager and Navigators Initiatives Evaluation Report

Prepared for:
Ministry of Social Development
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

February 2022

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a qualitative process evaluation of the Intensive Case Manager (ICM) and Navigator Initiatives (the Initiatives).

Overview of the Initiatives

A home is essential to wellbeing. A stable and affordable home provides a crucial platform for health, employment, education, and wider community engagement and participation. The 2018 New Zealand Census identified more than 102,000 people as severely housing deprived (Amore, Viggers & Chapman, 2021). Māori and Pacific people have high rates of severe housing deprivation. People experiencing homelessness have poorer health and social outcomes (Fazel, Geddes & Kushel, 2014; Ponka et al., 2020).

The Government is committed through the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020-2023) to prevent homelessness where possible and ensure that when it occurs, it is rare, brief, and non-recurrent. The Government is funding a range of responses to achieve the Homelessness Action Plan.

In September 2019, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) developed the Initiatives to better support people receiving Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNG). The Initiatives contribute to the Homelessness Action Plan's key focus area of supporting individuals, families, and whānau experiencing homelessness to move quickly into stable accommodation and access more comprehensive social support to address needs.

The overall goal of the Initiatives is to improve the wellbeing and stability of clients in their current situation, enabling them to engage with public and private housing and sustain housing in the long term. The Initiatives were not designed to rehouse whānau from emergency housing.

The Initiatives are based on the theory that intensive, personalised, single point of contact support will help clients stabilise their housing situation. ICMs (employed by MSD) and Navigators (employed by NGOs) offer personalised support. ICMs operate out of Work and Income offices. They grant entitlements, advocate for whānau, refer people to other services, and can access additional funding for whānau. Navigators operate in the community and visit whānau at their emergency housing. They support people to navigate through the system and stay connected with their community, health services and other necessary agencies. Whānau receive support from either an ICM or a Navigator, or both.

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Evaluation method

The qualitative process evaluation assessed the Initiatives' design, implementation, and short-term outcomes. The evaluation answered three key evaluation questions:

1. How well are the ICM and Navigator Initiatives being implemented against their intended design, recognising the need for regional adaption?
2. How well are the Initiatives contributing to achieving the short-term outcomes?
3. How might the Initiatives be refined to improve outcomes for clients, particularly Māori and Pacific people, and other groups?

In July 2021, we interviewed 26 whānau and 30 MSD and NGO stakeholders in Rotorua, Hamilton and Auckland to answer the questions. MSD's Research Ethics Panel reviewed the evaluation plan.

Evaluation findings

The Initiatives are mainly being implemented as intended

MSD used an agile design to rapidly stand up the Initiatives to respond to increasing housing pressures. MSD did not engage with Māori (or Pasifika) during the design phase of the Initiatives. However, MSD has since contracted Māori Navigator providers across Aotearoa with the mandate to deliver the Initiatives in line with their kaupapa.

As the design intends, the Initiatives identify and support whānau living in emergency housing who may benefit from additional support. ICMs and Navigators work holistically with whānau to address their immediate needs, including health and wellbeing. They help whānau to build their capability to search for houses and remove housing barriers. Where houses exist, ICMs and Navigators support whānau to secure and transition into long-term housing.

Many ICMs and Navigators interviewed have cross-sectoral knowledge and strong interpersonal skills. The combination of MSD and NGO staff is beneficial in ensuring whānau can access their entitlements and other support.

ICMs and Navigators use a whānau-centred approach based on trusted relationships. They build trust over time using manaakitanga and whakawhanaungatanga. They work with and make referrals to other services to wrap support around whānau.

Whānau have a less favourable view of the intent of the Initiatives

ICMs and Navigators see their role as addressing the immediate needs of whānau and building their capability to find and retain a house. Their role focuses on short-term outcomes that contribute to this goal. These outcomes include increasing whānau access to support services, improving whānau readiness to engage with housing support and other services,

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and increasing whānau self-efficacy and confidence in engaging with the housing sector. ICMs and Navigators do this by supporting whānau in housing applications, advocating for their housing needs and referring them to programmes or services to help whānau access housing.

Whānau see the purpose of the Initiatives as helping them access secure and long-term housing. If this end goal is not achieved, whānau see little value in the short-term housing readiness outcomes. While whānau are less positive than providers about the difference the Initiatives make, they consider having the support better than coping without any help. Whānau feedback indicates the need to consider how other government agencies and their partners are responding to whānau need and the level of duplication or gaps in housing services.

MSD can strengthen the Initiatives

Given the shortage of houses, the competitive rental market, and increasing whānau stressors from COVID-19, the Initiatives have a role in supporting and enabling whānau. The Initiatives, based on their current design, can be strengthened by:

- enhancing cultural safety at organisational and staff levels (leadership, management and frontline staff) so that MSD and Navigator provider organisations orient their service delivery to a tailored and collaborative approach with whānau
- ensuring the consistent delivery of a whānau-centred service that is mana enhancing
- clarifying and differentiating the ICM and Navigator roles so that each knows the scope and limits of the roles
- providing more training for ICMs and Navigators on the housing sector, the Housing Register, and Work and Income entitlements
- providing training and guidelines about building effective whānau relationships, and developing mechanisms to assess relationships and ways to manage relationship breakdowns with whānau
- strengthening relationships between ICMs and Navigators to improve communication, information sharing, and coordination of whānau support
- identifying how best to support whānau with substance use and mental health issues, given the lack of services to refer to
- improving technology systems to be less time consuming for ICMs and Navigators.

The Initiatives could also be strengthened through reviewing the design and policy supporting their implementation, specifically:

- Decrease whānau stress by reviewing the policy and process to assess ongoing eligibility for EH-SNG, particularly demonstrating weekly house search activities given the lack of transitional and other housing.
- Discuss with Māori and iwi leaders how to enhance the Initiatives for whānau Māori.

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- Review the eligibility criteria to assess the benefit of whānau being allocated to an ICM or Navigator when they first move into emergency housing.
- Extend the service to support whānau after they have moved into long-term housing to help whānau maintain stability and health and sustain their tenancies.

Evaluation conclusion

The Initiatives contribute to implementing the Homelessness Action Plan by providing holistic support to whānau in emergency housing. Through training, programmes and personalised support and advocacy, the Initiatives are building the capability of whānau in emergency housing to search for houses and sustain their tenancies. The Initiatives also contribute to system enabler focus areas through strengthening inter-agency collaboration and networks.

The Initiatives are not designed to address the underlying barriers and lack of housing supply resulting in whānau being in emergency housing. This lack of focus on the underlying issues creates disappointment for whānau, who assume the Initiatives will help them get a home. Not being housed decreases the value of the Initiatives for whānau. The question remains whether the Initiatives are best placed to meet whānau need in the current housing context, and how the Initiatives contribute to meeting MSD's strategic goals and the goals of the Homelessness Action Plan.

In the future, consideration is needed to:

- Ensure Māori and Pacific Navigator providers are enabled to adapt and deliver the initiatives to best meet the needs of whānau. This approach will align with the Te Pae Tata principle to form genuine partnerships with Māori—Kotahitanga. Māori providers may be better able to deliver the Initiatives to benefit whānau.
- Determine the need for separate ICM and Navigator roles.
- Determine whether all whānau in emergency housing will benefit from intensive ICM and Navigator support. MSD already assigns a dedicated case manager to all whānau in emergency housing. In extending the service, care is needed to avoid duplication and additional burden on whānau.
- Assess the impact of short-term extensions to EH-SNG and ensure ICMs and Navigator providers do not take a punitive approach to support. Requiring whānau to meet housing search targets does not align with the Initiatives' design.
- Extend support to whānau transitioning to permanent housing, recognising the work already done by many Navigators and some ICMs.

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The Initiatives context

This section describes the context and rationale for the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) establishing the Intensive Case Manager (ICM) and Navigator Initiatives (the Initiatives). The section covers:

- the impact of homelessness and the multiple factors influencing homelessness in Aotearoa
- how the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020-2023) seeks to address homelessness
- the evidence supporting the use of intensive case management in increasing the wellbeing of people experiencing housing instability
- the problem the Initiatives are seeking to address, an overview of their design, and their intended outcomes.

Homelessness is a significant issue in Aotearoa

In Census 2018, more than 102,000 people were severely housing deprived

In Census 2018, severe housing deprivation amounted to around two percent of the Aotearoa population (Amore, Viggers & Chapman, 2021). However, the increasing cost of housing and the impact of COVID-19 have increased housing deprivation across Aotearoa.

Homelessness or severe housing deprivation[1] is described as:

> *"a living situation where people with no other options to acquire safe and secure housing are without shelter, in temporary accommodation, sharing accommodation with a household, or living in uninhabitable housing" (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).[2]*

Compared with 2013, the rate of severe housing deprivation in 2018 had increased by about 4,400 people. In 2018, the severely housing deprived population was disproportionately young, with nearly 50 percent aged under 25 years of age.

Māori have high rates of severe housing deprivation

Colonisation and historic trauma associated with the confiscation of land, urban migration, and discrimination inequitably affect Māori experiences of homelessness (Lawson-Te Aho et al., 2019). Severe housing deprivation prevalence rates for Māori are four times the

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[1] In this report, we have used the term homelessness. However, when referring to documents that use the term severe housing deprivation, we have used this term (e.g., Statistics New Zealand).

[2] Living without shelter includes people living outside with no shelter or a makeshift shelter, sleeping in cars, or living on the street. Temporary accommodation is usually accommodation that is intended for overnight or 24-hour use. It may include hostels, transitional housing, women's refuges. It may also include longer term accommodation such as boarding houses or motor homes. Sharing accommodation includes temporarily sharing someone else's private dwelling. Uninhabitable housing is accommodation that is unsuitable to be lived in, such as a dilapidated building (Statistics New Zealand, 2014; see also Amore, 2016).

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European rate. Rates of severe housing deprivation are highest among Māori young people. The highest rates of severe housing deprivation are in Northland, Gisborne, and Auckland (Amore, Viggers & Chapman, 2021). In 2020, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing concluded:

> *Targeted action is […] required urgently to meet the current housing needs of Māori as a means to both promote human rights and restore Te Tiriti rights. (Farha, 2020)*

The Waitangi Tribunal Housing Policy and Services Kaupapa Inquiry (Wai 2750) has been hearing grievances on housing policy and services. Given the high rates of Māori experiencing homelessness, the Government will need to carefully consider the findings of the Kaupapa Inquiry currently underway on Housing Policy and Services, with a focus on the Crown's Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities regarding Māori experiences of housing policy and services. This evaluation reinforces the call by whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities for transformative change and action.

Pacific people also have high rates of severe housing deprivation

Pacific people's severe housing deprivation prevalence rates are six times the New Zealand European rate, with rates being highest among Pacific young people (Amore, Viggers & Chapman, 2021). Thirty-eight percent of Pacific households live in overcrowded living conditions and are vulnerable to increasing rental costs and insecure tenures (Statistics New Zealand, 2020).

Other groups particularly at risk or overrepresented in homelessness statistics include refugees, rainbow community/takatāpui, disabled people, people with mental health and addiction needs, and young people (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2020).

People experiencing homelessness have poorer health and social outcomes

A home is essential to wellbeing. A stable and affordable home provides a crucial platform for recovery, employment, education, and broader community engagement and participation. Internationally, research has shown people who are homeless have worse physical and emotional health status than other populations, higher rates of infectious and non-communicable diseases, higher prevalence of psychiatric diagnoses, and higher drug and alcohol dependency compared to those who are not homeless (Fazel, Geddes & Kushel, 2014; Ponka et al., 2020).

People experiencing homelessness are often marginalised and may experience dehumanising and structurally violent systems.[3] Their negative experiences of social services

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[3] Structural violence is the way that social and political structures and systems are used to disadvantage and control people, particularly people marginalised by these systems (Hodgetts et al., 2014; Magwood et al., 2019). For example, structural violence may be technocratic or technological systems to apply for entitlements or support. These systems may be inaccessible or extremely difficult to navigate, and exclude or make difficult for people to access their entitlements. Institutionalised racism is also a manifestation of structural violence.

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and support affect access to housing and housing stability (Magwood et al., 2019). System-level challenges, such as lack of affordable housing, provider attitudes and behaviour, and discriminatory systems compound health and social barriers to secure and sustained housing.

Multiple factors influence homelessness in Aotearoa

Housing unaffordability and high demand for emergency housing[4] considerably impact homelessness in New Zealand (Laing, Steven, & Nissanka, 2018). In 2017, housing providers reported housing unaffordability as an important factor for whānau seeking housing support. A shortage of emergency housing affects providers' ability to support these people (Laing, Steven, & Nissanka, 2018). Intergenerational poverty, and compounding factors such as mental health status, addiction, and trauma, further affect wellbeing, health, and housing security for New Zealanders (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2020).

The Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020-2023) seeks to address homelessness

In February 2020, the Aotearoa New Zealand Homelessness Action Plan (2020-2023) (the Plan) was publicly released. The Plan was developed and is jointly owned by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), MSD, Kāinga Ora, Ministry of Health, Te Puni Kōkiri, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Department of Corrections, New Zealand Police and Oranga Tamariki. The plan aims to deliver on the Government's goal that homelessness is prevented where possible, or is rare, brief and non-recurring.

The Government funds a range of responses to reduce homelessness and the impact of homelessness, including financial support (the Accommodation Supplement and Temporary Additional Support[5]), Housing First, transitional housing[6] and public housing mechanisms (including Income-Related Rent Subsidies). These responses are either delivered or funded by MSD or by HUD and delivered by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Community Housing Providers, Work and Income or Kāinga Ora.

MSD is responsible for client-facing functions, such as assessing client eligibility for public housing and managing the Housing Register. MSD is also responsible for assessing and paying a range of housing-related financial assistance, including the Accommodation

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[4] Emergency housing tends to be short-term accommodation such as motels, hotels, campgrounds.
[5] The Accommodation Supplement is a weekly financial payment to help people who are not in public housing to meet their accommodation costs. The Temporary Additional Support is a weekly payment to help people cover essential costs.
[6] Transitional housing provides short-term accommodation for people and whānau who have nowhere to live and are struggling to find a place to rent. People in transitional housing also receive tailored support, including budgeting advice, social services, or help with finding longer-term housing. Individuals and whānau will stay at a place for 12 weeks, and once they have found permanent housing, they may receive a further 12 weeks of support.

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Supplement and Emergency Housing Special Needs Grants (EH-SNG). MSD also delivers housing-related support, including support provided by ICMs/Navigators.

People who receive an EH-SNG from MSD are currently placed in motels due to the high demand for transitional housing and lack of available Kāinga Ora housing and affordable private rental accommodation.

In the quarter to September 2021, 357,370 people received the Accommodation Supplement, and 86,808 received the Temporary Additional Support grant (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Sept. 2021). In the same quarter, 1,248 households were housed through Housing First, with 3,968 households accepted to the programme. A further 4,710 transitional housing places were available for tenanting. In addition, 74,825 homes were tenanted by people eligible for public housing (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Sept. 2021).

Intensive case management can improve the wellbeing of people experiencing housing instability

Intensive case management can be an effective intervention mechanism to support people navigating health care settings, reduce hospital admissions, and improve the quality of life of health consumers (Hudon et al., 2019; Smith & Newton, 2007). A review of published international studies found intensive case management significantly reduced the number of days spent homeless compared to usual services (Ponka et al., 2020).[7] However, intensive case management had no significant effect on the number of days spent in stable housing compared to usual services. Aubry et al. (2020) found housing subsidies alongside case management contributed to increasing the number of days stably housed.

Some studies also found that in time-limited interventions, intensive case management led to more participants being housed, and reduced time spent in emergency and transitional housing (Ponka et al. 2020). In addition, some evidence shows intensive case management improved mental health outcomes, and some studies found intensive case management significantly reduced substance use (Ponka et al., 2020).

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[7] Ponka et al. (2020) provide a useful taxonomy of case management styles and compare the evidence on outcomes of standard case management, intensive case management, assertive community treatment and critical time intervention.

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MSD developed the Initiatives to better support people receiving EH-SNG

In May 2020, MSD established the Initiatives. The overall goal of the Initiatives is to improve the wellbeing and stability of clients receiving the EH-SNG, enabling them to engage with the housing system and sustain housing in the long term. The initiatives are not intended to secure homes for whānau.

The Initiatives are based on the theory that intensive, personalised, single point of contact support will help clients improve housing stability. Personalised support can increase trust between clients and MSD and facilitate engagement with wider support services.

The Initiatives aim to:

- increase understanding and access to support services for clients, whānau and families, including culturally appropriate services responsive to Māori and Pacific worldviews, values and experiences (e.g., kaupapa Māori approaches)—as defined by MSD in their documents and contracts
- improve whānau readiness to engage with housing support and other services
- increase self-efficacy for clients, family and whānau to engage with the housing sector
- increase social support and connectedness for clients, family, whānau and community
- address immediate health and wellbeing needs for clients, family or whānau
- reduce housing stress and trauma for clients, whānau and family.

In the long term, the Initiatives intend to:

- enable greater access to stable housing solutions
- help whānau remain engaged with ICMs/Navigators until their case is closed
- help whānau trust staff to re-engage with MSD and providers in the future
- ensure Māori and other participant groups achieve the intended outcomes equitably
- improve long-term health and social outcomes for whānau.

The Initiatives aim to contribute to outcomes for the person receiving the EH-SNG and for wider whānau or family, including children (e.g., by contributing to housing stability that enables children to continue attending school). The long-term outcome of more clients securing appropriate housing is reliant on other factors, such as an increase in the supply of affordable housing. There is a logic model for the Initiatives (Appendix A) which describes the theory of change and desired outcomes. This programme logic was designed by MSD, not Litmus. More comprehensive development of the logic in the design process for these Initiatives may have helped to support better implementation.

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ICMs and Navigators provide personalised support

In May 2020, MSD completed recruitment and contracting for the ICM and Navigator support services. The Initiative funds full-time equivalent (FTE) for 94 ICMs, 62 Navigators and 35 Support Service staff. Providers can reallocate Support Service FTE to Navigators to meet demand in their region.

ICMs are employed by MSD and work out of Work and Income offices. They assess and approve MSD entitlements, advocate for whānau[8] with other agencies, refer whānau to external services, and can access additional funding for whānau through the Flexi-fund. Most ICMs do not meet whānau outside of Work and Income offices. However, in Hamilton, an ICM is co-located with a Navigator provider.

Navigators operate in the community. They visit clients at their emergency housing, request MSD review whānau entitlements and funding, refer whānau to other support agencies, and can attend community-based meetings with whānau.

MSD uses various criteria to determine whether clients receiving an EH-SNG are allocated an ICM or a Navigator. The criteria include the length of their stay in emergency housing and complexity of physical or mental health needs. The initial design intended caseloads to be 1:20. Most ICMs and Navigators who participated in the evaluation have a case load between 20 and 25 whānau.

We describe how the Initiatives are delivered and the client pathway here.

The Initiatives are funded to support around 1,200 people

MSD intended for the Initiatives to support people receiving an EH-SNG who face barriers to accessing stable housing. Given the rise in emergency housing demand, the Initiatives now support more people than initially intended.

In November 2021, 6,222 unique clients received the EH-SNG.[9] The primary applicants in emergency housing were 61 percent Māori, 34 percent Pākehā, 14 percent Pacific Peoples,

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[8] We refer to whānau throughout this report to describe people who access ICM and Navigator support. Whānau can mean a single person, a couple, a single parent with children, two parents with children, caregivers/adults with children and intergenerational families. In this evaluation, intergenerational families were not housed together in emergency housing. However, multiple generations of the same whānau were in emergency housing and were applying for a single home together.

[9] Retrieved from https://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Statistics-and-Research/Public-housing-reports/Quarterly-reports/Public-housing-quarterly-report-September-2021.pdf

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and 6 percent other ethnicities.[10] Of the primary applicants in emergency housing, 1,611 were between 25 and 34 years old.

Of these people, the number receiving ICM or Navigator support changes from week to week. In the last week of June 2021, ICMs supported approximately 1,750 clients, and Navigators supported around 900 clients.[11] These clients may overlap as many have access to both an ICM and a Navigator. In total, over 11,700 unique clients accessed support from either an ICM or Navigator (or both) between September 2019 and June 2021.[12]

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[10] Total count of ethnicity does not equal 100 percent as one person may identify with more than one ethnicity. Data is retrieved from MSD's Monthly Housing Update (November, 2021), from https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/housing/monthly-housing-update/2021/nov/monthly-housing-update-november-2021.pdf. Data is incomplete as the ethnicity and age are not recorded for all clients. The primary applicant in emergency housing refers to the individual receiving the EH-SNG but does not include their whānau who are also resident in emergency housing.
[11] Drawn from MSD operational data provided to the evaluation team 22 September 2021.
[12] Ibid.

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Qualitative evaluation approach

This section describes the qualitative process evaluation approach and methods.

The evaluation responds to three key evaluation questions

The evaluation assessed the Initiatives' design, implementation and short-term outcomes. The qualitative process evaluation answered three key evaluation questions.

1. How well are the ICM and Navigator Initiatives being implemented against their intended design, recognising the need for regional adaption?
2. How well are the Initiatives contributing to achieving their intended short-term outcomes?
3. How might the Initiatives be refined to improve outcomes for clients, particularly Māori and Pacific people, and other groups?

The sub-evaluation questions are at Appendix B.

We used a qualitative evaluation approach

We used Patton's (2008) utilisation-focussed evaluation approach. This approach argues evaluations should produce useful information to inform decision-making about a service. To increase usability, we engaged with MSD's Service Delivery team and Research and Evaluation team at critical evaluation stages, including design and planning, recruitment and engagement with participants, and analysis and reporting. These engagements enabled the ongoing refinement of the evaluation and offered early insights into the findings.

We evaluated the Initiatives from April to October 2021. In July, we conducted interviews across three sites (Auckland, Rotorua and Hamilton). MSD selected the three sites based on the number of people currently in emergency housing and the high need in these locations.

We interviewed 26 whānau and 30 MSD and NGO stakeholders

Interviews were held face-to-face in a safe and comfortable place or via phone call, and lasted up to 60 minutes. We conducted interviews in July 2021. Whānau received a $50 supermarket voucher koha.

The MSD Research Ethics Panel reviewed the evaluation approach. We followed the agreed recruitment processes that protected participant privacy and complied with the ethics review.

To recruit whānau participants, MSD generated a list of 25 to 30 eligible whānau in each region. Eligible whānau were currently receiving the EH-SNG or had received it within the last month and did not have any serious health or security flags. ICMs in each region then

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reviewed the list to ensure potential participants did not have any additional risks to participants or interviewers.

MSD provided the final list of 81 eligible participants containing names, contact phone numbers and email addresses. Litmus contacted participants on the list until we reached our target number of interviews or exhausted the contact list. Our detailed recruitment approach is in Appendix C. Throughout recruitment, we followed informed consent processes.

The interview sample reflects the higher numbers of Māori and Pacific people living in emergency housing. The achieved sample is a purposive sample to offer an overview of the differing perspectives that whānau may hold. Table 1 provides the sample profile of the 26 whānau.

Table 1: Profile of whānau interviewed

Domain	Profile	Auckland n=10	Rotorua n=9	Hamilton n=7	Total n=26
Stage	In emergency or transitional housing	9	6	7	**22**
	Exited the service	1	3	-	**4**
Gender	Male	3	3	1	**7**
	Female	7	6	6	**19**
Ethnicity	Māori	3	8	3	**14**
	Pasifika	6	1	-	**7**
	Pākehā	1	-	-	**1**
	Unknown[13]	-	-	4	**4**
Provider	ICM	4	1	4	**9**
	Housing Navigator	5	8	1	**14**
	Both	1	-	2	**3**

To recruit MSD staff and providers, we worked with MSD to identify and contact Work and Income offices and Navigator providers to interview. We provided an information sheet about the evaluation to the offices and invited people to participate in an interview. Table 2 provides the sample profile of MSD staff and providers.

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[13] Ethnicity was defined through self-identification. Some whānau interviewed did not provide their ethnicity.

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Table 2: MSD staff and provider interviews across the three case studies

Total sample	Sub-groups	Auckland n=10	Rotorua n=7	Hamilton n=13	Total n=30
MSD	ICMs	3	2	3	**8**
	Housing managers and others	2	1	1	**4**
Navigator providers	Navigators	5	3	6	**14**
	Housing managers and others	-	1	3	**4**

Appendix D contains the evaluation data collection tools, including client and stakeholder information sheets, consent forms and discussion guides. The Evaluation Plan contains further details of the evaluation method (see Appendix E).

We used an integrated data analysis approach

We transcribed all in-depth interviews. We held an analysis workshop with the evaluation team to develop code frames for the inductive analysis. We thematically coded the interviews to identify key themes from whānau and stakeholder perspectives. We synthesised the themes from whānau and stakeholder interviews to answer the three key evaluation questions.

The report structure addresses the key evaluation questions

The report presents:

- The design of the Initiatives using an agile design
- A description of the current delivery of the Initiatives recognising the design flexibility
- A qualitative profile of whānau using the service based on interviews with whānau
- An assessment of how well the Initiatives are being implemented
- The short-term outcomes emerging from the implementation of the Initiatives from whānau and provider perspectives
- The factors that enable the implementation of the Initiatives, and areas to strengthen
- The evaluation conclusions on the overall qualitative assessment of the Initiatives and their role in the Homelessness Action Plan.

We are confident the report represents the information we received from whānau and stakeholders through the qualitative interviews.

The report reflects the themes arising from the analysis and are supported by de-identified quotes. We use the terms "many or most", "some" and "few" in the report to indicate the frequency of the themes across interviews:

- "Many or most" indicates the majority of participants interviewed noted the theme

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- "Some" indicates fewer than half of the participants interviewed identified the theme
- "Few" indicates less than five participants noted the theme.

Limitations of our approach

We interviewed few whānau who had exited emergency housing

Of whānau interviewed, 22 of the 26 were in emergency housing. As a result, we have limited insights into outcomes achieved by whānau who have left the Initiatives. A future outcome evaluation could assess the outcomes for whānau who have exited the service.

We did not interview all the provider organisations in the three locations

We interviewed one provider in Auckland and two in Rotorua and Hamilton, respectively. The findings reflect these organisations' service delivery and whānau experience. Service delivery and whānau experience may vary in other locations. However, we found the feedback on the Initiatives was consistent across the three locations of this evaluation.

The qualitative process evaluation did not analyse administrative data

We do not know the quantitative profile of users for the service or who, if anyone, is missing out from the service.

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How were the Initiatives designed?

This section describes the Initiatives' design.

MSD used an agile design to stand up the Initiatives

In 2019, MSD designed the Initiatives quickly to respond to emerging needs. The design was agile as it focused on practical, immediate, and easily funded solutions to the housing crisis. The design was refined through the early implementation stages.

The design linked the Initiatives to the Homelessness Action Plan (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2020). The Action Plan has four key focus areas: prevention, supply, support and system enablers. The Initiatives contribute to achieving support outcomes by helping people get back on their feet and ready for stable housing as soon as possible. This support focus recognises barriers that prevent people with low income or emergency housing from being chosen as tenants in the private rental market (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2020).

The Initiative design created flexibility for providers, ICMs and Navigators in delivering the services around the core design concept. We describe the current delivery of the Initiatives here.

Māori and Pacific whānau or providers did not inform the design

MSD has a clear obligation to improve outcomes for Māori through Te Tiriti o Waitangi and *Te Pae Tata*[14] (MSD's Māori Strategy and Action Plan). Te Pae Tata provides a clear direction on the importance of meaningful relationships with Māori to achieve better outcomes for Māori.

Te Pae Tata articulates the organisational shifts needed to achieve better outcomes for all New Zealanders, and how MSD can realise these shifts for Māori:

- *Mana Manaaki*: A positive experience every time – *We will earn the respect and trust of Māori*
- *Kotahitanga*: Partnering for greater impact – *We will form genuine partnerships with Māori*
- *Kia Takatū Tātou*: Supporting long term social and economic development – *We will support Māori aspirations.*

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[14] https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/strategies/te-pae-tata/te-pae-tata-maori-strategy-and-action-plan-single.pdf

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Not involving Māori and Pacific providers and whānau at the design stage of the Initiatives was a missed opportunity for MSD. These providers offer diverse and innovative responses to homelessness which can benefit MSD service design.

Many Māori and Pacific providers use Whānau Ora[15] delivery in their services. Whānau Ora is a proven, effective way of working for Māori whānau and Pacific families. MSD can use the learnings from Whānau Ora to apply to future design and improvements to the Initiatives. In addition, MSD has partnership accords with Te Hiku o Te Ika and strategic partnerships with iwi. These partnerships are an opportunity to support and enable iwi housing aspirations through the Initiatives.

The design is centred around two similar roles

The design created the roles of the ICMs and Navigators to meet whānau needs. In the original design, ICMs were intended to focus on entitlements, building client trust with MSD and navigating to other MSD support. ICMs were not intended to engage with whānau in the community. The Navigator role based in NGOs was designed to manage the needs of whānau who were unlikely to engage well with MSD. A lack of clarity in the differentiation in these roles is here.

The contracting model is challenging for Navigator providers

Navigator providers often manage multiple MSD contracts in the housing and social support space. Managing the reporting for multiple contracts is time-consuming. Furthermore, contracts are short-term (two-yearly). This contracting model means Navigator providers employ Navigators without long-term certainty and must spend time demonstrating their value to MSD.

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[15] Whānau Ora is a culturally-anchored approach, shaped by Māori worldviews, cultural norms, traditions and heritage. Whānau Ora puts whānau in charge of decision-making, empowering them to identify their aspirations to improve their lives and build their capability to achieve their goals. (Whānau Ora Review, 2018, p.5)

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Qualitative service user profile

This section provides a profile of whānau who use the service, their resilience, and the stressors they face in seeking to secure housing. This information is from qualitative data. We do not have quantitative data on the service user profile. Having quantitative data about whānau using the service and their service use (i.e., entrance and exit) would strengthen this evaluation. We recommend capturing and analysing quantitative administrative data as a priority going forward.

Whānau receiving ICM and Navigator support are resilient in complex contexts

The Initiatives come from a problem definition that views some whānau as not having the skills or capabilities to navigate the housing sector. In contrast, whānau interviewed demonstrate resilience and persistence in advocating for their needs and rights. They seek innovative solutions across health, housing, and social services.

Whānau prioritise their health, wellbeing, and education and that of their tamariki. Many whānau are managing complex health needs, including the health impacts of poor-quality housing. Whānau work to stay within their communities to maintain relationships and friendships. They work to avoid moving children out of their current school zone.

Whānau repeatedly advocate for their needs with providers and government agencies

This advocacy requires whānau persistence and is exhausting. Whānau can feel whakamā (ashamed) for asking for help frequently.

Whānau in emergency housing manage relationships across multiple organisations and agencies. These agencies include Kāinga Ora, Department of Corrections, Oranga Tamariki and MSD. Many also work with NGOs such as the Salvation Army, medical providers, social housing providers, mental health and Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) treatment providers. Managing relationships is challenging and time-consuming for many whānau.

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System-wide factors lead to whānau housing insecurity

Whānau are experiencing housing insecurity due to the housing shortage, lack of social housing and an expensive private rental market.

Many whānau experience discrimination and barriers in the private rental market. These barriers include:

- private landlords or tenancy managers unwilling to rent properties to whānau who are receiving a Work and Income entitlement, particularly single parents
- unavailability of properties suitable for larger whānau (three or more children) and private landlords or tenancy managers being unwilling to rent properties to larger whānau
- whānau having been involved in previous tenancy tribunal cases
- whānau having poor credit histories
- a lack of accessible properties for whānau with disabled whānau members
- if whānau have been directed by court orders to live in specific areas.

> *"It is hard getting a house because not many property renters deal with Work and Income, so if you sign up, they say, 'Oh, what's your occupation?' 'WINZ.' They don't give you the house because of the hassle with Work and Income, like redirecting money and stuff, and the bond and things." (Whānau)*

Whānau experience employment insecurity, lack of employment opportunities and financial insecurity. Many whānau work multiple short-term contracts to meet their financial needs and manage Work and Income expectations.

> *"These clients are already in emergency housing, and they are struggling. By the time they come to us, it's like they don't know what to do. So they are highly vulnerable families. It's never straightforward like, 'Okay, no housing', and then they go into social housing or a private rental and start clean. These families have a lot of other circumstances, and that's why they come to our caseload." (ICM)*

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How are the Initiatives delivered?

This section describes the Initiatives' delivery pathway. The section demonstrates that the Initiatives are being delivered broadly according to their intended design. The description of the Initiatives' delivery pathway covers:

- The referral and enrolment process into the Initiatives from MSD identifying whānau requiring support and ICMs and Navigators connecting with referred whānau
- An overview of the types of support ICMs and Navigators provide to whānau
- How whānau exit the Initiatives using various pathways, and support offered after exit
- How COVID-19 impacted the Initiatives' delivery.

MSD identifies whānau who are receiving EH-SNG to support

ICM and Navigator services are based on a proactive strategy of identifying whānau who would benefit from additional support to stabilise their housing situation. Most whānau are identified for support through MSD data on whānau receiving EH-SNG and by Housing Case Managers, General Case Managers, or Emergency Housing Case Managers.

The criteria for support are broad and vary, based on whānau need and complexity. The first criterion is the length of stay in emergency housing. MSD refers whānau for ICM or Navigator support who have spent more than 16 weeks[16] in emergency housing or are recurrent recipients of EH-SNG. The aim is to provide support to whānau with the greatest need.

Whānau with complex physical or mental health needs requiring specific housing solutions are also referred for support. These needs affect their ability to move out of emergency housing. For example, few private rentals and Kāinga Ora homes are available for people with a wheelchair and other disability access needs. Ongoing mental health needs or a history of poor mental health can also limit whānau ability to access permanent housing without support. Whānau who struggle to secure housing that meets their needs, such as whānau who have three or more children, can be referred for ICM or Navigator support.

Other factors MSD uses to identify whānau for support include those receiving multiple hardship grants, high household debt, engagement with multiple agencies (for example, Oranga Tamariki or Department of Corrections), and potential school disruption.

Occasionally, a Work and Income case manager will ask an ICM for support or advice about a client. If the ICM considers the whānau would benefit from intensive support, they may add them to their caseload.

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[16] Some whānau may be identified for support earlier than 16 weeks.

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ICMs and Navigators connect with referred whānau

Allocation to ICM or Navigator services varies regionally and depends on the type and capability of the Navigator services in each region. Whānau directed to Navigator providers usually have had long-term and sometimes negative relationships with Work and Income. They are more likely to be individuals with experience of chronic homelessness.

ICMs can refer whānau to a Navigator provider if preferred by whānau.

ICMs and Navigators organise an initial meeting with whānau

ICMs and Navigators have a similar approach to meeting and assessing whānau needs. Following referral, ICMs contact whānau by phone and meet to discuss their housing support experiences and needs. ICMs only meet whānau at Work and Income offices.

Navigators also contact whānau following referral to set up an initial meeting. Their approach to setting up a meeting varies depending on the provider. Some providers immediately organise an in-person meeting with whānau. Other providers correspond by text messages or phone calls until the whānau and Navigator meet face-to-face. Navigators meet whānau at their offices, at the whānau accommodation (e.g., emergency housing motel or other emergency housing), or another location.

ICMs and Navigators use their initial meeting to build a relationship with whānau

The focus of the first meeting is to identify whānau needs and strengths. The initial meetings can take over an hour. Usually, ICMs and Navigators will follow up the initial meeting with further phone conversations and may have another meeting to ensure they have all the information they need.

During the initial meeting, ICMs and Navigators ask about whānau context, other services whānau are working with, the health and wellbeing needs of parents and children, employment and income status, and any other relevant factors.

ICMs may also ask about the MSD entitlements whānau are receiving and assess whether these are correct. ICMs use whānau information to assess whānau status on the Housing Register and ensure this is correct. If ICMs need any further information for the Housing Register, they ask whānau to provide this.

ICMs invite whānau to contact them directly for any housing or Work and Income support or questions. They usually provide their personal MSD contact information to whānau or tell whānau to ask for them when contacting the Work and Income office. They tell whānau not to contact the Work and Income 0800 number.

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ICMs and Navigators provide similar types of support to whānau

Both ICMs and Navigators work with whānau to identify and work towards whānau-led goals

Most ICMs and Navigators do not focus on housing immediately. They ask whānau what their priorities are and adapt their support around these priorities. This approach gives them more time to work with whānau to increase their capability and increase whānau housing resilience.

> *"First and foremost, we'll be meeting in person, and from there, just being able to gauge what their thoughts are, what their goals are. Is housing a priority for them? Maybe it's not. Maybe it's jobs, and maybe it's stuff with Nan at the moment. Maybe it's the kids, playing up at school, not attending school, all sorts. And I guess that's where I'd start having conversations around priorities and where they see themselves in three months, six months." (ICM)*

ICMs and Navigators provide practical support to improve whānau wellbeing

ICMs and Navigators ensure whānau receive food grants when they need it or equipment to support whānau to live well in emergency housing (such as cooking equipment in the motel). ICMs can access Flexi-funding to support whānau health and wellbeing where needed.

> *"If whānau need food one week, we then help them with food. If they need help with petrol costs, we help them with petrol costs, or clothing or whatever their needs are, we're here to assist, and we should be working with them for that." (ICM)*

ICMs and Navigators encourage whānau to attend health and wellbeing services, especially General Practice. ICMs and Navigators also phone whānau to check how they are doing in emergency housing and see if whānau need anything or if the circumstances have changed since they last spoke.

ICMs and Navigators support whānau to maintain their children's wellbeing

ICMs and Navigators help whānau maintain children's access to school by providing petrol vouchers where needed. Some Navigators provide transport support to pick up and drop off children at schools.

> *"I have a client who has moved out of an area, and her son goes to a special school. We have some funding that will help with supporting them to get to school. Making sure that she continues to take her child to school, just by providing petrol vouchers, just to assist them for the month." (Navigator)*

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ICMs also provide funding so children can attend school and holiday programmes that whānau may not otherwise access.

One Navigator provider has a dedicated Tamariki Navigator who supports tamariki, while the Housing Navigator works with the adults. They provide wraparound support for tamariki, including educational and health support. The Ministry of Education funds this role.

ICMs and Navigators help build whānau knowledge about tenancy rights and the rental market

In most regions, Kāinga Ora has few available homes and a very long waitlist. ICMs encourage whānau to focus on alternatives to Kāinga Ora housing, including private rental or living with whānau.

Both ICMs and Navigators check that whanau are registered, able to access, and confident using the Tenancy Portal to search for and apply for properties to rent. They also help whānau gather information to apply for private rentals, such as referral letters. They may help whānau build their tenant portfolio and present their information in a way that manages or pre-empts landlords' potential questions.

ICMs and Navigators also provide advice about applying for private rental properties and how to best present to landlords and tenancy managers.

> *"A lot of the time, it's people who have limited to no tenancy history. Sometimes they don't know what to do, how to fill out a form, what they need to bring. So, I mean, a few weeks ago, I did help a client fill out an application. She just didn't know what to add in for referees and that kind of stuff. I had to guide her through, just look at character references and all that kind of stuff." (ICM)*

ICMs refer whānau to a "Ready to Rent" programme in all regions. This programme helps prepare whānau for private rentals. Whānau who attend the programme receive a certificate to support their applications in the private rental market.

Some ICMs and Navigators also search online for suitable properties for whānau and send these to whānau for review so that whānau can apply for the properties. In addition, some Navigators provide transport for whānau to go to property viewings and attend these with whānau.

ICMs and Navigators support whānau to reduce barriers to accessing long-term housing

ICMs and Navigators work with whānau to identify barriers to private rental or Kāinga Ora housing. For example, they may encourage whānau to expand the areas they are willing to move to or live in.

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ICMs and Navigators also support whānau to get a photo ID. Some whānau members do not have any form of photo ID, limiting their ability to apply online for properties or other support. ICMs and Navigators work with whānau to apply for 18+ cards or updated drivers' licences.

In some cases, ICMs and Navigators work with whānau to address unpaid debt. They also work with landlords and tenancy managers if whānau have a record of tenancy tribunal cases or previous convictions that may affect their ability to rent in the private market.

ICMs and Navigators refer whānau to other community support and services

ICMs and Navigators frequently refer to budgeting services and budgeting programmes. In addition, ICMs and Navigators refer or connect whānau to health and wellbeing services, such as mental health support, AOD treatment services, or dental services. They also refer to other support services such as legal services, iwi services, women's refuges, and the "Ready to Rent" programme.

Some ICMs and Navigators attend meetings between whānau and other service providers

In Auckland, ICMs attend Strengthening Families meetings[17] or Family Group Conferences[18]. Navigators sometimes attend meetings with whānau and other service providers such as Oranga Tamariki, Kāinga Ora, and the Department of Corrections. Navigators sometimes also attend other meetings with whānau as an advocate or support person.

Whānau exit the Initiatives through various pathways

ICM and Navigator support is not time-limited. The Initiatives' design does not identify an expected support length. Whānau exit the Initiatives when they:

- move into secure long-term housing (private rental, Kāinga Ora or other social housing); or
- enter transitional housing (the transitional housing provider will deliver whānau support); or
- move into another home (e.g., a family member's house or shared house); or
- choose to stop receiving support.

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[17] Strengthening Families helps whānau get the best support to thrive. All the people and agencies who are working with whānau come together to agree on how best to support whānau. Eleven New Zealand government agencies are actively involved with Strengthening Families, along with hundreds of community-based services.
[18] If an Oranga Tamariki social worker (or the police) decides after an investigation a child needs care or protection, a Care and Protection Coordinator from Oranga Tamariki will call a Family Group Conference. At a Family Group Conference, members of the child's family or whānau meet with social workers and other people to talk about and plan what needs to happen to make sure the child is safe and well cared for. The conference will make some recommendations about what should happen and work out a plan for the child.

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Navigator providers can exit a whānau from their support if the relationship has broken down or the whānau are not a suitable match for the Navigator provider. However, these whānau remain eligible for ICM support or a different Navigator provider.

Some ICMs and Navigators support whānau after they exit the Initiatives

Some ICMs and Navigators help whānau settle into their new accommodation. Some phone or visit whānau for several weeks after they have exited the Initiatives to make sure they are settled in their new home and know where and how to access further support. These actions reflect both individual and organisational practice and whānau need.

Post-exit support can include making sure whānau have payments organised for power, internet, rent and other costs.

> *"They didn't know how to set it up, so power and internet. Sometimes we're helping at that end as well, where we're organising their electricity company to be set up for them." (ICM)*

Whānau who have exited support occasionally return to ICM or Navigator support if they cannot sustain their tenancy or are in a new living situation.

COVID-19 impacted the Initiatives' delivery

The 2020 COVID-19 lockdown and subsequent lockdowns led to a considerable increase in people needing emergency housing. ICMs and Navigators experienced pressure during the initial lockdown to support the enormous influx of whānau entering emergency housing.

During the March 2020 lockdown, all contact with whānau was by phone. ICMs focussed on approving grants for the increased number of whānau in emergency housing. The increased case load meant ICMs had little time to connect with individual whānau or support their needs beyond approving housing and food grants.

> *"When it came to COVID, instead of having a caseload of clients, I got a caseload of motels. During a week, I often deal with 20, 23 clients; maybe I will see 25. During COVID, I was processing up to 200 a week, I think. Yeah, so during that time, all it was, was just grant, grant, grant. It was just ringing up the motels, giving them the list of the people that I had that day to process, and I said, 'Are these clients still there?' 'Yes, yes, yes.' Okay, grant, grant, grant. And that's all it was. There was some client interaction every now and then because they needed some food or other essentials. But a lot of the time, it was just working with the motels to make sure that all the people in motels have a place to stay." (ICM)*

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Navigators also contacted whānau by phone to check on how they were doing and identify any additional support needed. In addition, navigators provided food parcels for whānau in need, and activities for children.

> *"COVID had a huge impact on us, but our team provided essential services. We did care packages and worked through that whole period. We were making care calls, checking in on the whānau, dropping off kai packages outside their rooms or their houses. Things like that continued." (Navigator manager)*

The Initiatives are being delivered broadly in line with the intended design

The COVID-19 lockdowns and other housing pressures mean considerably more people are receiving EH-SNG than the design anticipated. This increase impacts ICMs' and Navigators' ability to provide the intended support to whānau who need it.

The Initiatives are supporting whānau who need help. ICMs and Navigators connect with whānau and provide similar types of support, with Navigators supporting whānau in the community.

The Initiatives' design did not intend whānau to continue receiving support when they stopped receiving the EH-SNG. However, some ICMs and most Navigators provide some post-exit support.

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How well are the Initiatives being implemented?

This section responds to key evaluation question one: How well are the ICM and Navigator Initiatives being implemented against their intended design, recognising the need for regional adaption? To answer this question, we discuss:

- The knowledgeable and experienced workforce
- Improvements to the referral process
- How the needs assessment enables a whānau-centred response
- How the initiatives support whānau, as intended
- Whānau struggles with MSD emergency housing requirements to extend their stay
- Whānau feedback on referrals to other services
- Challenges for whānau in exiting the Initiatives.

Recommendations from these findings are addressed in the [improvement section](#).

The workforce is knowledgeable and experienced

Most ICMs and Navigators have cross-sector knowledge

Many ICMs and Navigators have extensive experience working in the sector with whānau experiencing homelessness, health issues and other needs. Most ICMs and Navigators know the housing options available for whānau. Many are aware of the range of health and social services that support whānau living in emergency housing. ICMs and Navigators proactively connect with and refer whānau to other organisations and service providers based on their identified need.

> *"I think in integrated [case management], you have to be very well versed in all things MSD, whether it's services, products, providers, benefit entitlements, hardship assistance. You should be able to meet with a person or a family and within two or three questions be able to recognise four or five different options that we could be offering." (ICM)*

ICMs and Navigators have strong interpersonal skills

ICMs and Navigators consider their roles to be relational, not transactional. ICMs and Navigators report that clear communication and strong listening skills are essential for their roles. They are patient and bring empathy to their conversations with whānau. These skills ensure whānau can discuss their needs and experiences. ICMs and Navigators can then develop a whānau-centred response.

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"People skills, empathy, compassion, knowledge on our processes and procedures, and of course legislation. The biggest thing is life skills because even though it is not a requirement to relate to their situation, it does help. It helps with the connection, especially building the rapport with a whānau in emergency housing." (ICM)

More training is needed to build housing sector capability

No national certificate or guidelines exist on "housing navigation". Most ICMs and Navigators had not received any training before starting the role. Although most are very experienced case managers or community workers, many think further training would be helpful.

"There's a huge gap around all of that. So, nobody gives you this handbook of—you'll get the transitional housing guidelines of how to do all the paperwork and admin. But nobody is providing anything around what makes a good Navigator." (Navigator)

Training for ICMs and Navigators will improve whānau experiences. ICMs and Navigators suggest training on:

▪ the Housing Register and how to support people to get on it. Some ICMs had received or were about to receive this training

▪ the type of entitlements available to whānau, the eligibility criteria for these, and how Navigators can support whānau to access these entitlements (for Navigators only). When Navigators do not know available supports, they require extra information or support from ICMs. This process adds unnecessary administrative activities for ICMs

▪ the whānau referral process to the Initiatives (for Navigators only). This information will help them understand how and why whānau are referred to them

▪ the pathways and networks across the housing sector. For example, information on the housing providers operating in their area, access to these, and whānau eligibility criteria. Some ICMs and Navigators already know this information or have these networks. However, newer or younger ICMs and Navigators want more information.

"I think they need to educate people more, or even themselves, to get the right, proper training so that you can give the right support. Do you know what I mean? Instead of just sending someone in there and trying to figure out what support you need, you should already know." (Whānau)

It is not clear who should provide this training.

ICMs and Navigators need clarity on their roles and responsibilities

ICMs and Navigators do not differentiate their roles. The critical differences in the Initiatives' design are that ICMs can grant entitlements (a more transactional role) and are employed by MSD. Navigators can operate in the community (a more whānau-centred role) and are

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employed by contracted non-government providers. However, in practice, both ICMs and Navigators take a holistic approach to supporting whānau.

ICMs had a varied understanding of their role scope. For example, some ICMs reported they do not attend Family Group Conferences (FGC) and consider Navigators can better support whānau in the community. However, in Auckland, ICMs attend Family Group Conferences and support whānau to access community-based services. Differing ICM interpretations of the role mean whānau receive varied support depending on their ICM.

> *"That could be in the means of referring them to a contracted Navigator, who can provide more community support, could help them get registered with a GP, help them get their licence, support them in FGCs. As [Intensive] Case Managers, we can't do that." (ICM)*

Some Navigators report that they are unsure of the ICMs' role and what support ICMs provide whānau beyond granting entitlements. Navigators also varied in the support they provided to whānau, with some Navigators providing intensive whānau-centred support and others being less involved.

The referral process can be improved

Whānau find the referral process confusing

Whānau engage with multiple support services and staff while living in emergency housing. They find it challenging to keep up with new services and their staff. Whānau are often unaware they have been referred to an ICM or Navigator.

Whānau are sometimes confused when a Navigator contacts them about the support they offer. Negative and confusing initial engagement can affect whānau relationship with the Navigator.

> *"Honestly, I don't even know who is working with me because I've been getting different types of social workers from different types of companies." (Whānau)*

Some ICMs are aware of this challenge and are careful to talk with whānau about the referral to a Navigator service, who the Navigator is, and how they will support whānau.

Referral information supports Navigators to build relationships with whānau

Navigators use referral information to build constructive relationships with whānau, maintain their safety, and manage risks. However, referral information from MSD to Navigators can lack information on risks, especially around health and mental health needs.

> *"Another barrier is that sometimes they come to us, and we don't actually have any background info about them. So, then we're starting right from the bottom, and things*

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pop up out of nowhere. Like, this person has a real short temper, really quick to get triggered. What are their triggers? And then you end up finding out about these things the hard way." (Navigator)

MSD is unlikely to know this information unless the whānau have worked with an ICM before referral to a Navigator.

Whānau may benefit from earlier engagement with an ICM or Navigator

Most whānau referred to an ICM or Navigator have been in emergency housing recurrently or over 16 weeks. Some ICMs recommend a more proactive approach targeting whānau when they first enter emergency housing. They note this is an opportunity for case managers to discuss alternatives to emergency housing with whānau. MSD currently allocates a Housing Case Manager to everyone in emergency housing. However, front-line case managers do not have time to have the in-depth conversations needed and provide different support to ICMs.

> *"When I think about when a family first walks into the office and is met by a Case Manager completing an initial assessment around the housing needs, housing support, this for me is a pivotal, crucial time. Because you're either giving them the keys to a motel or you're offering them options: 'Have you thought about A, B, C, D first?'" (ICM)*

The needs assessment enables a whānau-centred response

ICMs and Navigators use a conversational needs assessment process

The Initiatives do not have a defined needs assessment process. ICMs and Navigators adapt their organisations' assessment processes to identify whānau needs and deliver an appropriate whānau-centred response. Navigator organisations benefit from using assessment processes that work best for their organisation.

ICMs and Navigators both focus on whānau context, needs, and goals. They use a conversational approach to gather information about whānau. They discuss health and wellbeing, immediate physical needs, and long-term aspirations (such as further study or getting a driver's license).

> *"With complex clients that we work with, we're trying to address barriers and social issues that they may be confronting. We're looking into health issues. We're looking at medical issues. It could be drug and alcohol addiction. It could also be involvement with Oranga Tamariki. Often, housing is the last thing on their mind." (ICM)*

Whakawhanaungatanga is integral to the relationship building

All ICMs and Navigators agree that building a relationship with whānau is critical during the initial assessment. Building a relationship involves getting to know whānau holistically and developing connections with them. This process builds trust so whānau can openly communicate their needs and barriers to housing.

Māori ICMs and Navigators describe building connections by starting with karakia, talking about whānau, connections and relationships, and sharing about themselves. The quote below demonstrates how they do this.

> *"We're looking at that holistic approach … When I work with families for the first time when I meet them, they're often Māori, so there's a connection there between us. It'll be 'Who are your people? Where are you from? Oh, your last name's [name], so you must be from Te Kūiti. Now tell me about your parents. What's your whakapapa?' That's how we connect in my role as an integrated [case manager]." (ICM)*

Non-Māori ICMs and Navigators did not describe building connections by identifying relationships or whakawhanaungatanga in this way.

Whānau, ICMs and Navigators prefer face-to-face contact

Most ICMs and Navigators prefer face-to-face conversations to build relationships and identify whānau support needs. Most whānau prefer face-to-face contact but are open to phone or text engagement. Phone and text contact can be helpful for single parents who find it difficult to organise transport to Work and Income offices or find childcare.

> *"Face-to-face engagement, I've always said that's super important. It builds that rapport, that trust that you need. I need whānau to be open to my suggestions, and that's not always easy to do over the phone. For me, first and foremost, is to bring them in, meet them." (ICM)*

The Initiatives are helping some whānau to feel supported, as intended

Whānau strongly value whānau-centred support

Whānau-centred support occurs when whānau identify their needs and the ICMs and navigators support these priorities. Whānau value when they feel ICMs or Navigators listen to their needs and concerns and act on them.

> *"We both meet each other halfway, and they'll look at my files. You know, if I say I'm after three-bedroom, and then they'll try and work things out to see if I'm suitable for*

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it. Or they'll look in my background. Not the history but like, 'Can you afford the rent?'"
(Whānau)

Whānau appreciate ICMs or Navigators checking on their health and whether they are getting the health services they need. Some Navigators work for health providers and refer whānau for health and other support within their organisation. Whānau appreciate this connected service.

> *"The place that we're getting moved in, I asked them if they can do a door gate for baby because he's only one and he's crawling, and they got it on the spot. Then they said, 'We're just going to go check this place out. Double-check anywhere else that needs some wire.'" (Whānau)*

Whānau also appreciate when ICMs and Navigators help with their daily needs, such as when ICMs or Navigators provide food or petrol vouchers.

> *"Before that, it was a nightmare, but now she's been supporting me. If I struggle with anything or if I've got court or something and I need petrol, I can contact her directly. Because now I can contact her, and I don't have to ring the 0800 number[19] and not get a reply back for days." (Whānau)*

Whānau appreciate when ICMs and Navigators help to remove housing barriers

Whānau sometimes do not know the requirements in the private rental sector or how to look for homes online. Most whānau felt that ICMs and Navigators were working to help them:

- get on the Housing Register, for example, by getting a GP to report on their health to support Kāinga Ora applications
- access the Tenancy Portal to apply for homes online[20]
- gather the documents needed to apply for a home (e.g., a referee letter from a previous landlord). Some whānau were unaware they missed out on properties because they did not have all their paperwork in place
- identify when unpaid loans are preventing whānau housing applications from succeeding and putting in place a process to reduce the debt. Some whānau attend budgeting programmes to manage their finances and demonstrate their renting ability in the private market
- connect to housing brokers to identify suitable properties for whānau and support landlords to rent to whānau.[21]

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[19] Some whānau described previously engaging with Work and Income offices and struggling to access timely information and support through the 0800 phoneline.
[20] The Tenancy Portal is an online tool where whānau can search and apply for private rental properties.
[21] Only ICMs connect to housing brokers. Navigators interviewed did not access this service.

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"Oh, it's just little pointers, like in terms of when you go for a viewing and that, just things to keep in mind when you see the real estate agent and stuff like that, and seminars." (Whānau)

"She sends me houses every week with that portfolio, and all I've got to do is click 'apply'. And instead of filling out the whole application again, I just click on my portfolio, and that's it." (Whānau)

However, some whānau feel unsupported by ICMs or Navigators to achieve these outcomes. Usually, these whānau felt they had been in emergency housing for a long time, and the ICM or Navigator support had not made a difference in their search for a home. These whānau also did not think the ICM or Navigator was proactively identifying barriers to housing and supporting whānau to overcome these barriers.

"[The case manager] hasn't really done much for me, to be honest .... All I know is that I've got to meet with her, you know, to get my rent paid; or just meet obligations to do my rent, and that's all I know." (Whānau)

Some whānau value being encouraged and motivated

Some whānau appreciate the regular contact from the ICMs and Navigators. These whānau were more likely to have built a positive relationship with their ICM or Navigator. They like the check-ins, which help them feel connected and keep them motivated, optimistic and focussed on getting a home. Some whānau feel this support is like an older brother or sister keeping an eye out for them and ensuring they are working towards their goals.

"They're like the bigger brother or the bigger sister keeping on top of things and making sure that I'm doing things. I had been having health issues too. My asthma and my ticker play up now and again. So they keep on top of that, 'How are you getting on with that? Have you gone and seen your Doctor yet? Have you …?' So they keep on top of you. They've just been really good." (Whānau)

Whānau struggle with MSD emergency housing requirements to extend their stay

Whānau do not have certainty that MSD will extend their EH-SNG

MSD requires whānau who receive the EH-SNG to demonstrate they are actively seeking alternative accommodation options. Most whānau think providing information on their housing activities, including the number of houses they apply for, is a requirement to continue to receive the EH-SNG.

"Work and Income have a piece of paper where it says address, and name, and when you searched the house. [The Navigator] gives you the paper, and I just fill out the

house viewings I've done and the places I've looked at. I write it down where I've been viewing and then just give her the paper. And then that just extends my extension on the motel. It goes week-by-week." (Whānau)

Whānau find this process stressful and unhelpful in their search for a home.

ICMs and Navigators interpret MSD's requirements differently across organisations and regions

Some ICMs and Navigators do not ask whānau to apply for rental properties every week.[22] However, several whānau report other ICMs and Navigators require them to undertake housing-related activities to continue to stay in their emergency housing. For example, some Navigators ask whānau to identify the number of houses they have applied for in the previous week.

> *"She gives me the housing pad every week to fill in. She's always harassing – I mean, you know, bothering me every week about. She's going to come to the hotel and make sure that the housing pad is filled up." (Whānau)*

Actively looking for alternative accommodation is a requirement of receiving the EH-SNG. However, this requirement conflicts with the Initiatives' intended whānau-centred and holistic approach. Therefore, MSD needs to develop ICM and Navigator guidelines to set clear expectations of how the roles should operate to allow greater flexibility for ICMs and Navigators to support whānau.

The prescriptive approach to extending the EH-SNG negatively impacts whānau

Demonstrating housing action is not enabling positive change for whānau or building housing stability. Whānau feel pressured to apply for properties they cannot afford or that are unsuitable for their needs. In addition, searching for, viewing, and applying for properties is time-consuming and adds pressure for whānau managing other priorities (such as health).

Many whānau felt continuously searching and applying for properties is demeaning and pointless, given the limited number of affordable rental properties and other pressing needs.

> *"It is hard, especially when I'm doing house viewings. My motel was on the one side of town, and her school was on the other side of town. I'm like, hang on; I'll be there soon! It felt like I viewed the bloody whole of Rotorua." (Whānau)*

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[22] ICMs can grant 21 days of EH-SNG.

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Whānau do not like referrals to other services without context

Many whānau work with multiple organisations and do not always remember who they are referred to. Whānau can become overwhelmed when another provider unexpectedly contacts them.

Some ICMs and Navigators ensure whānau have information to engage with other support services. For example, they proactively discuss referrals with whānau, they tell whānau when the referral is accepted and who will contact them.

> "Once the whānau agree to who they want to be referred to, I do up the referral letter, put it through ShareFile, and send it to the service. The service will respond to acknowledge they received it, and then they will let me know that they will contact the whānau. I just let the whānau know. I say, 'Hey, your referral has been acknowledged and accepted. They will be in contact with you. This is the name of the Service. Remember this is what they provide.' Because a lot of our whānau they forget; especially if you tell them too much information, they forget." (ICM)

Some Navigator providers have in-house support, such as mental health and AOD counselling services. These Navigators refer whānau to these services and may do a warm handover to help whānau connect with the service.[23] Navigators can also update the other support workers and communicate between these professionals and whānau.

Whānau need support transitioning to housing

Most whānau interviewed had been in emergency housing for over six months, some for over a year. Only four of the 26 whānau interviewed had moved out of emergency housing.

Currently, the ICM and Navigator support ends when whānau move into a house. ICMs and Navigators are not required to provide follow-up support for whānau who are housed.

Transitioning from emergency housing to private or social housing is difficult for some whānau

Whānau feel both anxious and relieved to be moving into a more permanent home. Many whānau do not have any furniture or household equipment. Some are unfamiliar with how to set up power and internet connections. Whānau value when ICM and Navigators check in and connect whānau to other support services.

> "So, the whole exit …. We talk to them about power providers. To set up your electricity, you need to do this, and you need to get this sorted. Still engaging them

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[23] A warm handover is when the housing Navigator accompanies whānau to the first meeting with the new service.

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with their supports, like their budgeting services to alter their budget to their new costs. Yeah, and then we hold on to them for four weeks to make sure that they are in the routine of their new house and how they're feeling." (ICM)

Some Navigator providers support whānau financially when they move into a home. For example, Te Rūnanga o Kirikiriroa has a fund to help whānau buy homeware and other essential items to ensure they are appropriately set up. This support reduces the financial burden for whānau during the transition period.

"When we successfully get them into a whare… we offer a care package to the value of $350 and everything needed to start you off. The basics from knives, forks, plates, spoons, glasses, sheets, toasters, jug, pots and pans, all of that." (Navigator)

ICMs do not provide financial support for whānau who have moved into permanent housing.

Ongoing support helps whānau sustain their tenancies

Some ICMs and Navigators continue to support whānau to increase the likelihood whānau will stay in their new housing. Most ICMs do one or two follow-up phone calls, and some support whānau for up to four weeks. Some Navigators will do several visits or phone calls over a couple of weeks. Other Navigators provide up to three months of support to make sure whānau are stable and maintain their tenancies.

"We want to make sure that they are set up and that they're comfortable in their whare. And that they know what their new budget is. All the kids are sorted for school in the new area. They're registered with a new GP and whatever. We stay with them for three months to make sure that they are definitely on the right track and they're happy navigating on their own." (Navigator)

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What are the short-term outcomes?

This section responds to key evaluation question two:

- How well are the Initiatives contributing to achieving the short-term outcomes?

The intended short-term outcomes for both Initiatives are:[24]

- increase understanding and access to support services for clients, whānau and families, including culturally appropriate services responsive to Māori and Pacific worldviews, values and experiences
- improve whānau readiness to engage with housing support and other services
- increase social support and connectedness for clients, family, whānau, and community
- address immediate health and wellbeing needs for clients, family or whānau
- reduce housing stress and trauma for clients, whānau and family
- increase self-efficacy for clients, family and whānau to engage with the housing sector.

Whānau have a less favourable experience of the Initiatives' outcomes than ICMs and Navigators

Many whānau are very disheartened when their core need of a home is not met

After immediate needs are met, whānau consider secure long-term housing their main priority. Whānau want support that addresses this priority.

Some whānau move into long-term housing through ICM and Navigator support. However, securing homes for all whānau in emergency housing is beyond the design or capability of the Initiatives. In addition, significant system-wide barriers prevent whānau from accessing long-term housing.

> "It hasn't [helped] because I still can't afford to get one. It's WINZ that needs to up the accommodation and for people that are on Jobseekers Benefit. Well, all around but especially Jobseekers, it's not enough to even go and get qualified." (Whānau)

Many whānau did not think having an ICM or Navigator delivered the Initiatives' intended outcomes

Many whānau did not consider having an ICM or Navigator impacted their health and wellbeing, confidence, or ability to find long-term housing.

> "Reduced my stress of looking for homes? I would say no because if I stopped, I wouldn't be able to stay where I am now. I have to continuously look even though I

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[24] The design has the same outcomes for ICMs and Navigators.

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apply and then get declined. I still have to show WINZ that I'm looking actively, so I guess it's more stress, finding a job and looking for homes." (Whānau)

"I think they're just MSD workers that are given a housing profile. So they're not actually proactively anything to do with housing. That should be a huge part of their job. Emergency housing is 'I'm in an emergency. I need housing. Can you find me a house, please?' None of that happens as far as I know." (Whānau)

Most whānau did not identify improved health and wellbeing outcomes. However, some described visiting their doctor to gather evidence on the impact of living in emergency accommodation on their mental and physical health.

A few whānau identified some short-term outcomes from ICM or Navigator support

These outcomes included improved knowledge of their entitlements, increased capability to look for housing, and accessing other services. A few whānau agreed that they gained housing knowledge through the Initiatives.

"They actually taught me a lot, and sort of showed me what kind of process I needed to take on, or what I needed to do to get to where I am now." (Whānau)

Some also considered their continued stay in emergency housing was due to ICMs or Navigators being responsible for renewing the EH-SNG. They felt this reduced their stress about their housing situation.

"I think it's helped reduce my housing stress quite a lot. It's taken a lot of burden off my shoulder because I only have to meet so many obligations on a weekly basis, which is good. It's not the greatest, but it's something. It does help me in the sense that it puts a solid roof over mine and my kids' heads, and we won't get evicted unless I don't meet obligations." (Whānau)

ICMs and Navigators consider whānau housing knowledge and capability has increased

ICMs and Navigators think that the Initiatives helped increase whānau confidence

ICMs and Navigators reported that whānau gained confidence in engaging with Work and Income, Navigator providers, landlords, and other agencies due to their support. ICMs and Navigators consider this increased confidence to have a flow-on effect on other areas in their lives, such as advocating for their children's education.

ICMs and Navigators also saw whānau self-respect increase as they gained knowledge and confidence.

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"Their self-esteem, their confidence. That's a major thing. Because in the beginning, when you walk in, they don't know whether they can trust you or not, and they don't feel confident that they're able to attend viewings. That they're able to ask for help and be helped or be heard. And by the end of it, it changes from 'I can't' to 'I can', and that's a massive thing for me. I feel like if they can get housed and they leave the service having that hope or that feeling that they can do something." (Navigator)

ICMs and Navigators consider the Initiatives helped whānau know how to access a private tenancy

ICMs and Navigators consider the Initiatives helped whānau develop and follow a pathway to exit emergency housing. A few whānau agree the ICMs and Navigators helped them develop a way to achieve their goals.

ICM and Navigator advice on accessing and using the Tenancy Portal helped whānau use the portal and look for rental accommodation. In addition, their guidance and advice helped prepare whānau to apply for housing and sustain the tenancy.

"You see their eyes light up because now they understand the purpose of a tenancy contract ... It's the little wins for the whānau that are really great to see. That was our hard work as well as the provider's hard work that was all put into one plan, and she [mother with two children] just ran with it. It's very cool to see the transition and the little lightbulb moments for them." (ICM)

ICMs and Navigators think Initiatives increased whānau knowledge of services and processes

ICMs and Navigators consider whānau knowledge of support services, where to go for support, and how to access support increased from the Initiatives. In addition, they think that whānau learn how to advocate for their rights and what is unacceptable.

"They become knowledgeable about processes. What is okay and what is not. Like what they're eligible for with Work and Income, their entitlements, what they're not eligible for. For Māori and Pacific Island whānau, they know what services are out there that can help them, especially if some have language barriers. [They know] where they can go to get a translator or have their support person go in with them for Work and Income meetings, appointments, or anything. But again, that comes down to having that confidence actually to go out and do it." (Navigator)

ICMs and Navigators think whānau health and wellbeing improved

ICMs and Navigators help whānau address their immediate needs, such as shelter and food. Their support also contributes to health and wellbeing outcomes by helping whānau access medical appointments and helping children maintain their access to schooling.

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"A lot of our whānau would be here for a real crisis moment. They'd be here often for food, for primary mental health, every other area in their lives would deteriorate. Having someone, a Navigator, in there supporting them daily or weekly to hear what their needs are, gives them the confidence, assurance that they're being heard and that they'll be supported." (Navigator)

ICMs and Navigators agree the Initiatives contribute to more integrated support

The Initiatives are designed to improve the referral process and strengthen collaboration between providers. ICMs and Navigators agreed the Initiatives contribute to better collaboration and communication, including with other service providers. This improvement occurs as ICMs or Navigators identify support and ensure these services contact whānau.

"I think it does provide good results because we've got products and services that can help them. You know, we've got housing brokers. We've got financial assistance available for private rental. We've got public housing stock that we can refer them to. We've got transitional housing. So, we've got a wide range of products and services that we can use to assist clients" (ICM)

Whānau outcomes are likely to be worse without any ICM or Navigator support

ICMs and Navigators consider the experiences, health, and wellbeing of whānau in emergency housing would be worse without their support. They think whānau would spend longer in emergency housing and be more likely to return to it after moving into private rental housing. Their perception reflects the lack of other navigation services for whānau and the complexity and competitiveness of the rental market.

"If that [Navigator support] wasn't there, I dread to think what would happen to our whānau. We'd have extremely high needs for mental health, and we're talking about children as well." (Navigator)

While whānau are less positive about the difference that ICM or Navigator support makes, they consider having support better than coping without any help.

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What are enablers and improvements for the Initiatives?

This section contributes to answering key evaluation question three: How might the Initiatives be refined to improve outcomes for clients, particularly Māori and Pacific people, and other groups? This section identifies enablers for the initiatives, including trusting relationships, cultural safety, and collaboration. We also identify ways that MSD can improve the Initiatives.

Enablers for the Initiatives

Trusting relationships, cultural safety, and effective collaboration enable the Initiatives.

A trusting relationship enables effective support

Whānau, ICMs and Navigators agree positive relationships are a critical component of the Initiatives. Unfortunately, many whānau have previously had negative and stigmatising service experiences, particularly with Work and Income and sometimes with Navigator providers. These experiences impede their willingness to engage and have open conversations. ICMs are particularly aware whānau may have had negative prior experiences with Work and Income.

Smaller caseloads of around 20 mean ICMs and Navigators have time to engage and listen to whānau without rushing. Time and an enabling approach build whānau confidence and trust in the ICMs and Navigators. Through trusting relationships, whānau can have open conversations about their needs, aspirations, and barriers to accessing housing. ICMs and Navigators can therefore more effectively support whānau.

> *"I guess it's within that first month or first couple of months where they feel like they can trust you or not, to tell you what is it that they're actually needing. I have a mum with three boys, and for the first couple of months, it was all very surface level. 'I'm okay. Yes, I'm looking for a house. Yes, I'm doing this.' It was all ticking boxes until I think she started to see that I'm there for a purpose, not just to tick boxes. Then she was honest and told me that she'd had Oranga Tamariki involvement with her kids. Something that she was scared to talk about." (Navigator)*

Some whānau do not have a positive relationship with their ICM or Navigator

Some whānau described negative relationships when they felt the ICM or Navigator:

- asked whānau to complete housing applications every week
- offered little practical support to help their health and wellbeing or other needs
- did not recognise whānau goals or the barriers they faced.

"She's offered me one place that she half-arsed sent an email, saying, 'Oh, look, well, there's this place in Mt Wellington.' I was going, 'Mt Wellington? Have you not been listening to anything I've said? Mt Wellington is not going to work.'" (Whānau)

"All they [case manager] are doing is just saying, 'How's it going?' They're not really doing anything at all. Nothing just, 'How's it going? Any luck yet?' That's it." (Whānau)

"I don't know if WINZ is looking on their books, 'Okay, there's all these people. We need to hurry up and slash them all.' That's what I felt. It feels like it a lot of the time." (Whānau)

As identified, very few whānau who participated in the evaluation had moved out of emergency housing, and many had been in emergency housing for over six months. Therefore, some whānau were frustrated when the ICM or Navigator asked them to undertake housing-related activities with little support. They were particularly frustrated when ICMs and Navigators did not recognise the challenges to getting housing. These experiences negatively affected their relationship with their ICM or Navigator.

The Initiatives rely on effective relationships. Therefore, ICMs and Navigators may benefit from:

- tools and training on relationship building
- mechanisms to monitor and assess relationship capability
- clear policies on how to manage relationship breakdown.

Cultural safety is a critical part of supporting whānau

The concept of cultural safety comes from health literature (Curtis et al., 2019; Ramsden, 2015; Papps & Ramsden, 1996) and recognises the inherent power dynamics and imbalances in relationships, particularly in the context of colonisation. Cultural safety requires organisations and staff (both management and frontline) to challenge their culture and cultural systems. Organisations and their staff need to question if their biases, attitudes, assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices contribute to lower quality services.

ICMs and Navigators are aware many whānau they work with are Māori. Many incorporate cultural skills and competencies, and appropriate referrals, into the support they provide by undertaking whakawhanaungatanga or using karakia. ICM and Navigator teams include people from diverse backgrounds who speak multiple languages.

"Yeah, they might be going through all these things in their lives, but they know when someone is genuine and pono. We talk about manaaki, kotahitanga, all those things, which is huge and means a lot. But if we don't show that in the mahi we do, how we work with our whānau, then we shouldn't be in there." (ICM)

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Four of the five Navigator providers involved in this evaluation are Māori providers who work in a whānau-centred way. Navigators working for these providers described supporting whānau they work with as whanaunga. Māori providers come with a deep understanding of the impact of colonisation on homelessness and work to deliver services aligned with mana motuhake.[25] Some whānau also described their relationship with the Navigators as whanaunga.

> *"When you've got a Māori kaimahi coming in who at least understands te ao Māori, that's a key. When you've got staff that have been working with high needs whānau, whānau in crisis and have that experience, and have empathy and an understanding but are also culturally strong. Our assessments that we do are a cultural assessment on the whole whānau. We're not just working with a māmā or the nan or the māmā and pāpā. We work with the whole whānau and hui with the whole whānau, so everybody's voice is being heard." (Navigator)*

Most ICMs are aware of basic cultural competency requirements and MSD's obligations to improve services for tangata whenua. Some ICMs and Navigators are operating in a culturally safe way using reflective practice. However, some ICMs and Navigators describe working with and treating everyone the same, regardless of ethnicity. Whether ICMs and Navigators receive regular cultural supervision to reflect on and strengthen their practice is unknown.

Pacific families interviewed indicated more work is needed to create a culturally safe service. Pacific people interviewed talked about a tick-box approach that did not reflect their preferred holistic approach.

> *"There's no cultural [appropriate] to anything, I believe, at all. Not even a 'Kia ora' or a 'Malo' or a 'Talofa' or anything. I don't think being culturally appropriate is really — the PC thing is a tokenism kind of carry-on. I don't think it's a valuable part of any kind of business or association in the way that if it's just done for the fact of it or because it's in black and white, then it loses its essence." (Whānau).*

More work is needed to improve cultural safety and critical consciousness, particularly among non-Māori providers (including MSD) at an organisational and staff level. For example, training on the systemic impact of colonisation on whānau Māori or support to undertake language training. More focus is also needed on how organisational processes and policies support staff to build the mana of whānau Māori.

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[25] Mana motuhake is the right for Māori to be Māori, for Māori self-determination, and to be supported to live as Māori based on Māori philosophies, values, and practices, including tikanga Māori.

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Collaboration is essential for achieving outcomes for whānau

Whānau receive better support when ICMs and Navigators collaborate and communicate clearly and regularly. Co-location can enable collaborative ways of working across ICMs and Navigators. For example, in a new initiative in Hamilton, an ICM works from the office of a Navigator provider. This collaboration makes communication smoother and faster for Navigators and helps provide a coordinated approach to supporting whānau. Co-location also facilitates a learning environment for ICMs and Navigators about the different ways to respond to specific whānau experiences.

In some cases, poor or delayed communication causes tension between ICMs and Navigators. Examples include:

- Navigators making multiple requests to ICMs or MSD for information available online
- ICMs taking several days or longer to respond to Navigator requests for whānau support or entitlements
- Unclear information from MSD on why MSD had declined requests.

These challenges are resolved by improving communication processes to sign-off entitlements.

> *"I guess another barrier would be us not being really aware of what the entitlements MSD offer for these people once they secure housing or while they're in emergency housing. And if they're not eligible for any of these entitlements, 'Are you able to tell us why?'" (Navigator)*

Connecting with other services benefits whānau

ICMs strongly value housing brokers' ability to connect with property managers and others and their ability to help whānau move into private rental properties. Housing brokers can locate housing in a competitive rental market and work to overcome housing barriers for whānau.

> *"They [housing brokers] work with their clients and, I suppose, pitch them to landlords and real estate people. I hear their conversations that they will be looking on websites to see if there are houses for rent or ring the landlord, explain what their job is, who they are, who they work for, and then they will profile clients to that landlord to help them get a foot in the door." (ICM)*

Some areas have limited services available for whānau, particularly mental health and AOD services. In some cases, ICMs will refer whānau to mental health and AOD services outside of their local area. However, whānau can struggle to access out of town services due to a lack of transport or childcare issues.

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MSD can improve the Initiatives

ICMs, Navigators and whānau identified ways to improve the Initiatives.

Policy improvements that may reduce whānau stress and improve the design

- Review the policy and process to assess ongoing eligibility for EH-SNG, given the lack of transitional and other housing, particularly demonstrating weekly house search activities.
- Review MSD contract reporting to see if it is possible to streamline provider reporting when holding multiple MSD contracts.
- Review the eligibility criteria to assess the benefit of more whānau being allocated to an ICM or Navigator when they first move into emergency housing.

Organisation and workforce changes to improve whānau experience

- Clarify the role differentiation of ICMs and Navigators or agree on the level of overlap.
- Enhance cultural safety and critical consciousness at organisational and staff levels, including leadership, management and frontline staff. For example, through training on the impact of colonisation, trauma-informed practice and setting professional development goals for cultural safety.
- Provide training and guidelines about building effective whānau relationships, develop mechanisms to assess relationships and ways to manage relationship breakdowns
- Provide more training for ICMs and Navigators on the housing sector, the Housing Register, and Work and Income entitlements.
- Identify and define good practice for ICMs and Navigators and provide in-house or external training and a practice guide.

Strengthen cross-agency collaboration and integration to benefit whānau

- Improve referral processes to external organisations, particularly in involving whānau better in choices about referrals.
- Strengthen relationships between ICMs and Navigators to improve communication, information sharing, and coordinate whānau support.
- Identify how best to support whānau with AOD and mental health issues, given the lack of services.
- Discuss with Māori and iwi leaders how to enhance the Initiatives for whānau Māori.
- Build stronger relationships with Māori, iwi, hapū and Pacific support organisations to ensure whānau Māori and Pacific families can access support from these providers.

Service and process improvements to improve whānau experience

- Ensure the consistent delivery of a whānau-centred service that is mana enhancing.
- Improve technology systems to be less time consuming for ICMs and Navigators.
- Extend the service to support whānau after they have moved into long-term housing to help whānau sustain their tenancies.

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Evaluation conclusions

This section presents our evaluative conclusions within the context of the broader housing system.

The Initiatives are part of the Government response to system-wide housing needs

The Homelessness Action Plan (the Plan) recognises that solutions to homelessness and housing instability require a system-wide response. The Plan identifies preventing homelessness, increasing supply, providing support for people experiencing homelessness, and increasing system enablers as key focus areas. The Initiatives contribute to the Plan's implementation by providing holistic support to whānau in emergency housing. The Initiatives are building the capability of whānau in emergency housing to search for houses and sustain their tenancies. The Initiatives also contribute to system enabler focus areas through strengthening inter-agency collaboration and networks.

The Initiatives are not designed to address the core need of whānau—a home

The Initiatives are not designed to address the lack of houses and affordable houses (i.e., the Action Plan's supply focus). However, for whānau receiving ICM and Navigator support, the lack of houses means their core goal of finding a home is not met. MSD has a responsibility to ensure its services meet its strategic goals (Mana Manaaki, Kotahitanga, and Kia Takatū Tātou) and the intentions outlined in Te Pae Tata. MSD, working with Homeless Action Plan partners, needs to consider how best to meet whānau aspirations for secure long-term housing.

The Initiatives cannot address whānau health and wellbeing needs without system-wide improvements to mental health and AOD services. In addition, access to General Practices and dental services can be prohibitively expensive, leading to whānau delaying essential medical care.

Ultimately, if housing stock increases and services improve, the need for the Initiatives should reduce. Fewer whānau will experience homelessness, for a shorter time, with fewer barriers to securing long-term housing. Until this happens, whānau need housing support tailored to meet this immediate and long-term housing need.

Going forward, more can be done to strengthen the Initiatives

To realise the commitment to Te Pae Tata and Te Tiriti obligations, MSD can have more flexible and responsive engagement with Māori and Pacific housing and Navigator service providers. MSD needs to involve these organisations in design improvements and adopt models of working that best support whānau (e.g., Whānau Ora). Working with Māori and

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Pacific providers will benefit whānau, particularly whānau Māori and Pacific families. More work is also needed to strengthen the cultural safety of the Initiatives.

Consideration is needed about who would most benefit from intensive support provided by ICMs and Navigators. Providing support earlier may strengthen whānau capability and resilience to find and sustain a tenancy in an expensive and competitive housing environment. MSD now assigns a dedicated case manager to all whānau in emergency accommodation.

Policies about how long whānau can receive the EH-SNG and the activities needed to demonstrate eligibility need to be reviewed. The current weekly review and demonstration of house search activities is punitive, adds significantly to whānau stress and depletes their energy and mana. The process is not whānau-centred and affects whānau relationships with their ICM and/or Navigator. The process does not align with the design or intended outcomes of the Initiatives.

Further work to differentiate the ICM and Navigator roles will help both roles support whānau effectively. Defining the roles should consider how best to deliver community-based relational support for whānau and ensure entitlements are efficiently processed.

The Initiatives' pathway needs to be extended to support whānau transitioning to more permanent housing. The Initiatives' design did not intend ICMs and Navigators to support whānau after moving into long-term housing. However, some ICMs and Navigators provide this support, which is valuable to whānau. Supporting whānau as they transition to long-term housing will help whānau to remain and thrive in their new housing situation.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Logic model detailing the desired outcomes

The logic model for the ICM and Navigator Initiatives is in the embedded document.

[PDF] Adobe Acrobat Document

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Appendix B: The key evaluation questions and sub-questions

Key evaluation questions	Sub-evaluation questions

1. How well are the ICM and Navigator Initiatives being implemented against their intended design, recognising the need for regional adaption?	**Design and set up of the Initiatives**
	▪ How were the Initiatives designed?
	▪ How well did the design consider the needs of whānau Māori and Pacific people? Other groups?
	  - How were Māori and Pacific people involved in the design?
	  - How did the needs of whānau influence the design?
	▪ What is the theory of change behind the Initiatives' design?
	▪ What enablers contributed to setting the service up quickly?
	▪ What are the lessons for future initiatives?
	
	Standing up the Initiatives and workforce
	▪ What is the number and profile of ICMs, Navigators and support staff across Aotearoa?
	▪ What are the skills and expertise of the ICMs, Navigators and support staff?
	  - How do the contracts, employment conditions and training of ICMs, Navigators and support staff enable or hinder service delivery?
	  - How well is the function and role of the ICMs, Navigators and support staff understood by them and other services?
	  - How well does the workforce capability support the needs of the service users?
	  - How well do the ICMs, Navigators and support staff relate to other services (e.g., housing brokers, mental health support)?
	
	Referral process
	▪ How is the flagging system identifying clients to refer to the services?
	▪ What is the profile of the clients of the ICMs and Navigator services?
	▪ Who are not being referred? What happens to them?
	▪ How are decisions made on whether ICMs or Navigators or both support clients?
	▪ How does the referral process support Māori and Pacific peoples to engage with the service? Other groups?
	
	Needs assessment
	▪ How are ICMs assessing service user needs? How are these assessments used? Is there consistency within and across regions?
	▪ How does the assessment process support the needs of Māori and Pacific peoples? Other groups?
	▪ How are whānau and family members involved in the process?

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Key evaluation questions	Sub-evaluation questions
	- How does the assessment process enable clients to be supported to meet their priority needs?

Service delivery by ICMs, Navigators and Support Services
- How are ICMs supporting service users (e.g., ongoing mentoring, guidance, access to entitlements, referral for housing assessment, rent readiness, links to housing brokers, referral to other services)?
    - How are the ICMs meeting clients' immediate needs?
    - What enables building trusting relationships?
- How are Navigators supporting services users (e.g., delivering or facilitating training and supporting engagement with other services)?
    - How are they meeting clients' immediate needs?
    - How well are they building trusting relationships?
    - How are they responding to Māori and Pasifika clients' worldviews, values and experiences? Other groups?
- How are the clients interacting with Support Services?
- What is working well in service delivery? Not so well?
- How do ICMs, Navigators and Support Services know their service is working well on a day-to-day basis?

Referrals and access to other support services
- What other services are services users referred to?
    - What are the barriers and enablers to accessing these services?
    - How do ICMs/Navigators identify and refer people to services that are responsive to their worldviews, values and experiences?
- How have the Initiatives increased the connectedness and trust across services?

Exiting the service
- What is the process/criteria for assessing if/when people are ready to exit the service?
- How do people exit the service? When are exits happening?
- What happens for clients after exiting the service?
- How frequently, if at all, are clients exiting and returning to the service? How come?

Other process questions
- How has the implementation of the Initiatives changed over time?
- How has COVID-19 affected the implementation of the Initiatives?
- What other housing services do clients access? How come?
- What are the strengths of the Initiatives' design and implementation?
- What are the enablers and barriers to implementation? What factors are internal and what are external?
- How can the implementation of the Initiatives be improved to meet the intended outcomes?

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Key evaluation questions	Sub-evaluation questions

2. How well are the initiatives contributing to achieving the short-term outcomes?	▪ What learnings are families, whānau and communities taking from the Initiatives?
	▪ What benefits are clients, whānau and families gaining from using these services?
	  - How do the Initiatives address clients', whānau and families' immediate housing and other needs?
	  - How do the Initiatives reduce housing stress and trauma for clients, whānau and family?
	  - How do the Initiatives support clients, family or whānau health and wellbeing?
	  - How do the Initiatives increase social support and connectedness for clients, family, whānau, and community?
	▪ How well do the Initiatives increase clients' self-efficacy to engage with the housing sector and other sectors (e.g., their understanding and ability to access housing and other services)?
	▪ What enables the services to deliver these benefits?

3. How might the initiatives be refined to improve outcomes for Māori, Pacific and other client groups?	▪ How can the Initiatives be improved for different client groups, particularly Māori and Pacific people? Other groups? ▪ What is working to engage Māori people in the Initiatives? ▪ What is working to achieve the best outcomes for Māori people? ▪ How are providers embodying appropriate cultural practices in their services? ▪ How can the design and implementation of these Initiatives be improved to support a Te Ao Māori worldview?

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Appendix C: Detailed recruitment approach

We followed an agreed recruitment process

MSD and Navigator interviews

We got approval from MSD's ethics board on the following recruitment processes. First, we worked with MSD to identify the appropriate Work and Income offices and Navigator providers to work with. We contacted the identified Work and Income offices and Navigator providers and supplied information sheets and consent forms to distribute to their teams. Those ICMs and Navigator providers that wanted to take part in an interview were made aware that this was not a performance review and that it was a confidential evaluation.

Whānau interviews

MSD created a list of potential whānau to interview against sample criteria using ICM and Navigator reports across the three case studies. MSD sent a password-protected list of 25 to 30 whānau contacts to ICM and Navigator providers from each case study area using the agreed privacy process for sharing client information. ICM and Navigator providers reviewed the list and removed whānau for whom it was inappropriate for Litmus to interview due to clinical reasons or other safety reasons for the participant or interviewer. The ICM and Navigator providers returned the revised password-protected list of whānau to MSD using the agreed privacy process.

Litmus developed an MSD and Navigator dual-branded email communication to be sent to whānau on the list. The email included an opt-out option for whānau who did not want to participate. Due to some whānau not having access to technology or Wi-Fi, we asked ICMs and Navigators to inform clients about the evaluation and offer the option to opt out.

MSD sent the password-protected cleaned sample list 2 to Litmus on encrypted removable storage. We stored the password-protected, encrypted list on a SharedDrive file accessible only by the Litmus evaluation team. One week after we emailed whānau, we removed the names of whānau who opted out. Only the Litmus team could see the list.

Litmus phoned whānau on the master sample list to invite them to take part in an interview. We used the informed consent process. We identified if whānau wanted the Navigator to introduce them to a Litmus interviewer. We maintained an up-to-date record of the consent status for whānau in the password-protected master sample list. We sent an email confirming the interview, date, time, and location with information sheet and consent form for those who agreed.

Interviews with family or whānau were held at a safe and comfortable venue as preferred by participants and safe for the interviewers. The spaces included public libraries, community

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venues, restaurants and cafes. If requested by whānau, kaimahi introduced the Litmus interviewer and then left before the interview commenced. Before the interview, Litmus completed the informed consent process and gained a written or verbally recorded consent. At the interview, all whānau or family participants received a $50 koha (supermarket voucher) to recognise their contribution and time to the evaluation.

With whānau consent, Litmus held interview audios and transcripts on an encrypted SharedDrive file. Participants that requested a copy of their transcript received it via email. In addition, we updated the record of whānau preference on the use of their information in the password-protected master sample list.

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Appendix D: Evaluation tools

Service user tools

Service user information sheet (Navigators)

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Service user consent form (Navigators)

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Service user information sheet (ICMs)

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Service user consent form (ICMs)

FINAL_ICM_Consent
_service user.pdf

Service user question guide

FINAL_Service
Users_discussion gu

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MSD and Navigator provider tools

MSD/Provider question guides

MSD Head office

FINAL_MSD Head office_discussion gu

Referrers

FINAL_Referrers_dis cussion guide.pdf

ICM manager

FINAL_Discussion Guide ICM Manager

ICMs

FINAL_ICMs_discuss ion guide .pdf

Navigator managers

FINAL_Navigator Managers_discussio

Navigators

FINAL_Navigators_d iscussion guide.pdf

Support Services

FINAL_Support services_discussion

MSD/Provider Information Sheet

FINAL_info sheet_providers.pdf

MSD/Provider Consent form

FINAL_MSD and Navigators_consent

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Appendix E: ICM and Navigators Evaluation Plan

ICM and Navigators Evaluation Plan

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Navigators Evaluatic

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