

## **Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **Q: Why do we need additional mental health support?**

**A:** We know that traumatic events such as earthquakes can have long lasting impacts on children's health and wellbeing. Mana Ake aims to intervene early to ensure children access support to build resilience and wellbeing and to address emerging mental health concerns.

Schools in earthquake affected communities have told us they've seen an increase in for the number of children with a complex range of health and social needs. Teachers identified that anxiety, stress and depression was impacting children's ability to focus on learning and their general wellbeing.

Schools were surveyed by the Ministry of Education and Canterbury DHB in December 2017 and the findings of the survey showed:

- although there are lots of services supporting children in schools, they aren't all available in all schools and service responses change depending on the context;
- schools were struggling to navigate the health system to get the correct support for children quickly;
- there are innovative, local responses but these aren't standardised and the funding for it is variable and unsustainable (grants, school operations budgets).

The Mana Ake initiative aims to address these issues early on so that children can more positively engage in learning.

### **Q: What is Mana Ake?**

**A:** Mana Ake – Stronger for Tomorrow is a collaborative initiative involving health, education, police, non-government organisations and consumers. It was established in March 2018 to support the wellbeing of children in school years 1-8 across Canterbury and Kaikōura.

The initiative aims to work with and through school communities to provide early intervention when children are experiencing ongoing concerns, such as anxiety or low mood that are impacting their wellbeing. The service can support individual children and groups of children and provide advice and guidance for teachers and parents/ whānau.

**Q: What is Mana Ake trying to achieve?**

**A:** Mana Ake aims to complement and enhance existing pastoral care support for children in years 1-8 at school and to increase the capacity and responsiveness of services by ensuring children access the right support at the right time.

The Mana Ake initiative will build on the good things already in place and enhance them by:

- providing 80 additional workers across Canterbury and Kaikōura to support children and families early, when mental health concerns arise;
- strengthening collaboration across the support network;
- working together to understand where the need is and how best to use the resources we have to address it;
- being clear about available support pathways and when to use them, so that we maximise the effective use of existing resources;
- learning where there are gaps in the system and highlighting these so that they can be addressed.

**Q: How will the Mana Ake initiative be implemented?**

**A:** Mana Ake is designed to be a collaborative approach to improve wellbeing for our children.

The resource is allocated to clusters of schools. Mana Ake kaimahi are employed by a network of thirteen of NGO providers. They will get to know their community and have regular times when they are available to teachers, parents and children.

Mana Ake kaimahi will have a range of skills to support whānau and children with wellbeing concerns. They will work directly with groups of students or individuals and their family/ whānau but may also be involved in running parent training or providing advice to whānau and teachers.

The cluster of schools, supported by Mana Ake kaimahi will decide how to use the resource to most effectively address the opportunities they identify to promote wellbeing for their community.

**Q: What will it mean for children, whānau and schools?**

**A:** There are three main elements of the Mana Ake initiative:

- the Mana Ake kaimahi – around 80 additional full time equivalent (FTE) ;
- Improving and supporting collaboration - working with and through school communities by complementing and enhancing existing pastoral care support to intervene early means we can prevent some children's needs escalating. By intervening early, we hope to ease demand on specialist services so that, when it's appropriate for children to be referred, they can access support sooner.
- Leading Lights – a website designed specifically to help teachers and education professionals identify children with health, learning or wellbeing needs. Leading Lights will provide ideas and strategies for teachers, and for teachers to share with

parents/caregivers. The website will also help teachers and other professionals navigate to appropriate services.

**Q: What will Mana Ake kaimahi do?**

**A:** Mana Ake kaimahi can:

- assess for risk;
- engage families to address parenting challenges and build positive relationships between parents and children to promote wellbeing;
- provide individual and group interventions that address anxiety, low mood, lack of resilience;
- support families to access community support to enhance their wellbeing;
- support children of parents with mental illness;
- work with school communities to understand trends and opportunities for support;
- provide culturally appropriate interventions and support;
- offer a range of information for parents and teachers through advice and guidance, training or group work.

**Q: How can I find out more about Mana Ake?**

**A:** You'll be able to use the [CCN website](#) to find out about the latest Mana Ake developments and even sign up for a mailing list to be kept up to date.

Messages from each meeting, as well as significant developments and milestones, will be shared via the Mana Ake page's newsfeed – you can sign up for alerts so you'll be emailed each time there's a development.

**Q: I have a question which isn't answered here – who do I talk to?**

**A:** If you have a question which isn't answered in this, or the general frequently asked questions (available on the CCN website), please email [info@ccn.health.nz](mailto:info@ccn.health.nz)

The design approach is flexible and developmental – any questions or comments you submit will help this process.