

Aide-mémoire



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Draft Cabinet paper

Date: 29 October 2025 **Security Level:** Budget-Sensitive

For: Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

File Reference: REP/25/10/828

Government response to the Dame Karen Poutasi Review

Purpose To provide an initial draft Cabinet paper for your feedback.

Background On 17 September 2025, you took a paper to Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee (SOU) for consideration – Update on Government Response to the Dame Karen Poutasi Review. At this meeting, SOU:

- noted that you intend to report back to Cabinet in November 2025 seeking detailed decisions for policies to give effect to the remaining recommendations of the Poutasi Review that either have no fiscal implications or can be managed from within baselines, and identifying resourcing implications of the key areas of work; and

- s 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [SOU-25-MIN-0128 refers].
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The full SOU Minute of Decision is attached as Appendix A. Cabinet confirmed these SOU decisions on 22 September 2025 [CAB-25-MIN-0330].

Draft paper for feedback

The Minister of Finance and the Treasury have advised that the November Cabinet paper cannot seek decisions that require funding to be sought through the Budget process. This limits the scope of the Cabinet paper, particularly in relation to recommendations 8 and 9 (mandatory training and reporting) as these recommendations are likely to lead to a significant increase in Reports of Concern to Oranga Tamariki, with associated costs to manage capacity in the system.

Agencies have agreed that recommendations 1, 2 and 6, relating to system enhancements where the dependent child of a sole parent is remanded in custody or sentenced to a term of imprisonment, can be initially implemented within baselines, with implementation beginning from January 2026.

We have collaborated with the other agencies involved in the Dame Karen Poutasi response on an initial draft of the November Cabinet paper (attached as Appendix B). There are some parts where discussions are continuing, and which may therefore be subject to further changes - we have indicated these in the attached paper.

We are interested in your feedback to ensure the tone of the paper is right, and that it meets your expectations as to content.

Next steps

Officials are available to discuss your feedback at the Child Poverty Reduction officials meeting on Monday 3 November.

Then we will provide an updated version of the Cabinet paper and seek your agreement to progress formal Ministerial and agency consultation.

Officials will also advise you separately on the MSD components of implementing this work.

Appendices

Appendix A. SOU-25-MIN-0128 Minute of Decision

Appendix B. Draft Cabinet paper – Government Response to the Dame Karen Poutasi Review

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