

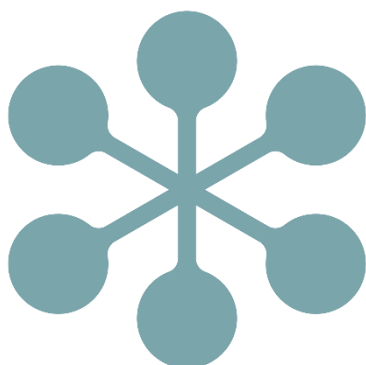
Litmus

The Creative Careers Service Pilot Process Evaluation Report

The report was prepared for:
Ministry of Social Development, Te Manatū
Whakahiato Ora and Manatū Taonga
Ministry for Culture and Heritage

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Executive summary

This report presents the evaluation findings of the Creative Careers Service Pilot (the service). The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH) commissioned this evaluation to assess how well the service is helping creatives¹ to develop non-creative skills to keep them financially sustainable in their chosen creative field. MSD and MCH will use the findings to inform the future development of the service.

The Creative Careers Service Pilot

The Creative Careers Service is a two-year pilot and partnership between MSD and MCH. The service aims to help people in the creative sector develop non-creative skills and knowledge to keep them financially sustainable in their chosen creative field. The service is delivered in the Auckland, Waikato, and Nelson Tasman regions. Participants can choose up to nine months of service support with an option of three months post-service support.

Eligible clients are aged 18–64, live in Auckland, Waikato, Nelson Tasman, and have a recognised creative qualification or relevant experience in a creative field. The service is available to MSD and non-MSD clients, people exiting tertiary education with a creative qualification (and minimal work experience in the sector), and people working in the creative sector who lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key evaluation questions and data sources

The evaluation was designed to answer the following three key evaluation questions:

- How well has the Creative Careers Service been designed?
- How well has the Creative Careers Service been implemented to the intended design?
- To what extent does the Creative Careers Service contribute to intended short-term outcomes?

The evaluation drew primarily on qualitative interviews with five MSD and MCH staff, 20 service provider staff (providers), and 35 clients (participants). We also drew on MSD service monitoring data and a client post-exit survey.

How well has the Creative Careers Service been designed?

Overall, the Creative Careers Service was well designed to meet the needs of creatives, although areas requiring strengthening were identified.

Most participants and providers interviewed highlighted the design strengths as the client-centred approach and the focus on building business capability specific to creatives. Flexibility was a critical design feature enabling providers to tailor their service to clients' needs (e.g., alumni support pathways, processes used to develop Personal Development Plans).

¹ The term 'creative' refers to people who practise and work in disciplines such as visual arts, literature, craft and object art, music, dance, community arts, theatre, circus arts, film, television and media, Ngā Toi Māori, Pacific Heritage arts, inter-arts/multi-disciplinary arts, ceramics, etc.

The service design allowed the service to operate successfully online during COVID-19 disruptions. The eligibility criteria also supported creatives at different career levels facing challenges due to COVID-19 impacts. However, providers felt client wellbeing support during COVID-19 needed strengthening in the design. Outcome measures and reporting also need improving to capture client wellbeing needs, different starting points and cultural success.

Feedback indicates MSD's Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity did not directly inform the Creative Careers Service design. However, the three underlying strategic shifts of Te Pae Tawhiti are evident. In the future, proactively using these strategies to inform design may ensure design gaps noted for this service are incorporated (e.g., wellbeing and Māori and Pasifika success measures).

How well has the Creative Careers Service been implemented to the intended design?

The Creative Careers Service is making reasonable progress towards implementation milestones as a new pilot. The Creative Careers Service has mainly been implemented as planned. Participants interviewed reported a positive service experience from referral to completion (in line with Te Pae Tawhiti, *Mana Manaaki*). They noted the critical service supports were mentorship, professional development, networking and access to resources.

The Creative Careers Service supports client diversity. Māori participants interviewed considered the service responsive and supportive of them as Māori. Pasifika participants reported a positive service experience and valued connections to broader networks. Disabled participants considered the service to be person-centred and responsive to their needs.

Facilitators to client engagement were the mentor-client relationships and the providers' ability to adapt their services to clients' needs and creative sector changes. However, illness, family obligations and new creative opportunities resulted in clients exiting the service earlier than they had initially planned. Creative Career Service monitoring data suggests about a third of clients did not complete the service.

However, data quality issues because of inconsistent coding of exits means the rate may be lower. Further, exiting early may reflect positive opportunities arising from the service (e.g., work) rather than service disengagement. MSD alongside the service providers needs to review the exit codes to ensure consistent and good quality data is collected on exits to understand the extent of early exits and their implications for the service.

The initial outcome-based contracting model created challenges for providers. The shift to a fixed-rate monthly fee contract has eased this. In addition, providers have received little feedback from MSD and MCH on their progress, and providers lacked opportunities to share learnings.

To what extent does the Creative Careers Service contribute to the intended short-term outcomes?

The Creative Careers Service is contributing to its intended short-term outcomes. Most participants interviewed reported the Creative Careers Service:

- helped them to identify and develop their creative career
- helped them articulate income goals and a plan to support goals
- improved their business skills and knowledge

- gave them the skills and confidence to network with other creatives, businesses and organisations, and be confident in public speaking
- gave them the knowledge and skills to write grant applications for business development.

Conclusion

The Creative Careers Service is highly valued, and no other similar service exists. Overall, the service was implemented as intended, contributing to positive client outcomes. However, areas to strengthen the service are more referrals from MSD, focusing on wellbeing, more post-service networking and a revised process to collect success measures.

Overview of the Creative Careers Service

Below is a description of the Creative Careers Service developed by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH). The service builds on insights from the former Pathways to Arts and Cultural Employment (PACE) Scheme.² The service also builds on providers' experiences supporting creatives, and sector engagement workshops in 2020 with potential users to understand their needs for the service (Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage [MCH] & Ministry of Social Development [MSD], 2020).

The Creative Careers Service aims to support creatives in building sustainable careers

The Creative Careers Service aims to help people in the creative sector develop non-creative skills and knowledge to keep them financially sustainable in their chosen creative field. The Creative Careers Service supports clients by:

- finding and creating creative careers
- building business knowledge and skills to sustain their creative career
- building professional networks aligned with their creative goals
- developing skills that contribute towards earning a viable living that supports their creative goals.

The service was rolled out in Auckland in December 2020 and in Waikato and Nelson in February and March 2021.

The Creative Careers Service is a pilot and aims to support up to 1,000 people in Auckland, Waikato, and Nelson Tasman over two years.

Description of the Creative Careers Service

The Creative Careers Service is free and voluntary. The service is provided for up to nine months with the option of up to three months of post-service support. Five regional providers deliver the service.

Service providers	Region
Toipoto , The Big Idea	Auckland
The Tūkua List , Ngāhere Communities	Auckland
Wayfind Creative , the Depot Artspace	Auckland
Elevate , Creative Waikato	Waikato
Art/Work , Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce	Nelson Tasman

² The PACE scheme existed between 2001 and 2011 as a Ministerial Directive that worked with MSD clients who were looking to start a career in the creative sector. Eligible clients needed to be on a Jobseeker benefit. The scheme gave clients the opportunity to take part in provider-led arts and cultural sector skills training.

The providers also have varying specialisations. For instance, Wayfind has music recording specialities, the Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce has business expertise, and Ngahere Communities has digital art expertise.

Eligibility criteria and referral

Providers apply eligibility criteria to clients seeking entry to the service. Eligible clients are aged 18–64, live in Auckland, Waikato, Nelson Tasman, and have a recognised creative qualification or relevant experience in a creative field.³ The service is available to MSD and non-MSD clients, people exiting tertiary education with a creative qualification with minimal work experience in the sector and people working in the creative sector who lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clients can self-refer or are referred by MSD staff (e.g., a case manager). Clients receiving an MSD benefit or support (MSD clients) and entering the service through self-referral can choose whether to disclose if they are an MSD client. If they reveal this, their case manager receives progress updates from providers on their behalf.

Assessment

Providers determine if clients are suitable and enrol them in the service. If a referral meets the eligibility criteria, the provider assesses whether the client is suitable for the service and what assistance they require. After a referral, providers contact the client and meet face-to-face or talk to them by phone/video conference to determine suitability. At this stage, the client receives more information about how the service works and what is involved and agrees with the provider about the length of time they require support (e.g., one to nine months). If a referral proceeds and a client accepts, they enter the service.

Enrolment

After acceptance, the provider and the client prepare a tailored Personal Development Plan (PDP). The PDP details the client's short and long-term creative goals and activities they plan to complete while enrolled. Providers and clients develop and agree on the clients' PDP together. Through this process they identify barriers to address and support the client to progress toward their goals. After the PDP is developed, clients decide if they would like to proceed. Completing and continuing with the PDP signifies client enrolment.

At enrolment, the provider and client also agree on the length of service required, except at Creative Waikato where the service is nine months by default. The other providers inform clients they have up to nine months of support and an optional three-month post-service support, depending on their needs. Clients choose the length of the service and, at completion, choose if they want post-service support.

Support

Providers offer mentoring, and career and business development to clients. Providers support clients in meeting their PDP goals and developing business skills and knowledge with the help of one-on-one mentoring, professional development workshops, and networking events. Providers also connect clients with other services (both within and outside their organisation) where appropriate. The Tukua List clients can also apply for digital creative freelancing work while in the service.

³ Relevant experiences refers to paid or unpaid work experience in their creative field (e.g., acting experience or working in film).

The number and frequency of workshops and mentoring sessions vary by clients' needs. Some providers run mentoring sessions and workshops simultaneously. At other providers, clients complete the workshops before mentoring.

Clients are assigned a mentor when they start with the service. Most mentors are mid- to late-career creatives with experience in creative and business fields. Providers match clients to mentors within similar creative fields (e.g., digital creator, musician, film). The Art/Work provider (in Nelson) has one mentor, while the rest have two or more. Generally, clients meet their mentors weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly to progress PDP goals and discuss needs.

Workshops (or seminars) cover marketing, networking, business management, pricing, funding applications, taxes, and resilience building. Mentors and other business professionals within the providers' network facilitate the workshops. The service was set up during COVID-19 lockdowns and disruptions; therefore, workshops were mainly online. After the COVID lockdowns, providers have moved to offer face-to-face, online, or a mix of online and face-to-face workshops. In addition, most providers record workshops for clients to watch or rewatch when it suits them.

Providers also create opportunities for clients to connect with peers by providing spaces or access to resources (e.g., recording studios, computers, and programmes). They also give clients access to networking events and support through their organisation.

Exit and post-service support

When the client is nearing completion, they meet with the provider to determine if post-service support is needed and agree on an exit plan to help them transition from the service. The exit plan builds off the PDP and includes steps to progress towards the client's career goals.

The exit plan details the client's post-service support (e.g., phone check-ins to monitor progress and other guidance or support). Depending on the client's needs, the provider can provide up to three months of post-service support. The provider may work with clients for up to 12 months (nine months of support and three months of post-service support).

Evaluation purpose and methodology

Evaluation purpose

The evaluation provides insights into the design and implementation of the Creative Careers Service and short-term outcomes for participants using the service. MSD and MCH will use the evaluation findings to inform decisions about ongoing implementation. MSD's Ethics Committee reviewed the evaluation plan. The evaluation follows the evaluation plan.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation answers the following three key evaluation questions.

- How well was the service designed?
- How well has the service been implemented?
- To what extent is the service contributing to short-term outcomes?

The sub-evaluation questions are in Appendix 2 as well as in their respective sections/chapters.

We used a mixed-methods evaluation approach

The evaluation focused on the intended and actual operations of services against MSD's business process description.⁴ The evaluation assessed clients' outcomes against the intervention logic for Creative Careers Service (Appendix 1) and clients' and mentors' reflections on clients' changes related to the service.

We used Patton's utilisation-focused evaluation approach.⁵ This approach argues that evaluations should produce useful information for decision-makers about a service. To increase usability, we engaged with MSD's service design team, MSD's research and evaluation team and providers at critical evaluation stages, including design and planning, recruitment and engagement with participants, and analysis and reporting. These engagements enabled ongoing refinement of the evaluation and offered early insights into the findings.

Overview of data collection

The evaluation draws from three key data sources. Evaluation data collection was conducted over two months, from October to November 2022. The evaluation draws on the following data sources:

- Qualitative interviews with MSD and MCH stakeholders, providers, and clients conducted by Litmus and focused on design, implementation and outcomes
- Creative Careers Service monitoring data held by MSD and collected by providers from January 2021 to October 2022, focused on implementation and outcomes

⁴ Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

⁵ Patton, 2008.

- Client post-exit survey data held by MSD and collected by providers from January to October 2022, focused on implementation and outcomes.

We interviewed 35 clients and 25 government and provider stakeholders

Auckland, Waikato and central government interviews were conducted by video conference (e.g., Microsoft Teams or Zoom) and telephone. Nelson Tasman interviews were conducted face-to-face in a safe and comfortable place selected by clients (e.g., home, businesses, cafés).

Interviews lasted around 45 to 60 minutes. Clients received a koha of \$50 (supermarket voucher) for taking part in an interview. Appendix 3 contains the evaluation data collection tools, including participant information sheets, consent forms, and discussion guides.

Tables 1 and 2 present the sample profile for central government and provider interviews and clients.

Table 1: Sample profile for MSD and MCH staff and providers

Stakeholder type	Stakeholder type	Number of people (n= 25)
Central government	Ministry for Culture and Heritage	3
	Ministry of Social Development	2
Service provider managers and frontline staff	The Big Idea	3
	Ngahere Communities	3
	Depot Artspace	6
	Creative Waikato	6
	Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce	2

Table 2: Sample profile of clients interviewed

Domain	Profile	Number of people (n=35)
Service	Toipoto	7
	The Tukua List	6
	Wayfind Creative	7
	Elevate	7
	Art/Work	8
Stage	Partway through post-service support	20
	Completed	14
	Exited before completion	1
MSD clients	MSD client	12

Domain	Profile	Number of people (n=35)
Ethnicity	Non-MSD client	23
	Māori	8
	Pasifika	7
	European and other ethnicities	20

MSD was also interested in understanding how the service supports disabled clients. We do not know how many disabled people use the service, as providers and MSD do not collect this information. While we could not identify disabled clients during recruitment, a few clients shared they had a disability or mental health condition during the interview.

We received monitoring and survey data from MSD

We received Creative Careers Service client monitoring data from MSD for each provider. Data was cleaned and coded before being shared with Litmus. The data included participant demographics and key milestone metrics from referral to completion and post-exit outcomes. In total, the data had 1,014 referrals across the five providers.

We received consolidated post-exit survey data from MSD for 53 respondents for all providers. We cleaned and coded the survey data where needed. Providers send the survey link to participants three months after completing an exit plan. The survey is voluntary. This data included responses to questions about participant experience, outcomes, and demographics. Appendix 3 contains a breakdown of the survey respondent profile.

We used an integrated data analysis approach

We used an integrated analysis approach drawing across the three independently collected data streams. The qualitative interviews offer insights into implementation and perceived outcomes. We used the quantitative survey data from the provider to assess whether themes from the qualitative interviews were supported. MSD administrative data offered an overview of client demographics.

The qualitative analysis completed draws on Patton's utilisation and qualitative analysis approach.⁶ All qualitative interviews were transcribed and coded. We developed a coding frame using the Creative Careers Service intervention logic activities, outputs and outcomes.⁷ Sub-themes were developed when coding the transcripts. We analysed the findings by stakeholder type, MSD and non-MSD clients, ethnicity and stage.

We completed a sub-group analysis of the Creative Careers Service client monitoring data and post-exit client survey data.

- In the post-exit client survey, we analysed the results at a total sample and by MSD and non-MSD clients due to the small base size.
- In providers' monitoring data we analysed the data by ethnicity (i.e., Māori and non-Māori, Pasifika and non-Pasifika) and by MSD and non-MSD clients.

⁶ Patton, 2002.

⁷ Ministry of Social Development, 2021.

We explored commonalities in findings and outliers across the three data streams.

Limitations of the evaluation approach

The evaluation report draws on qualitative and quantitative information. The evaluation team is confident the evaluation findings presented accurately reflect the interviews completed and data received to inform the report. MSD's service design team and MCH reviewed the draft report for accuracy.

We acknowledge the following limitations to the evaluation:

- **Potential for selection bias:** We used purposive sample selection and opt-out processes to ensure a diversity of clients were invited to take part in an interview. Feedback from clients on their service experience and outcomes is consistent across client sub-groups. However, we have noted key differences in the report where they exist. In addition, feedback from clients and providers was consistent. However, we do not know if other clients had different experiences or outcomes.
- **Limitations of client sample of early exits:** We have only limited feedback on those who exited the Creative Careers Service before completing the service. We interviewed only one person who had left early. In addition, we discussed the reasons for early client exit with providers.
- **Bias due to COVID-19 support:** The Creative Careers Service operated during COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. The evaluation cannot explore a counterfactual apart from asking clients interviewed what would have happened without the service. Some clients may have viewed the service more positively than if they received no COVID-19 support.
- **Recall bias:** Some clients had difficulty recalling all their engagement with the services, particularly the duration of service received.
- **Low post-exit survey response rates:** The survey response rate was 13%. The survey has few responses from Tukua Toi clients (n=2) and no responses from Art/Work clients. Overall, survey responses aligned with the feedback from clients interviewed.
- **Minor data variability of monitoring data:** Some data was missing as some clients did not share personal information such as ethnicity. The monitoring data has some data entry errors, particularly on early exit dates. Examples include coding people as an early exit 1) when they did not enrol, 2) when their time in the service is greater than their agreed length in the service, 3) coding Māori and Pasifika clients as an early exit when their service duration is similar to non-Māori and non-Pasifika clients and 4) coding as an early exit if they did not complete an exit plan, though completed the service duration. Given the variation in coding, we cannot draw meaningful insights on early exits from the service.

Report structure and terminology

We have structured the report into three sections to answer the key evaluation questions. In the report, the terms:

- 'Participants' is clients interviewed who took part in the service
- 'Provider' is provider staff interviewed who deliver the service (including managers, administrators, and mentors)
- 'Interviewees' are both clients and providers interviewed
- 'Clients' refers to all using the service and MSD's Creative Careers Service monitoring data.

The following terms are used to indicate the frequency of the themes across interviews.

- 'Most' indicates the theme was noted by most participants interviewed
- 'Some' indicates the theme was noted by less than half of the participants interviewed
- 'Few' indicates less than five participants noted the theme.

Findings



How well was the service designed?

This section answers the following evaluation questions about the service design.

- How well does the service design meet clients' needs?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the service design?
- How does the service design differ from or align with other services, and what is its added value for participants?
- How effectively was the service designed to handle the ongoing disruptions of COVID-19?
- How effectively was the service designed to align with Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity?

How well does the service design meet clients' needs?

Feedback from the 2020 sector engagement workshops indicated creatives wanted a service to help build their business skills and discover creative career pathways.⁸ Most participants interviewed reported the service is meeting their needs. They valued the opportunity to develop their business skills and career aspirations under the guidance and support of providers. They also appreciated having a service dedicated to creatives. Participants and providers interviewed in all regions reported this view.

'Because this [programme] is so **tailored towards the arts** and people involved in the arts, who tend to be quite shy in coming forwards when it comes to business, I see that as being its **number one superhero strength**.' (Participant)

The service need was reinforced by interviewees noting the significant challenges of building a sustainable income from a creative career. Many creatives noted they rely on government-funded grants or non-creative work as their paid creative work often fluctuates. Providers, MSD and MCH stakeholders reported the creative sector lacks employment opportunities, and buyer markets are competitive. Additionally, some participants and providers noted COVID-19 exacerbated these challenges (e.g., no tourists buying art, fewer jobs in film, and businesses shutting down).

'Some of the **real complexities come with the broader challenges of the creative sector** in that you've got a programme based upon people getting more work in the creative sector at a time when **there's less work because of COVID**.' (Provider)

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the service design?

The design was client-centred, focused on building business capability and was flexible

All interviewees reported the creative sector in Aotearoa is diverse. Creatives work in various mediums, e.g., film, visual and performance arts, music, ceramics, and writing. They are often at different career stages and have varying aspirations. All participating providers noted the client-centred approach is a strength of the service design.

⁸ Manatū Tonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Ministry of Social Development, 2020.

All providers interviewed noted the service design has allowed them to tailor services to provider strengths and clients' needs. While providers have set service guideline requirements (e.g., eligibility criteria, length of service, etc.), they also have the flexibility to design specific service elements on the ground (e.g., workshop content and structure, the process to develop PDPs, alumni pathways). Providers felt this flexibility is a strength of the service, enabling them to adapt the service to participants' needs.

'The design, the **one-on-one mentoring** supported by workshops, works incredibly well for our people because we're **tailoring the approach** for them.' (Provider)

The design and outcomes measures did not acknowledge clients' wellbeing needs, different starting points and cultural success

Some clients using the service have complex mental health and wellbeing needs (e.g., anxiety, depression, physical disability, homelessness). However, most providers felt the service design and outcome measures did not recognise these challenges (discussed further [here](#)).

'The **reality of working in the creative industry is a struggle**, and we can't change that. It's a hard career to be in, and the mental health struggle comes with that. [There's] a real fine line of us not being counsellors.' (Provider)

All providers felt the desired long-term outcomes asked in the post-exit survey (e.g., higher incomes, a greater portion of income earned from creative work) were too ambitious for the timeframe of the service and given some clients' starting points (e.g., people living in emergency housing with no creative income earning experience, people starting up a new creative business).

'Some MSD clients who have been more **long-term on a benefit, they're in a difficult place in their life**, been getting support from the government in the first instance, so **to take them and elevate their self-esteem** and focus it into the thing they do well, can be a bit challenging sometimes.' (Provider)

All providers interviewed also felt the desired outcomes did not reflect clients' holistic gains, such as having an improved sense of purpose and fulfilment or uplifting youth in their community.

'[One] outcome MSD wanted was increased income... we felt that **so many other needs of our people are missed from MSD, like the holistic views**. Those who were getting referred to us weren't mentally in a position where they could pursue their business or creative industry because **they weren't in the right headspace**.' (Provider)

Furthermore, one provider noted the outcome measures are not whānau-centred⁹ and do not capture whānau Māori success. For example, this provider reported success as seeing clients becoming a better version of themselves, for them, their whānau, their Iwi and their community. However, these success markers are not in the intervention logic for the service or the post-exit survey. Further, while not mentioned in interviews, the design does not consider Pasifika models of success (e.g., the philosophy of *teu le vā* which focuses on secular and sacred commitments, guiding reciprocal 'acting in' and respect for relational spaces).¹⁰

'We felt that MSD was just focused on numbers, input/output and no in-between because for us, **Māori and Pasifika, we're very whānau-orientated**.' (Provider)

⁹ 'Whānau-centred' refers to a culturally grounded, holistic approach focused on improving the wellbeing of whānau (families) and addressing individual needs within a whānau context.

¹⁰ Airini et al., 2010.

How does the service design differ from or align with other services, and what is its added value for participants?

Most stakeholders viewed the service as essential and relevant to the sector as it bridges the gap between creative practice and business skill development. They noted business skills are often not taught in tertiary education and are critical to a sustainable creative career. Therefore, the critical value-add was the strengthening of business skills.

Most providers and clients said no services like the Creative Careers Service exist. Given the service's unique value, they wanted ongoing funding to build a sustainable creative sector.

*'I think there's something very appealing about the idea of **stability in the creative world**, and usually, it's quite hard to reconcile the two. So, the idea of [this service] is very attractive.'* (Participant)

How effectively was the service designed to handle the ongoing disruptions of COVID-19?

COVID-19 disrupted the creative sector. In March 2020, the loss of productivity (GDP) from the creative sector was projected to be twice that of the economy and an estimated 11,000 jobs would be lost by March 2021.¹¹ Providers also reported the creative sector and clients faced wellbeing challenges during this time (e.g., mental health challenges and financial hardship).

The Creative Careers Service was not designed to respond to the immediate economic, social and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19. The Creative Careers Service was designed to offer longer-term support for:

- creatives to build resilience and adapt their creative business within a disrupted sector
- emerging or early career creatives to prepare to enter the sector.

The eligibility criteria worked well to support creatives at differing career levels during COVID-19 disruptions

Participants who lost income during COVID-19 highly valued being eligible for the service to adapt their creative business model. Emerging creatives appreciated having a service to work towards their creative earning goals during lockdowns.

The Creative Careers Service successfully operated online during COVID-19 disruptions

The Creative Careers Service was designed and rolled out throughout COVID-19 lockdowns. Due to these disruptions, providers developed and delivered service activities mainly online (e.g., workshops and mentoring).

Online options increased opportunities for more clients to take part in the service through COVID-19 restrictions. Additionally, providers recorded workshops, which enabled clients to complete service activities at times convenient to them, and reduced access barriers for some (e.g., travel costs).

¹¹ Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2021.

Shifting to an online environment also enabled clients to connect with their peers during lockdowns and build new connections, possibly broader ones than in-person.

'We've been in and out of lockdown and stuff, so we've just made the call to deliver the majority of workshops and activity online, which meant we could serve those people who were more remote equally as well as the people who were local. And so, there is a broad range of people from across the region, which is cool, and that seems to be going quite well.' (Provider)

Since the lockdowns have ceased, most providers have continued providing flexible options for clients with both online and in-person activities. Participants' engagement preferences varied. Some preferred most of their engagement online as they lived a significant distance away (e.g., over a one-hour drive) from the provider offices or did not have a car or viable public transportation method. Some preferred face-to-face because they did not have the physical space or technology at home to take part online.

Some preferred a mix of online and face-to-face options because they were busy with work or school most days though wanted the option to connect in person when they had time. A few participants interviewed lived more rurally. While they appreciated the online options they wanted some opportunities to connect face-to-face with other artists.

Providers felt client wellbeing supports during COVID-19 needed strengthening in the design

Most providers noted they did not anticipate the extent of wellbeing support some clients required during COVID-19. Providers noted clients relied on their staff for emotional and informational support during these times. As a result, most providers developed additional supports for clients even though they were not resourced to do so (e.g., resilience, information sheets about where to access help, more time mentoring).

'During lockdown, we had more mentoring. We did a lot more talking... Because they just really needed it as well because of the whole stress. I think a lot of that was COVID was really hard for artists and they needed someone to talk to and you became the person.' (Provider)

Provider contracts stipulated clients could draw on MSD support. However, when clients used these pathways, providers felt clients received a delayed response.

How effectively was the service designed to align with Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity?

Te Pae Tawhiti Programme (the Programme)¹² is a multi-year change work programme to enable the MSD to deliver services that are easier to use, more accessible, and integrated across employment, housing, and income support. MSD wants to be trusted and proactive, connecting clients with the right support and services for them and improving New Zealanders' social and economic wellbeing.

Te Pae Tawhiti describes MSD's three strategic organisational shifts as:

- *Mana Manaaki*: A positive experience every time
- *Kotahitanga*: Partnering for greater impact

¹² [Te Pae Tawhiti Programme - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](https://www.msd.govt.nz/te-pae-tawhiti-programme)

- *Kia Takatū Tātou*: Supporting long-term social and economic development.

The programme is underpinned by MSD's *Te Pae Tata* Māori strategy and action plan¹³ and MSD's *Pacific Prosperity – Our People, Our Solutions, Our Future*¹⁴.

Feedback indicates *Te Pae Tata* and *Pacific Prosperity* did not directly inform the Creative Careers Service design. However, the underlying strategic shifts of *Te Pae Tawhiti* are evident. In the future, MSD must clarify how the strategies are used in service design processes and contracting. Framing future design with these strategies may work to address design gaps noted for the Creative Careers Service, notably wellbeing, and incorporating Māori and Pasifika success measures.

Although not planned, design alignment exists with *Te Pae Tata*

MSD's *Te Pae Tata* Māori strategy and action plan highlights the importance of meaningful relationships with Māori and achieving better outcomes for Māori. The vision is that whānau Māori are strong, safe, prosperous and self-determining. Māori were not involved in the design of the service. However, the underlying strategic shifts of *Te Pae Tawhiti* are evident to some extent.

MSD contracted a Māori provider located in Māori communities to deliver the service. Contracting the Māori provider demonstrated a level of partnering for greater impact for Māori (*Kotahitanga*). In addition, the Creative Careers Service focuses on business skill development for Māori creatives which aligns with *Kia Takatū Tātou*.

Feedback from Māori participants highlighted the importance of the Māori provider in enabling their connections to their culture. They also appreciated having successful Māori role models and access to other Māori creatives to support them in developing a sustainable creative career.

Māori participant experiences with non-Māori providers demonstrate *Mana Manaaki* and *Kia Takatū Tātou* on some levels. For example, at non-Māori providers, Māori participants reported a positive experience of being treated with respect and having trusting relationships with their mentors and staff. They also appreciated having successful Māori role models and access to other Māori creatives. For example, Māori participants at Creative Waikato valued the opportunity when placed in a Māori creative cohort where they felt they could express their culture freely (e.g., use of te reo and incorporating kai and karakia).

The service design was less aligned with *Pacific Prosperity* due to limited Pacific leadership input

MSD's *Pacific Prosperity – Our People, Our Solutions, Our Future* interweaves the three organisational shifts of *Te Pae Tawhiti* by placing Pacific peoples at the heart of its development, thinking and decision-making. The vision is for Pacific peoples, families, and communities to thrive and flourish in Aotearoa.

Pacific Prosperity did not directly inform the Creative Careers Service design. The Creative Careers Service has not partnered with a Pasifika provider. Contracting Pasifika providers would align with the *Pacific Prosperity* strategy by recognising Pasifika communities could then determine their solutions.

¹³ <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>

¹⁴ <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/about-msd/strategies/pacific-strategy/pacific-prosperity-our-people-our-solutions-our-future-english-version.pdf>

Some providers have community partnerships with Pasifika organisations, Pasifika communities, and Pasifika creative role models. Therefore, some providers are partnering for greater impact at the community level (*Kotahitanga*). For example, some providers are partnering with Pasifika artists to mentor or facilitate workshops and Pasifika Arts Associations and funds.

The Creative Careers Service focuses on business skill development for Pasifika creatives and supports Pasifika aspirations for their creative careers. Therefore, the design aligns with the strategic focus of supporting long-term social and economic development (*Kia Takatū Tātau*).

Feedback from Pasifika participants demonstrates a positive service experience (*Mana Manaaki*). Pasifika participants appreciated the Māori provider's understanding of their lived experience and challenges. At most providers, Pasifika participants liked having connections to new networks, given the small size of their Pasifika creative networks. Additionally, Pasifika participants reported being treated with respect and dignity, trusting relationships with provider staff, and feeling safe and empowered through the service.

How well has the service been implemented?

This section answers the following evaluation questions about service implementation.

- How well has the service been implemented?
- How well does the service support those with diverse needs and/or learning requirements?
- How well does the service support those working with toi Māori or Pacific heritage arts?
- How well has the service managed the ongoing disruptions caused by COVID-19?
- What are the facilitators of and barriers to participants engaging with and sustaining their participation in the service?

How well has the service been implemented?

The Creative Careers Service is making reasonable progress towards implementation milestones

The service was intended to support 1,000 creatives over two years. From January 2021 to October 2022, about 700 people have used or are using the service. For a new pilot, set up during COVID-19 disruptions, the achievement is reasonable and indicates the level of service needed in the creative sector. The Creative Careers Service monitoring data (January 2021 to October 2022) shows:

- 1,014 people were referred to the service
- 773 of these referrals were accepted
- 741 assessments were completed
- 328 people currently use the service
- 250 people completed the service
- 153 exited the service early (limited data exists on reasons for early exits, discussed [here](#)).

Figure 1: Creative Careers Service user engagement numbers



Data source:
Service monitoring data (January 2021 to October 2022).

**Note: Clients who completed the service within the exit plan date include clients who received post-service support.

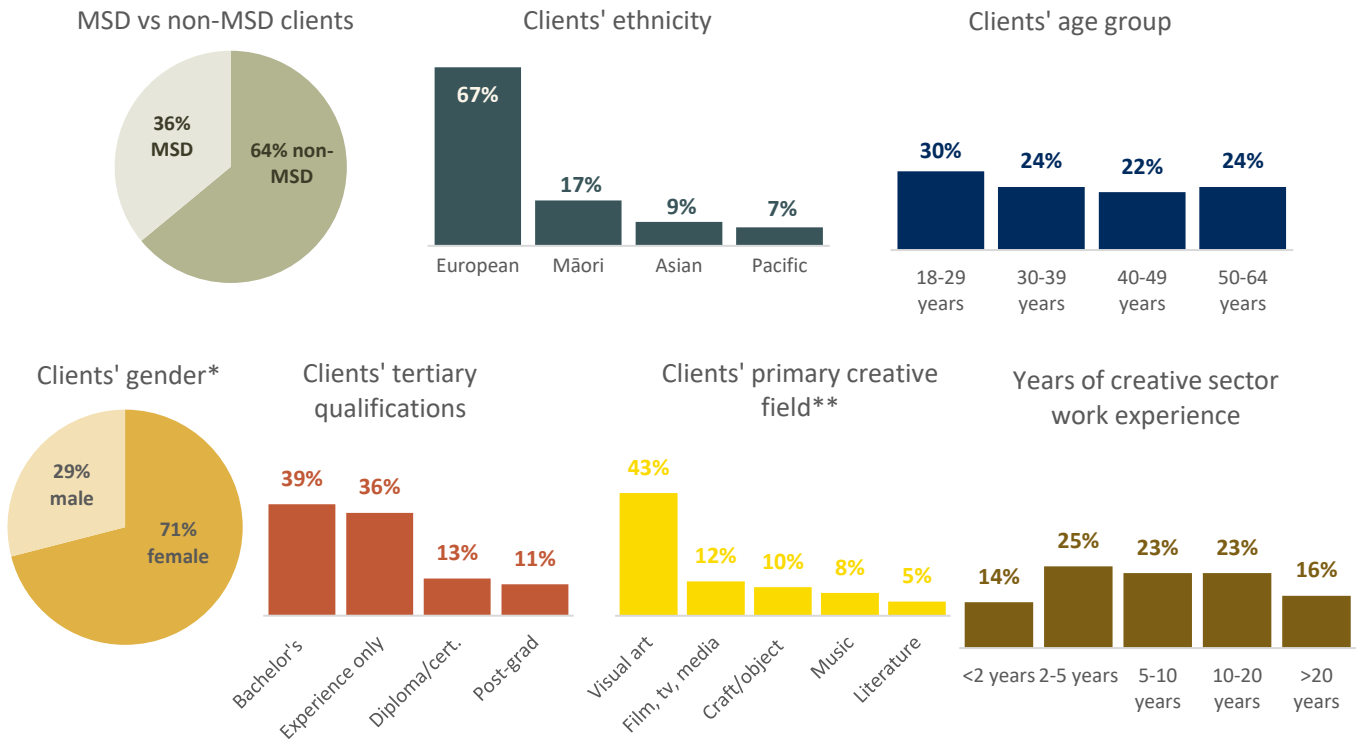
Creative Careers

The service has supported a diverse range of people

The Creative Careers Service has supported diverse creatives (e.g., singers to digital animators) at different stages of their creative careers (e.g., those entering the creative industry to those with established careers looking to change direction due to COVID-19). Overall, clients using the service were mainly non-MSD clients (63%), female (71%) and European (67%). We do not know how

clients' demographics compare to the creative sector population as this information was not available. However, we note the proportion of Māori and Pasifika in some regions appears to be low.

Figure 2: Overview of client demographics



Data source: Creative Careers Service monitoring data (January 2021 to October 2022).
 * Two clients were gender diverse, the proportion was small and not displayed in the figure.
 ** The graph does not include all primary creative fields mentioned by clients. A complete table is in Appendix 3.

The Creative Career Service is mainly being implemented as planned

All providers implemented the service as planned and demonstrated the client service journey from entering to exiting the service.

Participants found both the referral process and self-referral pathway work well

Most participants interviewed learned about the service through providers' marketing or word-of-mouth from peers and service users. A few participants interviewed heard about the service from their MSD case manager or agency navigator (e.g., Kāinga Ora or ACC). These participants were supported by their case managers/navigators to self-refer. Case managers and navigators helped these participants realise they were eligible and helped build confidence to self-refer.

Most participants interviewed self-referred to the service and recalled a straightforward process. For example, they remembered filling out forms on the providers' websites. One participant interviewed said they visited the provider's office to learn more about the service and filled out a paper form.

All providers used the eligibility criteria

According to the monitoring data, all providers used the criteria (e.g., working age, relevant experience or creative qualification) to assess clients' eligibility for the service. The main reason providers did not complete an assessment was the person could not be contacted or said they were not ready to begin the service.

The onboarding meeting sets the service up for success

After the providers accepted the referrals, they met with clients to determine their suitability for the service. During the onboarding meeting, providers reported ensuring clients are available, committed to participating and have internet connectivity.

'If a potential client fits the criteria, I call them and chat about the programme and the time commitments. I find what is **key for people is to have time to put into the programme.**' (Provider)

Most participants interviewed said providers contacted them soon after applying or inquiring about the service. They felt welcomed at these initial meetings.

'**It was all casual and welcoming.** You make an online submission, and then you come in for an interview, and both of those things went well for me.' (Participant)

All providers and participants reported the initial meetings set expectations for the service. For example, during this first conversation, participants learned:

- the service's purpose is to guide and support users to generate income from their creative work
- they will develop a PDP unique to their creative income-generating goals
- participant and mentor roles and responsibilities
- support the provider offers to progress PDP goals (e.g., mentoring, workshops, peer groups or cohorts, networking events, etc.)
- the time commitments for participating in the service (e.g., hours per week for workshops).

'They explained how they are **bridging the gap between creatives and having a lifestyle and income.** The way they put those things together, I could see it **seemed realistic.** I didn't think I was ever going to get accepted. I thought I would enter on a whim. And [the mentor] called back straight away. I was there within a week.' (Participant)

'**In the first meeting, I get to know the client and understand** where they are going. Set some goals and start to build some trust. I think that is important because if you are going to be **giving somebody advice over time, they have to trust you and open up.**' (Provider)

Clients and providers also agree on the length of time they require support. Clients can opt for between one and nine months. According to the monitoring data, 70% (n=358) of clients requested or were assigned nine months of support at enrolment.¹⁵ Most clients opting for nine months highlights the intensity of support needed to build business acumen. However, duration flexibility is important, given the variation in need levels.

Participants found PDPs helpful for setting their goals

All participants set goals and developed a PDP. They used different terminology to describe their PDPs, including a business plan, goals, vision and mission setting. Most participants set their goals with the support of mentors and providers' staff. In some instances, participants attended group workshops dedicated to developing their PDP. Participants found both these supports helpful for developing realistic and achievable goals. Most participants also said the service helped them to

¹⁵ See Appendix 3: Table 6 for data.

identify and develop their unique creative career or business pathway. A few participants also reported the PDP enabled them to track their progress.

'It was pretty good because it makes you sit down and nut it out, explore what direction you want to go. **You can go with a creative career in so many different ways.** I was thinking about many different things at the time, which **made me focus.** It's all about focus at the end of the day and working hard to get better at what you do.' (Participant)

'It was so useful. Right through the programme, I relooked at [my PDP] and rewrote it. It showed me how much I was getting out of the programme. **It was obvious how much I was learning and how much I was developing along the way.**' (Participant)

Post-exit survey results reflected interviewed participant feedback. Most survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed:

- their PDP helped identify steps to progress their career or business (86%, n=42)
- their PDP helped to identify barriers to earning income through their creative work (80%, n=40)
- their PDP felt specific to them and their needs (74%, n=38).

For mentors, the PDP was critical for ensuring clients were on track and had the support they needed to succeed.

'With their PDP, we ensure all the stuff is being ticked off. It's almost like a **succession plan** and ensuring they are **moving in the right direction** and have all the **building blocks and resources** to succeed.' (Provider)

Mentorship, professional development, networking and access to resources were critical supports

Most participants said their mentors offered step-by-step guidance and advice on progressing their goals, highlighting opportunities and overcoming challenges. They formed good relationships and trusted their mentors because they had creative sector experience. They liked that mentoring was tailored to their specific situation and creative and business development goals. They also felt mentors helped them to be more confident and motivated to work through their PDP goals.

'I think **one of the most useful things was talking to my mentor.** I developed a relationship with them so I could take them on my journey, and they would give me insight into what I was doing.' (Participant)

Most participants said taking part in professional development workshops was helpful to their specific needs, e.g., marketing, taxes, grant writing, and resilience building. In addition, they liked the practical nature of the workshops. They also mentioned that workshop scheduling was convenient.

Most participants interviewed considered providers to be advocates for the creative sector in their communities, had networks, and pushed for more opportunities for artists, such as funding, gallery showings and spaces. Providers' advocacy allowed participants to connect with and learn from other creatives (peers and later career creatives).

In addition to mentoring, professional development workshops and networking opportunities were offered. Some participants were also offered provider spaces and resources (e.g., office space, computers, recording studio) to use. Participants considered these supports helped to progress their PDP goals.

On average clients use the service for about 10 months

According to the monitoring data, clients who have left the service (n=366) on average used the service for about 10 months (from assessment to exit date). Clients who completed the service as planned (n=231) on average used the service for about eleven months. Clients who exited early¹⁶ (n=135) on average used the service for about seven months. These averages do not include additional time in post-service support.

Participants who used post-service support found it useful

According to the monitoring data, 81% (n=68) of clients who completed the service used post-service support, and most (75%, n=42) requested the maximum duration of three months. MSD and non-MSD clients used post-service support at similar rates. And Māori and Pasifika used the post-service support at higher rates than non-Māori and non-Pasifika.

Most participants who had completed the service recalled being offered post-service support to determine if they needed further help to fulfil their development goals. They were offered post-service support after completing their agreed service length.

Participants who received post-service support said this support usually involved more mentoring sessions. These participants said the post-service support helped them progress towards their development goals.

A few participants wanted the service extended through ongoing access to workshops and networking opportunities. They said they would be happy to pay for six monthly mentoring sessions once the post-service support ended.

Participants did not take up post-service support because they:

- felt confident to pursue their development goals
- had achieved an employment or income outcome
- had transitioned to another service offered by the provider.

After completion, providers noted clients accessed other supports and networks

Providers reported many clients to have access to other supports and services after transitioning out of the service. For example:

- Toipoto has an alumni pathway where clients can stay connected to the network and use resources (e.g., workshop recordings) after they exit or complete
- Through Art/Work, applicable clients requiring additional support can be staircased to other programmes to apply for funding to support their creative business (e.g., accountant fees).
- Through the Tūkua List, clients can continue to use the Ngāhere Communities space and resources.

Some participants mentioned these additional supports and appreciated the opportunity to stay connected to the networks and draw on services when they needed them.

¹⁶ Clients who exit early are those who do not complete the service within the timeframe agreed with the provider at enrolment and did not complete an exit plan.

How does the service support client diversity?

Māori participants considered the service responsive

Most Māori participants felt providers were invested in realising their creative careers and developing their business goals. They spoke of providers being respectful, and welcoming, and some providers used te reo Māori. They also spoke of providers ensuring they received the resources and support to realise their goals.

Māori participants interviewed found working with Māori mentors who have a personal connection to the issues facing Māori creatives especially supportive. They also valued when providers connected them with successful Māori role models.

Tukua List participants who were Māori especially valued working with a provider with tikanga Māori values. In the Waikato, Māori participants found being in a cohort with other Māori clients (offered by Creative Waikato) to be supportive.

'[The service] has gotten to know most of the Māori artists in the area. **They've got their finger on the pulse.** They're the networkers who can hear our voice and reflect that back to the organisers of events, so **they've got a very important role** there.'
(Māori client)

Two Māori clients interviewed worked with Toi Māori. They said they appreciated networking opportunities and when providers had knowledge and connections to other Māori organisations, Iwi, and funding opportunities.

Most providers drew from Creative New Zealand to support Toi Māori creatives with funding. Some providers offered joint mentoring with Toi Māori artists. These providers noted Māori clients valued mentoring by Māori artists with cultural traditions, skills, practices and networks.

Pasifika participants reported a positive service experience and valued connections to broader networks

Most Pasifika participants interviewed also felt the providers supported their creative careers and business pursuits. They felt providers were respectful and created welcoming spaces for them.

Pasifika participants appreciated the opportunities to broaden their networks with a wider network of creatives. As one Pasifika participant explained, the Pasifika artist community in Aotearoa is small. They valued making new connections through the service as they met new people they would not normally interact with in their artist networks.

Pasifika participants liked working with the Māori provider as they understood their challenges and openly shared their resources and experiences.

'They're so good at supporting and going above and beyond for Pasifika and Māori participants. They know what it's like. **They know where we're coming from and what little resources we've grown up with.** They're doing this continually. With the resources, they've got and the talents they have, they're not just keeping it to themselves.'
(Pasifika client)

Most providers drew from support from Creative New Zealand to support Pasifika clients to access Pacific Heritage Artists funding. Some also offered joint mentoring with Pacific Heritage Artists. These providers noted Pasifika clients valued being mentored by artists with cultural traditions, skills, practices and networks.

Disabled participants reported the service to be person-centred

Disabled participants interviewed felt the service supported them to participate in the service. They felt comfortable and safe to disclose their conditions to provider staff and ask for extra support when needed.

They felt their mentors understood and respected their physical and emotional needs and worked proactively with them to achieve their creative career and business development goals. Disabled participants also reported having online engagement options, and a free service made the service more accessible.

Disabled clients also valued the flexibility of the programme length as they sometimes needed to take breaks or pause for a couple of weeks to prioritise their health and wellbeing.

Post-exit survey reflects feedback from disabled participants

Post-exit survey results were similar to the feedback of participants interviewed:

- 92% (n=23) of survey respondents with wellbeing needs reported the service met these needs.¹⁷
- 95% (n=18) of disabled survey respondents reported the service met their access and learning style needs.¹⁸

What are the facilitators of and barriers to client engagement?

Mentor relationships enabled participants' service completion

Most participants interviewed reported the mentor relationship was essential for completing the service. They said mentors were on hand to help them grow, develop their creative careers and help them succeed.

Providers adapted their service based on clients' feedback

All providers reported refining their service delivery to enhance the client experience. Providers noted they improved their communications with clients and provided more online tools. Some also added more peer groups and networking options based on client feedback.

Some providers reported trialling new ways to better meet their clients' needs. For example:

- In 2022, Ngahere Communities shifted their focus to supporting digital creatives, reflecting their expertise and where they could impact most. Ngahere Communities also connected clients with freelancing work to develop their professional skills (through the Tukua List platform). As a result, clients gained work experience and could apply workshop learnings.
- The Depot ArtSpace and the Big Idea developed an alumni pathway for clients who completed the service. Alumni receive invites to networking events and access to workshop recordings and resources post-service.

¹⁷ Twenty-five post-exit survey respondents indicated this question was applicable to them.

¹⁸ Nineteen post-exit survey respondents indicated this question was applicable to them (e.g., those with a wheelchair, hearing and visual aids, interpreter, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

Illness, family obligations and creative opportunities can impede ongoing client engagement

A sizeable portion of clients exited earlier than planned. According to the monitoring data, a third of clients (37%, n=153) exited before service completion. Early exit data suggests Māori and Pasifika are completing the service at a lower rate than non-Māori and non-Pasifika. However, the reasons for this difference are unknown from the interviews with Māori and Pasifika participants.

Providers considered clients mainly left the service before planned completion because they:

- had disengaged from the service, and the provider could not contact them
- had found employment or contract work (in the creative or another sector)
- needed to focus on a large creative project and could not dedicate time to participating
- had family and other responsibilities and could not commit time to take part
- moved out of the region so they could no longer take part.

Reflecting providers' feedback, Table 3 summarises the reasons given in the monitoring data for clients exiting the service before planned completion. The key reasons noted are disengaged or not contactable, reaching an employment or creative goal, or the wrong time to take part.

The monitoring data suggest some clients paused and re-entered the service. MSD, MCH and providers should consider options for clients to continue to take part when moving out of the region and opportunities to pause and re-enter if they have medical or family responsibilities.

Table 3: Reasons clients exited service before planned completion

Reason captured for exiting before planned	Proportion	No.
Disengaged from the service and the provider was unable to contact	33%	47
Reached an employment or creative goal	14%	20
Chose not to participate	13%	19
Another reason, though not specified	12%	17
Indicated the wrong time to take part	10%	14
Moved out of the region	9%	13
Exited due to a medical reason	5%	7
Settled in education or training	2%	3
Other support was more appropriate (e.g., financial, tech)	2%	3
Total	100%	143

Data source: Creative Careers Service monitoring data (January 2021 to October 2022).

Where have there been challenges in delivering the service?

The initial outcome-based contracting model created challenges for providers

In the first year, most providers faced cash flow challenges due to the time to set up a new service and achieve MSD-anticipated participation numbers. To rectify this, MSD changed provider contracts from a primarily per-participant monthly fee to a fixed-rate monthly fee. Providers reported this change worked better for them.

'In the beginning, the contract wasn't financially viable for providers. They then split into **flat-rate monthly payments, which is better.** Though, a whole third of the contract is based on success payments, which happens after the end of the programme and relies on participants providing information they may not want to. **That's quite a risk if you've budgeted on a contract amount, and then you can't access a third of that evenly-divided service.'** (Provider)

Providers reported they struggled to capture outcomes post-service, especially for non-MSD clients. Providers also said MSD's monitoring and reporting systems were difficult to use. Outcome-based reporting took up more administration time than anticipated.

'We rely on the participants providing information that they may not want to provide. Our **non-MSD clients are uncomfortable sharing their financial information** in the post-exit survey. So, the survey goes out, and I get very few.'

(Provider)

Attracting MSD clients to the service was a challenge in some regions

The Creative Careers Service aims to support half MSD and half non-MSD clients (e.g., 500 MSD clients and 500 non-MSD clients). Across the service, 34% (n=328) of referrals indicated they were MSD clients, and 66% (n=623) indicated they were not. Most providers felt they were not receiving enough support from MSD to attract MSD clients to the service.

Ngahere Communities and Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce had higher rates of MSD clients referring to their services than other providers (50% MSD clients to 50% non-MSD clients).¹⁹ These providers noted MSD clients mainly self-referred to the service, highlighting the importance of the self-referral pathway.

Creative Waikato reported MSD referred many clients in their region. Only Creative Waikato reported they had a strong relationship with their MSD regional office. On multiple occasions, Creative Waikato held information sessions about the service and shared fliers with MSD staff.

Other providers received few referrals from MSD. These providers had difficulties contacting MSD regional offices. They, therefore, spent more resources than intended identifying eligible MSD clients for the service who had self-referred. MSD needs to promote the service to MSD regional staff and identify internal levers to enable referrals.

'I would say MSD only referred two people this whole year. Everything has just been us sourcing people. We do advertising and stuff. We've naturally let it flow for the last couple of months, but we have to pull back in what we do and focus on getting our numbers up for the remainder of our contract.'

(Provider)

Providers received little feedback from MSD and MCH on their progress

Until recently, most providers reported having little communication with MCH and MSD. They sent in progress reports and received no feedback on achievements or challenges. We interviewed no MSD regional staff for this evaluation, so cannot comment on any blockages or challenges from their perspective.

¹⁹ See Appendix 3, Table 3 for breakdown of MSD and non-MSD referrals and clients by provider.

Opportunities for sharing learnings across providers were limited

Providers shared insights with each other informally. However, they wanted more deliberate and structured opportunities with MSD and MCH to share learnings and support collective responses to improve client services.

How well did the service mitigate the ongoing disruptions caused by COVID-19?

Government and providers noted COVID-19 hit the creative sector hard regarding financial hardship, paid work opportunities and broader wellbeing needs, including food and housing. Providers responded by referring clients to wrap-around supports and providing online communities for creatives to connect. In addition, providers managed disruptions to the service by offering online mentoring and professional development workshops.

'We never imagined we would be referring people to Foodbanks, but that's exactly what happened. We couldn't dim the lights because people were looking for how to stay with it and not give up on visions.' (Provider)

Some providers developed and delivered resilience workshops to support client wellbeing

Some providers developed and delivered resilience workshops for clients during COVID lockdowns to support their clients. These workshops covered COVID-19 challenges (e.g., creating and connecting in isolation, fluctuating paid work), coping mechanisms, and potential solutions. These providers continue to offer these workshops, given their relevance in coping with creative work isolation, facing funding rejection and the ongoing lack of work in specific industries (e.g., film).

'Definitely through COVID, there were quite high mental health challenges going on with lots of creatives so we were there as a **kind of a community to support them**. It's just that **building their resilience** and supporting their health and wellbeing.' (Provider)

'You've got a programme that's based upon people getting more work in the creative sector at a **time where there's less and less work because of COVID**.' (Provider)

To what extent is the service contributing to short-term outcomes?

The Creative Careers Service was designed to support creatives to stay working in the creative sector and have more sustainable incomes. This section assesses how the service contributes to short-term outcomes.

- To what extent do clients feel the service helped articulate goals for their artistic career and develop a career plan to support them?
- To what extent do clients feel the service has helped them articulate goals for income and develop a business plan to support these goals?
- To what extent do clients feel the service has increased their knowledge of relevant sectors and led to stronger professional networks?
- To what extent do clients feel the service has helped them source funds for business development where needed?
- To what extent are outcomes equitable for Māori, Pacific and others?

Do clients feel the service helped articulate goals for their artistic career and develop a career plan to support them?

Most participants felt the service had helped them to identify and develop their artistic career goals

Most participants came to the service with some ideas or experience about generating income from their creative work. The service helped participants narrow down their creative pathways. Additionally, some participants reported the service increased their awareness of other creative career or business pathways (e.g., freelancing, teaching, grants-based partnerships).

When asked what their most significant change was from taking part in the service, most participants said they felt more confident, motivated, and inspired to develop a career pathway in the creative sector.

'I think the biggest takeaway from [the service] is it's made me feel inspired... I am every stereotype under MSD. If you're coming from that world, it's inspiring, not scary, and you can be a part of that. It's a field we can all reap from, and we can all sow in.'
(Participant)

Do clients feel the service has helped articulate income goals and develop a business plan to support them?

Most participants said the service had helped them articulate income goals and a plan to support goals

Most participants reported gaining insights about earning from their creative work. For example, some participants reported gaining new knowledge about pricing their work or budgeting for their creative businesses. In addition, some participants reported thinking in the longer term about their income goals and building knowledge for financial resilience.

'I now have a longer-term plan. **I have money goals** for three months, six months, and then yearly to five-year. That's been amazing because I never set those goals for my art practice or **business.**' (Participant)

In a few instances, participants said the service changed their mindsets about earning from their creative work altogether (e.g., shifting from providing creative work for free to charge).

'Before [the service], I did a lot of murals for free. I was constantly running out of fuel and still helping people, but I just thought I was on this mission. This course has snapped me out of that. It **has taught me my worth.** I've learned that I'm an artist. It's taken me until the last couple of months to say it. And **I see a future for my kids and me.** I see I'm not just a loser who sits around and doodles. Like, **there's a career here. There's money to be made** here, and I can figure it out, and it's because of that.' (Participant)

Most participants reported the service had provided them with the following knowledge and skills to develop their creative careers:

- how to price their work and negotiate with buyers
- how to pay taxes, put costs against their business and budget effectively
- how to develop a marketing plan, including using social media or setting up a website to promote and market their work
- how to write grants, funding, and awards applications (including where to apply and what organisations look for in successful applications).

Do clients feel the service has increased their sector knowledge and strengthened professional networks?

Most participants gained confidence, networking skills, and grew their networks

Most participants reported the service gave them the skills to network with other creatives, businesses and organisations, and be confident in public speaking. In addition, they reported the service had enabled them to grow their professional networks. They spoke of having more robust connections with other creatives (as peers and mentors), funders and businesses. In some instances, new connections led to new business collaborations (e.g., creating digital marketing material for another creative and getting commission from sales).

'Now, when I want to sell work, there are opportunities to do that. **I can build a website and get outside the little box** I had in my head for a long time. Also, becoming an artist where I can **maybe fund my stuff instead of just getting funding.**' (Participant)

Do clients feel the service has helped them source funds for business development where needed?

Most participants gained insight into effective grant writing

Most participants reported the service gave them the knowledge and skills to write grant applications for business development (e.g., Creative New Zealand funding). Some participants mentioned their mentors actively supported them in sourcing funds. For example, writing letters

supporting their funding applications. One participant shared their mentor helped them secure sponsorship to ship their artwork for an exhibition costing thousands of dollars.

However, not all participants were at the stage of applying for funds. Nevertheless, they reflected when they were ready, they now had the knowledge and skills and confidence to source and apply for funds.

'I'm looking at applying to enter some awards. So, we are looking at all these applications together, and I'm, like, really? No way! But I have learnt you don't know what you can do until you do it.' (Participant)

'If I had to ask for funding [before the service], I wouldn't know what they were looking for. Now, I would know what to write and include in the proposal. (Participant)

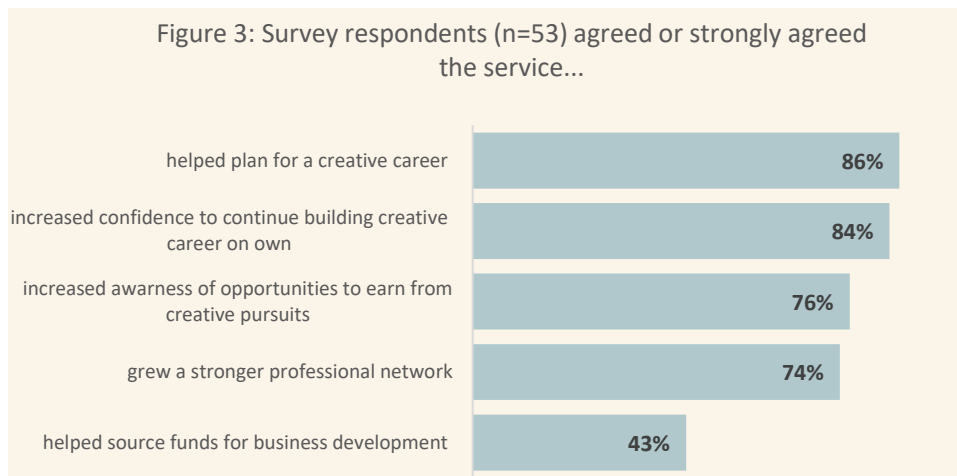
Post-exit survey responses support client feedback

In the post-exit survey, around three-quarters of respondents agreed the service:

- helped them plan for their creative career
- helped them build confidence to continue building their career
- increased their awareness of opportunities to earn from their creative work
- grew their professional networks.

However, less than half (43%) of post-exit survey respondents agreed the service helped them source funds for business development.

In most instances, responses were similar across MSD and non-MSD clients. However, MSD clients were less likely to agree the service grew their professional networks compared to non-MSD clients (e.g., 61% of MSD clients versus 82% of non-MSD clients agreed this). MSD clients may therefore require more networking support.²⁰



Data source: Creative Careers Service post-exit survey.

²⁰ Note: due to small sample sizes, any differences in responses by ethnic groups cannot be drawn.

To what extent are outcomes equitable for Māori, Pasifika and others?

This qualitative evaluation cannot assess whether the outcomes achieved by Māori and Pasifika clients are equitable compared to non-Māori and non-Pasifika clients in the service. However, as noted below Māori and Pasifika clients noted positive outcomes attributed to the service.

Māori participants identified career and income goals and gained the confidence to increase their connections and grant applications

Māori participants interviewed identified positive changes they attributed to the service. Māori participants reported the service helped them to identify and progress their creative career and income goals. They also gained the confidence to build their networks and apply for grants to achieve their goals. Some Māori participants also shared this confidence reflected the service was based on the values of mana manaaki. Māori participants felt safe, trusted and respected, and supported to be Māori.

'We Māori need confidence from each other, just the praise and just tell you, "You're awesome, you can do it," and we really lift to that, whereas Western things I've been involved in is competitive and feeling unsafe, so **it just provided a space for people to get some encouragement from each other and it's like family.**' (Participant)

Some Māori participants also spoke of their mentors enabling them to overcome their anxiety and work towards their goals.

'Since seeing my mentor, I've been way more confident in approaching people. I applied for a grant from the marae. I just walked in there. **Before I would be so shy.** I would have to walk around about an hour before the appointment **because I've got bad anxieties.** But when I went to the marae, I just went straight in. [My mentor] made me feel confident and every artist needs that because a lot of people hold back from asking or reaching out for those kinds of things.' (Participant)

Some Māori participants appreciated the opportunities to connect with leading creatives in their field to grow their understanding of broader creative opportunities.

'My favourite things have been when they bring in those really amazing people from around Aotearoa and getting to connect with them as well as connecting with the service whānau. Just absolutely magical.' (Participant)

A few Māori participants discussed their new creative business ideas focused on promoting art and creative endeavours and opportunities in their community.

'I've come up with an idea to have pop-up workshops that youth can join in. I've got friends and family with young kids and over the COVID season, they didn't want to go back to school. **They are on courses and they're artists, too.** They need stimulation. I know these kids well and they are keen. They can't wait.' (Participant)

Māori participants indicated the service value in wanting other Māori to access it. A few Māori participants wanted to ensure that other Māori creatives know about the service and its ability to support Māori to be Māori. They felt the service could enhance its reach and engagement through targeted marketing and wrap-around support.

'More strategies as to where to advertise all these cool things that can really help Māori and Pasifika artists. Entering those spaces where the Māori and Pasifika actually are and letting them know. It would be really cool if some of these services

could be able to **give that financial support after they've given the knowledge**. So, once they've given you the knowledge, they can give people that financial incentive to move forward again and to keep progressing.' (Participant)

Pasifika participants reported the service increased their understanding and capability to build a creative business or income

Pasifika participants indicated growth in their self-belief about the value of their creative endeavours and they could earn an income or create a sustainable creative career. For Pasifika participants, the service built confidence in their creative product and their ability to promote themselves and their creative business.

'**[Pasifika people] don't really put the right value on their work**. A lot of our work is given away. So, it is **changing my mindset and looking at the way the Pālagis do it and not be embarrassed for asking for money** and not being mā, because that's the thing that happens.' (Participant)

The service workshops and working with their mentors helped them identify their career goals and built network opportunities to achieve them. For example, one Pasifika participant worked collaboratively with a new contact made through the service to curate a show that has run for two seasons and received national and international press.

'The knowledge and workshops especially were great because you don't get taught these things in school. You don't get taught how to start businesses or all the ins and outs of tax paying and running of finances, so it was just amazing to see that.' (Participant)

Pasifika participants highlighted the practical skills gained from the workshops from learning about business planning, tax, website building and online shopping apps. These valuable skills laid the foundation to start or strengthen their creative business.

'Now when I'm wanting to sell work it's like there's opportunities to do that. I can get a website done and built and just thinking outside of my little box that I had in my head for a long time, yeah.' (Participant)

Disabled participants reported the service supported their wellbeing and traction on their creative career goals

Disabled participants shared the service contributed to building their sense of self-worth and their mental wellbeing (e.g., feeling less depressed or anxious and having a more positive outlook on the future). This shift reflected their mentor fostering their belief in their creative skills, developing their PDP and working towards their goals.

'Look at me now, I feel tears of joy. I feel real happy and all this stuff. **Before that service, I was suicidal. It is the best thing that has happened to me...** The biggest change for me was just believing in myself and knowing I'm going to make it. I just want other people to go through it.' (Participant)

Disabled participants on a Work and Income benefit needed more financial support to realise their creative careers. They noted their benefit was insufficient to buy art supplies.

'**I don't eat because I buy art stuff**. I've done that for years now. So, WINZ could definitely help more. There needs to be little grants in play where maybe I could go and get \$400 worth of art supplies.' (Participant)

How is the service progressing towards long-term outcomes?

This qualitative evaluation was not commissioned to answer whether the services contribute to the desired long-term outcomes of the service. The long-term outcomes in the intervention logic model are:

- creatives have more sustainable careers underpinned by client skills and knowledge
- creatives spend more time working in the creative sector
- creatives have more sustainable incomes (e.g., income stability, a higher proportion of income earned through creative work, higher incomes).

The qualitative evaluation shows some promise in some participants interviewed moving towards sustainable creative careers

A few completed participants interviewed attributed gaining employment, freelancing work, or earning income through their creative work to the service. In addition, some participants gained grant funding, won awards, and secured paid gallery or performance showings. A few participants also reported the service allowed them to pivot their creative business through COVID-19 disruptions and to stay in the sector (e.g., rebranding their creative business).

The monitoring data also includes evidence the service may contribute to employment goals and greater income for some clients. For example, of clients who had completed the service and a post-service survey:

- 59% (n=30) said they had increased their creative income since participating in the service
- 16% (n=25) of MSD clients are in full or part-time employment for at least three months²¹
- 23% (n=56) of non-MSD clients increased their creative income for at least three months and did not require any benefit for three months.

More quantitative data analysis is needed to assess the long-term service outcomes.

²¹ For the total numbers of clients we included clients who both completed the service and exited before planned completion.

Conclusions

The Creative Careers Service Pilot aims to help creative professionals develop non-creative skills and knowledge to sustain them financially in their chosen creative field. This qualitative evaluation provides insights into the design and implementation of the Creative Careers Service and short-term outcomes for participants using the service.

The qualitative evaluation shows the Creative Careers Service is highly valued, and no other similar service exists to support creatives' financial sustainability. While not directly used in the design, the service contributes to MSD's strategic shifts as detailed in Te Pae Tawhiti. Participants interviewed had predominantly positive service experiences (*Mana Manaaki*). The partnership with MSD, MCH, providers, clients and mentors enables adaptable service delivery (*Kotahitanga*). The service focus aligns with supporting long-term social and economic development (*Kia Takatū Tatou*).

The service design was assessed as effective due to being client-centred, adaptable and flexible. A critical gap in the design was a focus on wellbeing, given the stressors of COVID-19 disruptions, and the income and opportunity variability in a creative career. Provider feedback indicated more work was needed to refine the outcome reporting to make it more efficient and useable for MSD, MCH, and providers. Not using the framing of Te Pae Tawhiti may have contributed to a lack of focus on Māori and Pasifika markers of success in the outcome reporting.

The service was implemented as intended. Service uptake is reasonable, given the disruptions of COVID-19 and its impact on creative opportunities. Monitoring data suggests a third of clients exited early. However, data quality issues mean conclusions cannot be drawn on the extent and service implications of early exits.

Māori, Pasifika and disabled participants are accessing the service and noted positive service experiences tailored to their needs. Ongoing quality improvement areas for the service include:

- the MSD referral pathway to increase MSD-client referrals
- Māori and Pasifika referrals in regions where fewer Māori and Pasifika are in the service
- wellbeing supports and health and mental health pathways for clients
- options for clients to stay connected post-service
- opportunities to share learnings between providers, MCH, and MSD to support collective responses to strengthen the service
- review of the exit codes and their use to ensure quality data to be able to assess the extent of early exits and their implications for the service.

The service helped participants develop non-creative skills to work towards being financially sustainable in their chosen creative field. Participants interviewed noted the following non-creative skills, including a creative career plan, new networks to source new opportunities, and new business and finance skills. Critically, the services built participants' confidence and self-belief they could develop a sustained creative career. Some evidence exists that longer-term outcomes of increased incomes and fewer clients requiring financial support from Work and Income are starting to emerge.

While the qualitative evaluation demonstrates positive progress, these findings would benefit from quantitative research to assess whether longer-term outcomes of a sustained creative career and improved incomes are being realised.

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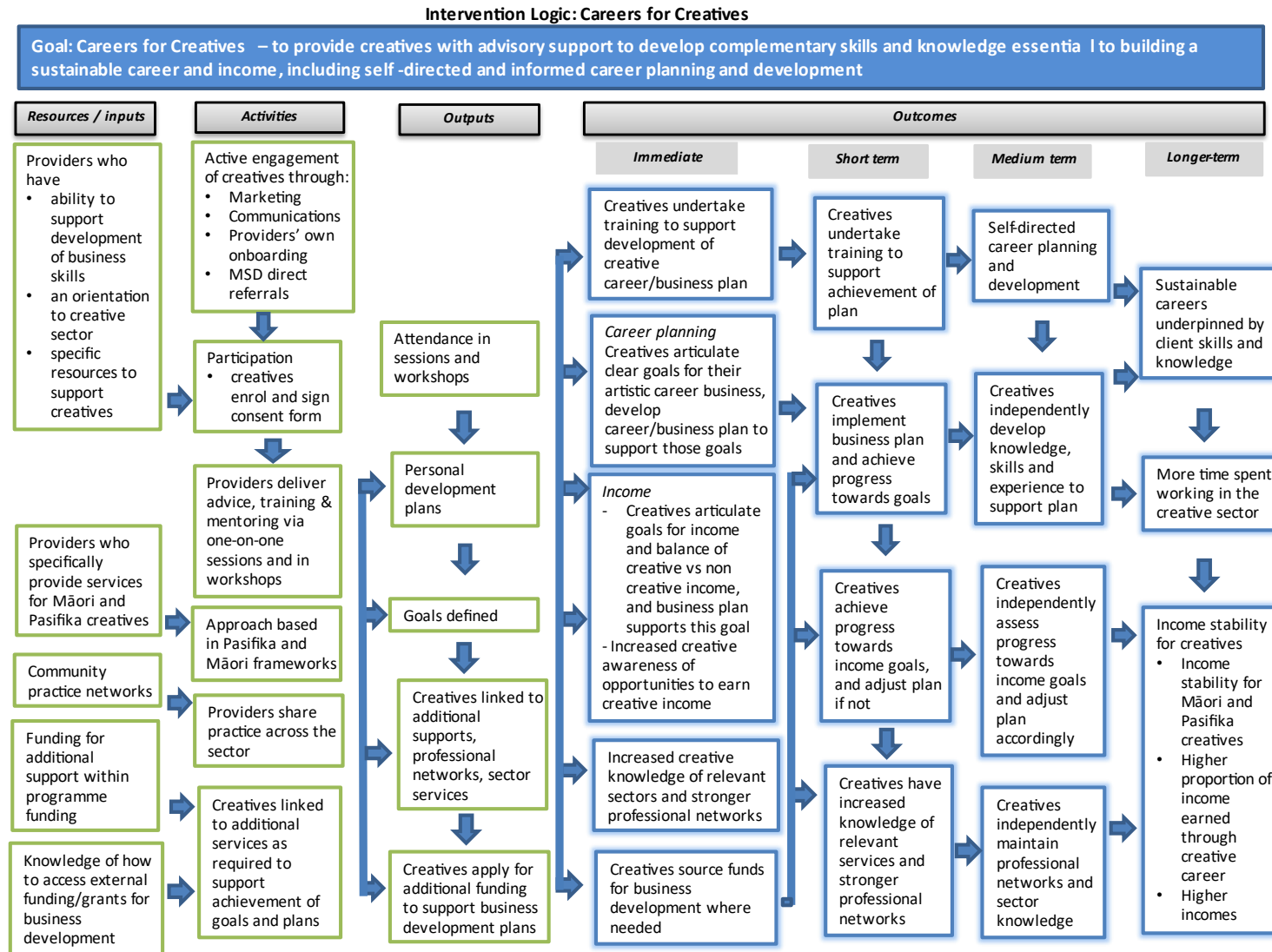
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Appendices



Appendix 1 – Intervention logic for Creative Careers Service



Appendix 2 – The key evaluation sub-questions

Design

- How well does the service design meet participants' needs?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the service design?
- How does the service design differ from or align with other services, and what is its added value for participants?
- How effectively was the service designed to handle the ongoing disruptions of COVID-19?
- How effectively was the service designed to align with Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity?

Implementation

- How well has the service been implemented?
- Where have there been challenges in delivering the service?
- What aspects of the service have proven successful?
- How does the service support participants who work with toi Māori or Pacific heritage arts?
- How does the service support participants with diverse needs and/or learning requirements? (Particularly for Māori and Pacific and other ethnic minority groups, rainbow communities, and people with disabilities)
- How has the service been impacted by the ongoing disruptions caused by COVID-19?
- What are the facilitators of and barriers to participants engaging with and sustaining their participation in the service?

Short-term outcomes

- To what extent do participants feel the service has helped prepare them to pursue a career in a creative field?
- To what extent do participants feel the service has helped articulate goals for their artistic career and develop a career plan to support these goals?
- To what extent do participants feel the service has helped them articulate goals for income and develop a business plan to support these goals?
- To what extent do participants feel the service has increased their knowledge of relevant sectors and led to stronger professional networks?
- To what extent do participants feel the service has helped them source funds for business development where needed?
- To what extent do participants who work with toi Māori or Pacific heritage arts feel the service has met their needs?
- To what extent do participants feel the service has met their diverse needs and/or learning requirements? (Particularly for Māori, Pacific, other ethnic minority groups, LGBTQIA+ communities, and people with disabilities.)
- To what extent do participants feel the service has added value within a broader range of available initiatives?

Appendix 3 – Data tables

Table 4: Creative Careers Service post-exit survey respondent sample profile

Domain	Profile	n=53
Service	Elevate	26
	Toipoto	14
	Wayfind Creative	12
	The Tukua List	1
	Art/Work	0
MSD clients	MSD client	18
	Non-MSD client	35
Gender	Female	38
	Male	12
	Non-binary	1
	Prefer not to say	2
Ethnicity	New Zealand European/pākehā	32
	Māori	7
	Asian	7
	Pasifika	3
	Middle Eastern, Latin American, African	3
	Prefer not to say	1

Table 5: Proportion of MSD and Non-MSD clients referring and taking part in service by the provider

Provider	Referrals			Clients with PDP completed		
	% MSD clients	% non-MSD	Sample size	% MSD clients	% non-MSD	Sample size
Ngahere Communities	51%	49%	51	57%	43%	44
The Big Idea	25%	75%	285	22%	78%	129
Depot ArtSpace	30%	70%	277	31%	69%	197
Creative Waikato	38%	62%	185	36%	64%	131
Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce	50%	50%	158	51%	49%	95
All providers	34%	66%	956	37%	63%	423

Data source: Creative Careers Service monitoring data (January 2021 to October 2022).

Table 6: Length of service requested or assigned

Months	All providers
1 month	1%
2 months	2%
3 months	4%
4 months	3%
5 months	3%
6 months	16%
7 months	1%
8 months	2%
9 months	70%
Sample size	515

Data source: Creative Careers Service monitoring data (January 2021 to October 2022).

Table 7: Clients' primary creative field

Primary creative field	No. of clients	Proportion of clients
Visual arts	416	45%
Film, television and media	116	12%
Craft and object art	90	10%
Music including contemporary	77	8%
Not shown/other	52	6%
Literature	46	5%
Theatre (including circus arts)	39	4%
Inter-arts/multi-disciplinary arts	29	3%
Dance	25	3%
Ngā toi Māori	19	2%
Community arts	12	1%
Photography	2	0%
Ceramics	1	0%
Sculpture	1	0%
Musician	1	0%
Creative consultancy	1	0%
Jeweller	1	0%
Visual arts	1	0%
Weaving/textile production	1	0%
Music	1	0%
Sculptor	1	0%
Sample size	932	100%

Data source: Creative Careers Service monitoring data (January 2021 to October 2022).

Appendix 4 – Evaluation tools



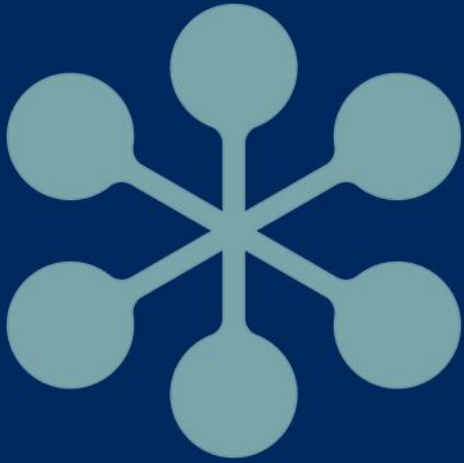
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Discussion
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Consent form_CCS
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