CONFIDENTIAL

Te Puni Kōkiri
REALISING MĀORI POTENTIAL

22 July 2015

AIDE MEMOIRE

Te Pou Matakana: Whānau Direct

Purpose

- This aide memoire provides you with an overview of Te Pou Matakana Whānau Direct programme.

Comments

- Te Pou Matakana portfolio of commissioning activities includes three mechanisms for supporting whānau, as follows:
  - Whānau Direct, which aims to assist whānau to access resource in times of need
  - Collective Impact, which sees Whānau Ora partners across multiple sectors supporting whānau through whānau planning and integrated service provision to achieve positive impacts for whānau
  - Kaiārahi services, through which Navigators support high needs whānau to achieve their aspirations through whānau planning and implementation.

Overview of Whānau Direct

- Whānau Direct offers investments of up to $1,000 to vendors or providers who supply goods or services directly to whānau with the aim of supporting achievement of Te Pou Matakana priority outcomes, as follows:
  - Whānau are self-managing
  - Whānau are living healthy life-styles
  - Whānau are cohesive, resilient and nurturing
  - Whānau are participating fully in society
  - Whānau are confidently participating in te ao Māori
  - Whānau are economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation.

- Whānau access Whānau Direct through approved providers, who assist with a whānau assessment and application form to identify the need, the support requested and the results sought. The results are mapped back to Te Pou Matakana priority outcomes noted above.
- The Whānau Direct application also outlines the timeframe expected for the results sought, at which point the provider follows up with recipients to assess the impact of the intervention.
- The aspects of Whānau Direct focused on ease of access for whānau and moving support closer to whānau were some of the factors the Evaluation Panel that reviewed the responses to the Request for Proposals most liked about Te Pou Matakana approach when selecting the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agencies.

Differentiation from other grants-based funding programmes

- Whānau may access grants-based funding or emergency support through other Government programmes; however, there are a number of points of difference between Whānau Direct and other grants-based support programmes.
- Whānau Direct enables whānau to determine the pathway towards achieving their longer term aspirations. Whānau know best the support that will enable them to respond to an immediate need.
- Many other grants-based funding programmes are based on predetermined needs that arise in crisis situations. In contrast:
  - Te Pou Matakana has described its approach as whānau-centric rather than deficits-focused. Whānau Direct can be more responsive to whānau needs, rather than being limited to supplying predefined support. In this regard, Whānau Direct may be more efficient than other alternatives.
  - Whānau Direct builds on whānau strength, rather than simply relying on addressing a crisis for a whānau. Te Pou Matakana considers that this can empower whānau to achieve their longer-term aspirations by overcoming an initial barrier.
- Additional points of difference include:
  - Te Pou Matakana has designed the application process for Whānau Direct to streamline whānau access to support. Whānau Direct providers work directly with whānau to complete the application and assessment form. This is a simpler process when compared to the application for a special needs grant from Work and Income New Zealand, for example, which requires detailed information and verification processes regarding an individual's and their partner's asset base, income levels and employment status.
  - Similarly, Whānau Direct aims to provide support to whānau within 48 hours of a provider's submission of a complete and accurate application to Te Pou

Matakana. As noted above, applicants for special needs grants must provide verification that they have met certain hardship obligations, which can delay access to support. Although difficult to verify, Whānau Direct may result in reduced total cost to Government through more timely interventions.

- As part of the aim to provide immediate support, Whānau Direct is available for any whānau seeking assistance to meet an immediate need that will contribute to the achievement of one of Te Pou Matakana's priority outcomes.

- Furthermore, Whānau Direct applicants must meet with a Whānau Direct provider or Kaiārahi to complete a whānau assessment and application form. Te Pou Matakana has reported that this touch point through Whānau Direct serves as a gateway to ongoing engagement through Te Pou Matakana's other commissioning activities, including Collective Impact and Kaiārahi services. Whānau Direct therefore serves as an important component to the overall package of support that Te Pou Matakana offers whānau.

Risks and potential criticisms related to Whānau Direct

- As noted above, Whānau Direct funds vendors or providers to provide goods or services directly to whānau to meet an immediate need. This presents a number of risks related to ensuring Whānau Direct funding is used as it was intended. If Whānau Direct funding is not used appropriately, this carries a reputational risk for Te Pou Matakana and for Whānau Ora more broadly.
- There was recent media attention on Pacific Trust Canterbury's use of Whanau Ora funding for similar support as that provided through Whānau Direct, e.g. accommodation costs, car registrations, school uniforms and medical expenses. Pacific Trust Canterbury's activities led to comments describing Whānau Ora as a "band aid service providing handouts as opposed to enabling families".[1]

Key messages for Whānau Direct

- The sort of attention garnered by Pacific Trust Canterbury does not accurately reflect the whānau-driven nature of Whānau Direct and Whānau Ora more broadly.
- Key points to note in relation to Whānau Direct include the following:
  - Whānau Direct funds vendors to provide goods or services to whānau to meet an immediate need. Funding is not distributed directly to whānau.
  - Whānau Direct offers small interventions of up to $1,000 per whānau that can prevent deterioration in whānau circumstances and assist a whānau to overcome barriers in the way of achieving their aspirations.

[1] http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/68979260/whanau-ora-funding-goes-on-shopping-vouchers

- Vulnerable whānau may need their fundamental issues addressed first, in order to enable the whānau to work towards achieving their long-term aspirations.
- Whānau Direct enables whānau to determine the pathway towards achieving their longer term aspirations, and provides more timely and responsive support to whānau than other grants-based funding programmes.
- Whānau Direct recognises that sometimes what will provide the greatest support to whānau is the ability to respond quickly to an immediate need. Without access to timely support, the circumstances of a whānau may deteriorate further, resulting in more costs to Government in the long term.

Mitigations for risks associated with Whānau Direct

- Te Pou Matakana has acknowledged and taken steps to mitigate the risks associated with Whānau Direct. This is reflected in Te Pou Matakana compliance with the Office of the Auditor General's general expectations and sources of guidance for managing grant arrangements with limited conditions.[2] This is set out in the table below.

General expectations	Te Pou Matakana's approach
Planning stage	
• Process to check that purpose aligns with entity's business or functions • Organisational policy and business planning to develop systems and criteria for considering applications or requests	Whānau Direct aligns with Te Pou Matakana strategic direction and priority outcomes. This is articulated in its Investment Plan. The requirements for Whānau Direct recipients are set out in the application form, and Te Pou Matakana provides ongoing training to providers to reinforce the requirements and intent of Whānau Direct. Te Pou Matakana piloted Whānau Direct before implementing a full roll-out of the programme, and commissioned an independent review of the programme to refine policies and processes before expanding it.

[2] http://www.oag.govt.nz/2008/funding-arrangements. Note this guidance was prepared for public entities managing public funds, but the principles and guidelines can also be applied to Te Pou Matakana's distribution of grants-based funding through Whānau Direct.

Selection stage	
• Systematic process for considering applications or requests against criteria • Specific assessment of the basis for the amount of the grant sought • Clear documentation of terms of the grant and what is being funded • Some clear and appropriate conditions set to manage risk and ensure suitable accountability	Te Pou Matakana articulated selection criteria for Whānau Direct providers in its FY14/15 Investment Plan, including prioritising mature, high performing providers in order to mitigate risks. There is a cap of $1,000 per whānau, with the item(s) sought, funding required and link to Te Pou Matakana priority outcomes set out in the application form. Funding recipients are held accountable through provider check-ins following receipt of the funds, and providers are held accountable through quarterly reporting to Te Pou Matakana.
Monitoring stage	
• Payment may be in advance of delivery/performance but could be in stages to manage risk • Possibly some ongoing reporting or monitoring arrangements, depending on risk, scale, and nature of the relationship, to enable funder to assess success	Money is not distributed directly to whānau. Te Pou Matakana must approve payment of all Whānau Direct applications, and where possible, pays the vendor offering the support or item requested directly within 24-48 hours of receipt of applications that are complete and accurate. Alternately, Whānau Direct providers may choose to pay for the support or item, following which Te Pou Matakana reimburses the provider. Whānau Direct providers submit quarterly monitoring reports to Te Pou Matakana, who then report quarterly to Te Puni Kōkiri.
Review stage	
• Some reporting of achievements against the purpose of the grant	The Whānau Direct application outlines the timeframe expected for the results sought, at which point the provider follows up with recipients to assess the impact of the intervention. Providers' reporting to Te Pou Matakana includes reporting on the mandatory provider check-ins with whānau.

- The Outcome Agreement between Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Pou Matakana provides a mechanism for Te Puni Kōkiri to maintain visibility of Te Pou Matakana operating policies and procedures.
- The Outcome Agreement requires Te Pou Matakana to put in place, maintain and comply with operating policies and practices that represent general good practice. The Outcome Agreement also gives Te Puni Kōkiri the right to request evidence and assurance relating to those operating policies and practices, including the use and application of public funds, financial management and the maintenance of financial records.
- Te Puni Kōkiri must also comply with its obligations under the Public Finance Act 1989, which requires Te Puni Kōkiri to maintain oversight of the management of public funds.

- In line with the devolved nature of the commissioning model, Te Puni Kōkiri initial response to addressing queries or uncertainty about Whānau Direct would be to request further information from Te Pou Matakana. If more information or assurance is needed, the Outcome Agreement includes pathways for Te Puni Kōkiri to support Te Pou Matakana to improve its performance, to invoke special inquiry rights or to take more punitive actions if Te Pou Matakana fails to meet service requirements and standards.

FY14/15 investment in Whānau Direct

- Te Pou Matakana allocated $3.85m of its FY14/15 commissioning funding to Whānau Direct. Te Pou Matakana undertook a pilot of Whānau Direct with 22 providers through 30 April 2015, with wider implementation of Whānau Direct beginning in May 2015.
- As per Te Pou Matakana's quarterly report on Quarter 3 activities, Te Pou Matakana had distributed a total of $2.01m to 1,588 whānau (5,558 individuals) as at 31 March 2015.
- From the 1,588 whānau engaged in Whānau Direct, a total of 3,883 expected outcome connections were made to at least one of the six Whānau Ora outcomes. The profile of the outcomes sought are as follows:
  - Whānau are living healthy lifestyles (1,178 outcomes)
  - Whānau are self-managing and empowered leaders (877 outcomes)
  - Whānau are participating fully in society (692 outcomes)
  - Whānau are cohesive and resilient (530 outcomes)
  - Whānau are economically secure (464 outcomes)
  - Whānau are confidently participating in te ao Māori (142 outcomes).
- The top six category items funded by Whānau Direct include:
  - Household appliances (21.4 percent)
  - Household furniture (13.2 percent)
  - Vehicle maintenance (9.5 percent)
  - Housing / property maintenance (5.2 percent)
  - Vehicle licensing / registration and WOF (4.8 percent)
  - Adult clothing/footwear (4.5 percent).
- In response to Te Pou Matakana reporting on the achievement of outcomes through Whānau Direct, officials have sought clarity around the link between items funded through Whānau Direct and the high-level outcomes sought, as well as the criteria that constitute 'achievement' of a Whānau Ora outcome through Whānau Direct.

- Because the intervention logic for a Whānau Direct intervention is driven by the circumstances unique to each whānau, reporting on the items purchased with Whānau Direct funding provides little clarity on the intervention's contribution to the achievement of longer term outcomes. Reporting mechanisms such as interviews and case studies provide more insight into longer-term impacts achieved through Whānau Direct.
- Te Pou Matakana has included case studies in previous quarterly reports to Te Puni Kōkiri (such as the one below), and has endeavored to report on ex-post indicators measuring the impact on whānau engaged through Whānau Direct as part of its annual report.
- Furthermore, in order to better articulate the impacts of Whānau Direct on whānau capability and the contribution towards the achievement of Whānau Ora outcomes, Te Pou Matakana will undertake ongoing research and evaluation of Whānau Direct. This includes refinement of Te Pou Matakana Social Calculator to demonstrate the benefits of Whānau Direct.
- Te Pou Matakana will report to Te Puni Kōkiri on the research activities it undertakes, and Te Puni Kōkiri will continue to monitor and support Te Pou Matakana to refine reporting on Whānau Direct and the articulation of its impact on whānau.

Whānau Direct Case Study

- The case study below is drawn from Te Pou Matakana Quarter 3 Report:
  - "The following is a case study, a 35 year old mum, Pākehā with a Māori partner. She is unemployed and receives the WINZ benefit. Her partner was recently released from prison and has no income. They have three children aged 18, 17 and 11 years. The 18 year old has a one month old baby. The whānau reside in a small rural community.
  - After paying rent, power and other household bills, there is little money to buy food. The whānau have one vehicle which requires a registration, warrant and repairs. They have received no support from social services to address this issue. The whānau sought assistance from a Whānau Direct partner.
  - The Whānau Direct partner developed a plan with the whānau. The plan offered $614 financial assistance to make their vehicle road worthy. The provider was able to source a fridge from the local community charity. Budgeting advice and support was given. The kaimahi facilitated a support meeting with WINZ so that the whānau are receiving full entitlements. Mum is enrolled in a parenting programme, tikanga and te reo Māori programme.
  - The whānau have access to a safe and secure vehicle. They are living in a healthy home. The whānau are engaged in community courses".

Independent evaluation of Whānau Direct

- Te Pou Matakana commissioned an independent evaluation of Whānau Direct in March 2015. The evaluation looked at how eight Whānau Ora partners across Te Ika ā Maui implemented the Whānau Direct pilot programme from September to December 2014.
- The evaluation has not been made public and therefore the evaluation findings should be treated as confidential and not to be shared.
- The evaluation identified the following key findings related to efficiency and effectiveness:
  - Whānau Direct achieved its efficiency performance measures related to payment turnaround and links to Whānau Ora outcomes
  - Pilot delivery delays were due to a range of factors and most were relatively simple to remedy
  - Pilot delivery was time and resource intensive for partners
  - Whānau Direct achieved its aims and intent
  - Whānau Ora partners are at different stages in their Whānau Ora journey and more work is needed to support partners to better understand the aim and intent of Whānau Direct
  - Whānau Direct achieved its effectiveness measures related to positive whānau feedback
  - Whānau Direct provided momentary relief and support for some whānau, but these whānau require 'many moments' and access to 'layers of support'
  - Whānau Direct helped some whānau to accelerate whānau aspirations and build on Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) planning in a positive, strengths-based way.
- The evaluation noted that providers highlighted how Whānau Direct has made an immediate positive difference to whānau, and were overwhelmingly positive about the programme as a whole. Providers indicated how Whānau Direct made a difference because it:
  - Supported immediate whānau outcomes
  - Opened accessibility
  - Provided a whānau-centred resource.
- The evaluation also noted that the immediate difference Whānau Direct made was contextual and therefore different for each whānau. However, some of the common themes expressed by whānau were:
  - Increased 'peace of mind' and a decrease in stress
  - Increased independence and self-sufficiency

- Improved self-confidence
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved attitude and mindset
- Improved standard of living.

- The evaluation made the following recommendations to Te Pou Matakana:

Process and system

- Build Whānau Ora partner understanding of the aim and intent of Whānau Direct through increased training and support, as a matter of urgency
- Prioritise and implement the suggested process and system improvements
- Update efficiency measures to include a focus on fully completed and accurate application forms and reduced administration costs to Whānau Ora partners
- Carry out robust quantitative analysis to assess the quantum and scale of resource required to administer Whānau Direct.

Monitoring and reporting

- Provide regular feedback and analysis to partners on results, challenges and future risks.

Effectiveness

- Support partners to set up time- and resource-efficient processes to review and report back on Whānau Direct outcomes achieved by recipients.

Evaluation and outcomes framework

- Confirm the overarching monitoring and evaluation framework for Te Pou Matakana and Whānau Direct
- Invest in future outcomes evaluation to gather evidence which demonstrates short- and medium-term impact and work collaboratively with whānau to develop whānau success indicators and measures to populate the Whānau Ora and Draft Te Pou Matakana outcomes framework.

- In response to these recommendations, Te Pou Matakana has planned to undertake additional research and evaluation of Whānau Direct, including provider training and process refinement. Te Pou Matakana has also undertaken to further develop its outcomes framework.
- As noted above, Te Puni Kōkiri will continue to monitor and support Te Pou Matakana to refine reporting on Whānau Direct and the understanding of the long-term impacts Whānau Direct achieves for whānau.

FY15/16 investment in Whānau Direct

- Te Pou Matakana intends to invest $2.45m in Whānau Direct in FY15/16, alongside its investments in Collective Impact and Kaiārahi services.
- While Kaiārahi funded through Budget 2014 and Budget 2015 funding may support whānau to access support through Whānau Direct, officials have noted to Te Pou Matakana the expectation that Kaiārahi should be prioritised to support whānau planning and implementation through Collective Impact.
- We are available to discuss this information relating to Whānau Direct with you if you require.

Di Grennell
Manahautū Tuarua Hononga ā Rohe

NOTED
Hon Te Ururoa Flavell Te Minita Whānau Ora
Date:_____ / _____ / 2015