



# **Social Services National Industry Advisory Group Hui Minutes**

**2 April 2025**



## Minutes – Social Services National Industry Advisory Group (kanohi ki te kanohi hui)

<b>Date, Time and Location:</b>	02 04 2025 at 09:00-15:30, L1, 49 Tory Street, Wellington, Te Whanganui-a-Tara
<b>Chair:</b>	Hera Williams, National Engagement Manager, Toitū te Waiora
<b>Advisory Group Members:</b>	<p>Nathan Chong-Nee, Chief Executive, Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers</p> <p>Ivy Harper, Pouārahi   Chief Executive, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the South Island</p> <p>Karena Brown, Lead Strategic Researcher, E Tū</p> <p>Tanya Anaha, Chief Māori Health and Equity Officer /Pou Whakahaere, Te Whatu Ora Taranaki/ Why Ora</p> <p>Liz Gourlay, Lead Advisor Social Worker Workforce Planning, Social Workers Registration Board</p> <p>Carole Tana- Tepania, Chief Executive/Kahui Member, ME Family Services/Tangata Whenua Social Workers Association</p> <p>Susana Lepoamo, Workforce Manager, Te Puna Aonui</p>
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Tamar Anstice, National Engagement Project Coordinator, Toitū te Waiora
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p>Sean McKinley, Chief Executive, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Amanda Kent, General Manager Strategy and Advice, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Mark Ormsby, Poumatua, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Lois Moran, Quality Assurance Manager, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Tracy Collier, Qualifications Product Developer, Toitū te Waiora</p> <p>Hone Manu, Team Administrator, Toitū te Waiora</p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<p>Tuala Pesio Ah-Honi, Chief Executive, Mapu Maia</p> <p>Selina Elkington, Addiction Programme Manager, Te Pou</p> <p>Edna 'Ungatea Havea, Victoria University of Wellington, Programme Director Pasifika Pathways</p> <p>Megan Thomassen-Clarke, Reporting &amp; Accountability Manager, National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges Inc.</p> <p>Belinda Himiona, Chief Executive, Te Pai Ora SSPA</p> <p>Dominic Chilvers, Principal Academic   Programme Leader, Ara Institute of Canterbury</p>

**\*Actions for review on Page 7**

## Summarised Minutes- Social Services Update and Discussion

### Commentary: VET Reform & Transition

- The hui began with an update on the Toitū te Waioira VET Reform programme, including preparations for the transition of functions to the future Industry Skills Boards (ISBs).
- Education and social services currently sit within the proposed coverage of the Health and Community ISB, although final coverage boundaries remain subject to further consultation.
- Members were updated on the Education and Workforce Select Committee hearings for the Education and Training Amendment Bill:
  - TTW submitted a written response;
  - Three other WDCs presented oral submissions opposing aspects of the Bill on behalf of their industries.
- TEC acknowledged being impressed with TTW's early preparation and transition planning, noting that this groundwork will help minimise disruption during the shift from WDCs to ISBs.

### Cultural Competency, Safety & Sector Expectations

Cultural safety and capability dominated the kōrero, reflecting long-standing sector concern around gaps in culturally grounded practice.

#### Key Issues Raised

- Whānau Ora navigators and overseas social workers are often entering the workforce without sufficient grounding in te ao Māori, leading to misunderstanding of whānau dynamics and expectations.
- Many migrant workers are not receiving Level 3 or Level 4 training, leaving them without foundational cultural knowledge required for Aotearoa-based practice.
- Members expressed the need for a legitimised cultural safety framework, recognising mātauranga Māori and Pacific leadership as central to safe and responsive practice.
- Several contributors strongly advocated for:
  - formalised cultural safety education,
  - a micro-credential for newcomers,
  - embedding cultural capability as a required component of qualifications across social services.

The discussion reflected a consistent view that cultural competency is not optional, it is essential for ethical practice, whānau trust, and effective service delivery.

## Summarised Minutes- Social Services Update and Discussion

### Workforce Development, Training Pathways & Sector Capability

Members shared extensive insights into current workforce challenges and opportunities across social work, disability support, care and support, and wider community services.

#### Training Needs & Gaps

- Rangatahi need more accessible training pathways, as many flourish when given opportunities to learn in practical contexts.
- Disability workers remain underpaid and underqualified, with many lacking access to Level 4 training that would enhance capability and career progression.
- Strong agreement that migrant workers, especially those working in Māori homes, should complete NZQA-recognised qualifications relevant to Aotearoa.
- Members emphasised the need for core professional development, including:
  - external supervision,
  - structured PLD,
  - training for FV/SV roles.
- There is an urgent need for clear FV/SV pathways, including funded qualifications that build specialised skills.

#### Barriers to Access

- The cost of qualifications remains a major barrier.
- Members advocated for accessible, affordable pathways, including recognition of lived experience.
- Some proposed enabling financially struggling students to work part-time while studying to support whānau needs.

### Workforce Pressures, Retention Challenges & System Gaps

The hui highlighted deep concern about the long-term sustainability of the social services workforce.

#### Migrant Workforce Pressures

- Approx. 40% of care and support workers are migrants, particularly in home-based support.
- The funding model remains “broken,” with providers unable to pay appropriate wages or support training.

#### Declining Workforce & Need for Long-Term Planning

- Many roles have remained unfilled for years; members emphasised the need for a sector-wide investment plan to rebuild capacity.

## Summarised Minutes- Social Services Update and Discussion

- Calls were made for structured entry-level roles for school leavers to retain talent and support early career development.

### Support for Students

- Practitioners raised the difficulty of taking students on placement due to limited time and resourcing.
- Members advocated for better support, such as micro-credentials for supervisors and funding models that recognise the workload of supporting learners.

### Sector Sustainability, Resources & Service Pressures

#### Resource Constraints

- Many practitioners operate at maximum caseload capacity, with limited referral options due to service shortages.
- Unregulated parts of the workforce lack consistency and quality assurance, prompting calls for tools and templates to support best practice.

#### Provider Challenges

- Private Training Establishments (PTEs) face competitive funding pressures that compromise the quality of education in FV/SV fields.
- Members voiced concern about the complexity of social service environments, where limited specialist access and heavy workloads significantly impact both workforce wellbeing and client outcomes.

#### Community Strengths

- Despite system pressures, whānau engagement and community-led responses remain strong, but require better support and resourcing to be sustainable.

### Technology, AI & Ethical Considerations

- Members discussed the increasing presence of AI in social work practice, noting opportunities for administrative efficiency and improved access to information.
- However, concerns were raised about:
  - privacy risks,
  - ethical use of data,
  - over-reliance on artificial intelligence in decision-making.
- The group emphasised the need to understand how AI will influence:
  - future learning,

Summarised Minutes- Social Services Update and Discussion	
	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ qualification development,</li><li>○ and frontline practice.</li></ul></div> <div><b>Investment in Whānau, Practitioners &amp; Students</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members highlighted the importance of investment in whānau, emphasising that strong families require a well-supported workforce.</li><li>• Practitioners taking students on placement need improved support structures to ensure learning is positive and sustainable.</li><li>• The sector reiterated the importance of “earn as you learn” models to strengthen workforce pipelines.</li></ul></div> <div><b>Summary of Key Themes</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural Competency &amp; Safety: Widespread agreement that cultural capability must be integrated into qualifications and PLD, especially for migrant workers.</li><li>• Workforce Development: Urgent need to invest in career pathways, supervision, and FV/SV capability-building.</li><li>• Technological Change: AI offers potential but raises ethical and privacy questions for the future of social work.</li><li>• Support for New Entrants: Structured roles and improved access to qualifications are essential for long-term sustainability.</li><li>• Sector Sustainability: Training access, resourcing, and community-led responses must be strengthened.</li><li>• Regulation &amp; Professionalisation: Proposed micro-credentials for supervisors and clearer structures in unregulated workforce spaces.</li><li>• Government Investment: Better funding models are needed to support training, qualifications, and workforce retention.</li></ul></div>

## Actions:

1. Social Services Update and Discussion	
<b>Reference #</b>	20250402/01
<b>Presenter:</b>	Hera Williams
<b>Commentary:</b>	<p>Most of the group discussed the importance of cultural competency within Social Service professions and how that could be integrated into future qualifications.</p> <p>As Toitū te Waiora are currently working on creating Te Tiriti standards in CDEM and Cultural Competency/ Cultural Safety skill standards for Health and Well-being, the NIAG would like to see how these standards could be utilised for the Social Services Sector.</p>
<b>Actions:</b>	Hera and Mark to share draft of Cultural Competency/ Cultural Safety skill standard with the Social Services NIAG once it has been signed off by SLT.

2. Social Services Update and Discussion	
<b>Reference #</b>	20250402/02
<b>Presenters:</b>	Hera Williams
<b>Commentary:</b>	<p>It was mentioned that Toitū te Waiora are currently in the consultation phase of creating Disability qualifications. These qualifications will stand alone rather than be a part of the Health and Wellbeing qualification suite. This update intrigued the group, and they asked if there was any possibility of being able to see how these qualifications look.</p>
<b>Actions:</b>	Hera and Mark to share draft of Disability qualification with the Social Services NIAG once the quals have updated the rest of the organisation of the qualification's contents.

3. Social Services Update and Discussion	
<b>Reference #</b>	20250402/03
<b>Presenters:</b>	Hera Williams/ Susana Lepoamo

3. Social Services Update and Discussion	
<b>Commentary:</b>	Susana began to update us on her workforce analysis regarding the current workforce issues in the FV/SV sector. Her analysis has amazing insights and data that could help guide and inform Toitū te Waiora's investment advice regarding the FV/SV sector.
<b>Actions:</b>	Seek permission from Susana to share her mahi with Toitū te Waiora and the NIAG.

4. Social Services Update and Discussion	
<b>Reference #</b>	20250402/04
<b>Presenters:</b>	Hera Williams
<b>Commentary:</b>	Hera set an action for the members to talk with their stakeholders about the current trends and challenges identified within the meeting and to come back to the next hui in June 2025 with possible solutions.
<b>Actions:</b>	NIAG members are to talk with their stakeholders about the current trends and challenges identified within the meeting and to come back to the next hui in June 2025 with possible solutions

5. Meeting close	
<b>Reference #</b>	20250402/05
<b>Commentary:</b>	Hera asked the group what their most convenient dates would be to have our three subsequent online hui. The dates were discussed and decided on by the rest of the group.
<b>Decisions:</b>	<p><b>Reference:</b> 20250402/01</p> <p><b>Agreed subsequent hui dates and times are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (10 am- 12 pm)</li> <li>- Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 (10 am- 1:30 pm)</li> <li>- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025 (10 am- 12 pm)</li> </ul> <p>The group also agreed that if another hui was needed, we would agree on a time and date for that to happen.</p>



5. Meeting close	
Actions:	Tamar to send through the dates to all members so that they have the meetings in the diaries. Members will be updated with an agenda and any pre-readings that need to be reviewed two weeks before the hui date so that they are all prepared for discussions