

Who counts?

Young people out of systems in Counties Manukau

A report to inform planning for better youth health outcomes

This report is based on a 2006 Scoping Project for Counties Manukau District Health Board and estimates:

1. numbers of young people (under 16 years) in Counties Manukau who are not enrolled in school, alternative education, teen parent units or other registered schools and are not in Child Youth and Family Residences
2. health issues for young people who are out of these systems.

Terry Fleming 2006 for Counties Manukau District Health Board

Who counts? Young people out of systems in Counties Manukau

Terry Fleming, November 2006

Commissioned by

This report was commissioned by Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB).

Disclaimer

The opinions in this report do not necessarily reflect the official views of CMDHB or the official views of individuals and agencies who contributed to it.

While every endeavour has been made to provide an accurate overview, there is a lack of complete data on young people out of systems. The report is by its nature a scoping exercise, and should be regarded as providing best estimates available within the timeframe and methods utilised and available data.

Foreword

In looking at where we should be targeting scarce youth health resources, we necessarily have to weigh up between the commonplace and the rare, between the mild and the severe, between the complex and the simple. Research informs us that at one end where resiliencies cluster excellence occurs, in the middle most young people get by with a minimum of problems, but at the other end risks cluster and resiliencies are rare. This group has a disproportionate impact on society (crime and lost opportunity), on health resources (trauma, mental health, disability). At the end of this extreme is a group of young people who are outside the reach of healthcare, of education and of welfare systems. They come to light through youth justice and criminal behaviour, through violence and suicide. They affect families and communities. This small group with a disproportionate impact is the subject of this report.

How big is this group?
How big is the impact?

For health planners and managers, there are issues of access, of resource allocation and of skills. Terry is primarily addressing the quantification issue. Is this just a few kids or a lot?

Terry has undertaken a difficult piece of work with no guaranteed outcome and produced what may prove to be a unique piece of work. In contrast to most research, the answer to the question: "How many young people are outside of statutory and organisational systems?" is unknowable by its nature. Terry has performed this difficult task admirably with a set of information that informs our practices, plans and funding.

I have looked forward to this piece of work for some time. It will give us some hitherto lacking information we can get our teeth into in terms of planning for young people in Counties Manukau and will have implications for the rest of New Zealand.

Dr John Newman
Specialist Youth Physician
Kidz First Centre for Youth Health
Counties Manukau District Health Board

Thanks

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Executive Summary

Background

The Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) is supporting or developing services for young people in a range of settings including school, alternative education and Child Youth and Family (CYF) residences. In 2006 CMDHB contracted Terry Fleming to carry out a scoping exercise to estimate how many young people under 16 years old in the Counties Manukau District were outside all of these settings and the kinds of health issues that these young people face. An advisory committee was formed to oversee the project and a range of data and advice was sought from young people, education, community and government agencies. The purpose of the project was to inform planning for youth health.

In New Zealand every person who is not a foreign student is legally required to be enrolled in a registered school, or have a legal exemption from school, during the period beginning on the person's 6th birthday and ending on their 16th birthday. There is a small number (66) of young people in CYF residential care in Counties Manukau at any one time and these young people are routinely enrolled in Alternative Education or other registered school while they are residents. This project focuses on young people between 6 and 16 years old, who are not enrolled in a registered school and are not in CYF residential care. For the sake of brevity they are referred to in this report as 'young people out of systems.'

There is little data about young people outside of systems. The most complete information is Ministry of Education data on students referred to non-enrolled truancy services. This data does contain some important gaps, however (although it is likely to become more complete with the continued implementation of the new Ministry of Education supported student management systems). Additional information from young people, alternative education, justice and community settings is also included here as it adds valuable insight and information, although some of these reports are based on limited data.

Summary of findings

The findings from this project suggest that there are **at least 500** young people in Counties Manukau who are non-enrolled and not attending alternative education, teen parent unit, kura kaupapa or other registered school and are not in a Child Youth and Family residence. Most of these young people are likely to be 13 years or older, although a small minority of students are 'out of systems' from as young as ten or even eight years old. Pacifica and especially Maori young people are over-represented in this group.

In addition, there are approximately **500** young people (usually aged 15½ or over) who have legal exemptions to be out of school.

Most young people out of systems have multiple complex health concerns that may cross the boundaries of several sectors, such as: alcohol and drug abuse; mental health, sexual health and behavioural problems; abuse and neglect; and disabilities or chronic illness. Their health needs appear to be at a similar level to those of young people in youth justice residential care or alternative education settings.

A range of possible approaches to working with young people out of systems are outlined in the report. Common themes are the needs to

- work effectively with Maori and Pacifica communities
- work with both young people and families
- address multiple complex issues
- ensure follow-up over extended periods
- work with education and others already engaged with young people and their families

and for approaches to complement other initiatives.

Main findings

- In 2005 there were **558** young people aged between their 6th and 16th birthdays who were found to be 'true'¹ not enrolled truants referred to non-enrolled truancy services (NETS) by catchment schools².
- In 2005 there were approximately **516** young people aged 15 in Counties Manukau district who were given exemptions to leave school. 75 young people were given exemptions after being referred to NETS; hence there are approximately **1000** young people who were exempted or 'true' non-enrolled truants in 2005.
- Not all young people who are not enrolled and truant are referred to NETS, hence 'true' not enrolled truants data is likely to underestimate young people who are out of systems. For example:
 - out of 14 consecutive enrolments of young people who had been out of systems to AimHi consortium alternative education, about 60% were known to NETS and about 40% were not known to NETS.
 - out of residents consulted at the Manukau Youth Justice residence just over half (approx 56%) who had stopped going to school by 15 years said they had been followed up by truancy services such as NETS.Note that the average amount of time reported out of education was similar for young people known and not known to NETS in each of these groups.
- **Additionally** there may be a considerable number of young people in Counties Manukau who are not legal residents and thus not entitled to free New Zealand schooling or health care. These young people are not counted in 'true' NETS or exempted figures. Anecdotally, many of these young people miss out on education for significant periods or even entirely, although they may remain in New Zealand for many years and in some cases become permanent residents. They are likely to require specific interventions, which take into account cultural and migrancy issues.
- Summed estimates from a range of community workers in Counties Manukau suggest that between **226-632** young people are out of systems in the district.
- There are differences in New Zealand census population estimates and education enrolments. Although some of these differences may be due to other factors, on the face of this information, it appears that nationally there are small proportions of young people out of education from 11 years of age. In the CMHDB area the difference in figures would suggest there are **810** young people out of education (including those who have exemptions), if no adjustment is made for disparities from national norms.
- These data sources, in combination suggest that an estimate of at least 500 young people out of systems in Counties Manukau is not unrealistic and is likely to be conservative.
- The majority of young people out of systems reported by community workers or referred to NETS are 14 and 15 years old, although there are NETS referrals for children as young as 6. The youngest person out of schooling and not having returned to education reported as part of this project last attended school at 8 years of age. This was a young person in youth justice residential care. Young people out of systems from 10 years of age were reported by 6 different key informants.

¹ Note over 1000 young people were referred to NETS by catchment schools in 2005. Many of these young people are found to be overseas, already enrolled elsewhere or have other legitimate reason to not be enrolled. 'True' not enrolled truants is used in this report to refer to students who were between their 6th and 16th birthdays and were not found to be enrolled elsewhere and not deceased, overseas or have a legal exemption from education.

² Schools within the CMDHB District and Otahuhu and McAuley colleges (both of which are located close to Counties Manukau and have over 75% of the roll made up of Counties Manukau residents).

- Young people in particular identifiable groups – such as those who are offending, young people with complex chronic health issues, young people whose families have major health problems or are gang affiliated – appear to have high rates of being out of systems.
- Some young people who are out of education systems or Child Youth and Family residence are well known to services such as health, education, youth transition services, police or community providers including churches and families. Often education, families and services have worked hard to support these young people.
- Young people out of systems appear to have multiple health issues, which impact on their current and future wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. These issues include high rates of:
 - alcohol and other drug abuse
 - behaviour problems
 - offending (violence and property offences)
 - learning and other disabilities
 - chronic illness
 - mental ill health
 - sexual health issues.
 Additionally many have responsibilities to care for others and most are in need of care and protection.
- In general these health needs may be estimated to be similar to the needs of young people in alternative education settings or Youth Justice residences.
- A range of approaches which might help to prevent young people from becoming disengaged with systems or might address health issues for those already out of systems were suggested and are reported here. Suggestions varied, although common themes included the need to work with both young people and families, to address multiple complex issues, to be able to ensure follow-up over extended periods, to work with education and with others already engaged with these young people and their families and for approaches to complement other initiatives. It is essential that approaches work effectively with Maori and/or Pacifica young people, their families and communities.

Introduction: Setting the scene

Counties Manukau District Health Board

The Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) area covers Manukau City and Papakura and Franklyn Districts. This includes a population of approximately 431 000 persons including 153 700³ young people aged 0-24 years of whom 44 330 are aged 10-15⁴.

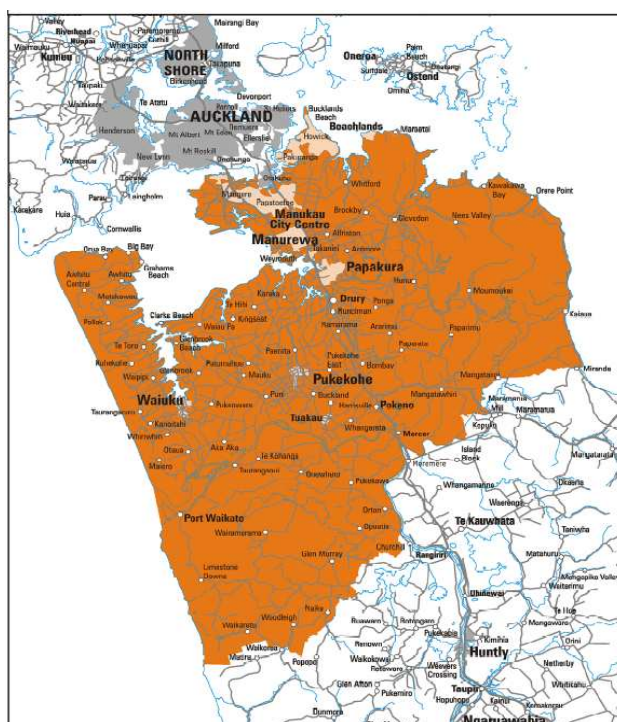
Counties Manukau DHB's vision is to work in partnership with its communities to improve the health status of all, with particular emphasis on Maori and Pacific peoples and other communities with health disparities.⁵

Within Youth Health, CMDHB has committed to a range of approaches to improve child and youth health and reduce inequalities in health status - including for young people who are excluded from mainstream and alternative settings. Current youth health priorities include:

- improving youth community wellbeing by enhancing school based health services
- improving health outcomes for young people with specific chronic conditions
- addressing preventable death, illness and injury due to risk taking behaviour
- addressing information gaps⁶.

The DHB continues to support or is developing services for young people in a range of settings including school, alternative education and CYF residences.⁷ In 2006 CMDHB commissioned this report to identify if there were significant numbers of young people who would not be reached by health services in any of these settings and to identify if young people out of these systems had significant health needs.

CMDHB District



Source: <http://www.moh.govt.nz/dhbmmaps>

³ The Paediatric Society of New Zealand, 2005

⁴ Population Statistics Unit Statistics New Zealand Christchurch, personal communication, 2006

⁵ Counties Manukau District Health Board, accessed 2006, from <http://www.cmdhb.org.nz/>

⁶ Gilli Sinclair, personal communication, 2006

⁷ Counties Manukau District Health Board, 2003

Young people in systems:

New Zealand schooling requirements

In New Zealand every person who is not a foreign student is legally required to be enrolled in a registered school at all times during the period beginning on the persons 6th birthday and ending on the persons 16th birthday.

Registered schools include kura kaupapa, alternative education, teen parent units, correspondence school and state schools.

A parent who does not enrol a young person between their 6th and 16th years commits an offence.

Exemptions, allowing students to leave school for homeschooling or allowing young people to leave school to go on a course or to work may be granted by the Ministry of Education; these are approved on a case by case basis.⁸ Exemptions to leave school to go on a course or to full time work are usually only granted to young people over the age of 15 years and six months. Their course or work plans are checked at the time; however, there are not routine checks that the young person is still attending at later dates.

Students must attend school when it is open for instruction, or, in the case of correspondence school, do the work of the course. Parents are responsible for attendance of students and Boards of Trustees must take reasonable steps to ensure that students attend. Schools have electronic systems for attendance information and a range of services to support them with truancy. These services include the schools' own staff and processes, District Truancy Services (DTS) and the Ministry of Education, Non-Enrolment Truancy Services (NETS).

Chronic truancy (whether it is condoned by the family or not) may be harmful, is often difficult to deal with and typically requires interagency responses.⁹ However, this report focuses only on people outside of education (not including those partially engaged).

Where a student is absent from school for 20 consecutive days, he or she is recorded as having left the school and should normally be followed up by the school and, if not re-engaged, referred to NETS.

Where a student leaves school to attend another school, then the new school should request the student's record. If this record is not claimed, the school that holds it should normally follow up the student and/or refer them to NETS.

There is significant evidence that students are not always referred to NETS when they have become disengaged from school by these methods.¹⁰ Students might also leave school and not be referred to NETS via other processes as summarised in the table below. A particular gap observed by several informants was where students leave school to go overseas but might not in fact go, or might return to New Zealand but not return to education.

How would young people come to be out of education systems?

Process	Policy/procedure to address
Never enrolls at school – no schooling at all or arrives in NZ under 16 years and does not enroll in school	Concerned individuals may notify NETS/the Ministry of Education (MOE)
Enrolled but frequently truant	School & District Truancy Services follow up
Intermittent enrolment periods of weeks/months off between enrolments	School record not claimed - school to notify MOE
Previously enrolled but truant 20 or more days	School to follow up, and if required NETS referral. NETS attempt to locate and follow up

⁸ Education Review Office, 2004

⁹ Ministry of Education, 2006

¹⁰ Education Review Office, 2004 and see later sections of this report.

Leaves school to shift to another school but does not re-enroll	School record not claimed - school to notify MOE
Excluded (expelled) from school	School assist with enrollment 10 days – if not successful, school to notify MOE
Leaves school to go overseas but does not go, or returns and does not re-enroll	Individual schools may have systems, but MOE will not be notified
Extended absence from school for health reasons	Health Schools support
Enrolled in correspondence but disengages	The correspondence school monitors work and will refer to NETS if necessary
Enrolled in home-schooling but disengages	The Education Review Office monitors home schooling
Enrollment in alternative education (AE) but does not attend	AE to follow up and, if not re engaged, refer to NETS
Referred to NETS but not successfully re-engaged in education.	Some referrals, such as families who move regularly or where students or families refuse school, are not always successfully re-engaged in education.
Exempted from school to attend work or course but does not attend work/course	Course or work checked at time of exemption. Some schools follow up further

Young People in Child Youth and Family Residential Care

The Ministry of Social Development, Department of Child Youth and Family Services (CYF) provides care and protection and youth justice 24-hour supervised residential care for young people and children aged 10–16 years. There are a total of 150 care and protection and youth justice residence beds throughout New Zealand. Admission to a residence happens when there are no other practical alternatives or when the child's continued presence in the community is a threat to their own safety or the safety of others.¹¹

There is one Care and Protection residence in Counties Manukau: Whakatakāpokai, which has 20 beds. Additionally, there is one Youth Justice residence in the district: Korowai Manaaki, which has 40 youth justice beds and six criminal justice beds.

Children and young people may be admitted to Care and Protection residences when their behaviour is a danger to themselves or others, and that danger can only be reduced by 24-hour supervision.

Children and young people can be admitted to a Youth Justice residence when they have been arrested by the Police, remanded by the Court, found guilty of an offence by the Court and sentenced to imprisonment or ordered supervision with residence.

Young people in CYF residential care are enrolled in education programmes and have medical care provided to them.

Young people out of systems:

This project focuses on young people in the CMDHB area who are neither in education nor in Child Youth and Family residential care.

¹¹ Child Youth and Family, accessed 2006 from <http://www.cyf.govt.nz/>

Project Overview and Methods

Project: Young people (under 16 years) out of Education and other systems in Counties Manukau: Scoping Project, 2006

Project manger: Gilli Sinclair

Contracted provider:

Terry Fleming (MHSci; DSW)

Aevidence@ihug.co.nz

Tel (09) 536 4284, Fax (09) 536 4283, Mob 021 237 0595

PO Box 37, Maraetai Beach, Manukau 2148

Project support: Phillipa Bennett, Auckland School Nurses Group.

Time Frame: July – November 06

Objectives: Estimate numbers of young people under 16 and not enrolled in education or part of Child Youth and Family residence in CMBHD area. Estimate health needs for a sample of these young people.

Purpose: To inform planning for youth health in CMDHB.

Methods:

Investigate existing data sources and materials regarding young people who are outside of education and other systems, including NETS information as available and population differences in education enrolments and census data.

Consult education experts and providers and health providers in the CMDHB region regarding numbers of young people out of systems and issues for these young people.

Estimate numbers of young people out of schools known to youth workers, community workers, police or other systems in sample areas.

Consult Youth Justice Residence personnel regarding how long young people in the residence have been outside of systems prior to their current residence.

Consult a sample of young people who have been out of systems, or know young people who are out of systems, regarding possible health services for young people out of systems.

Findings

Section 1: Estimating numbers of young people out of systems

Non enrolled truants, aged 6-16: data supplied by the Ministry of Education.

During 2005 there were 1267 students referred to Non Enrolled Truancy Services (NETS) whose last school of attendance was a Counties Manukau school or Otahuhu or McAuley High School (catchment schools).¹² Of these students about 56% were found to be under 6 or over 16 years at the time of referral or were found to be already enrolled at another school, already exempted from school or overseas, or were found to be a foreign student or deceased.

This left a total of 558 students who may be considered 'true' non-enrolled truants who were aged 6 years or over and under 16 years.

Of 'true' non-enrolled truant young people referred in 2005, over 75% were aged 13 or over. Approximately 50% were NZ Maori, 40% were Pacifica (with the largest of these groups being Samoan or Cook Island), approximately 8% were NZ European/Pakeha and 2% were Asian or other.

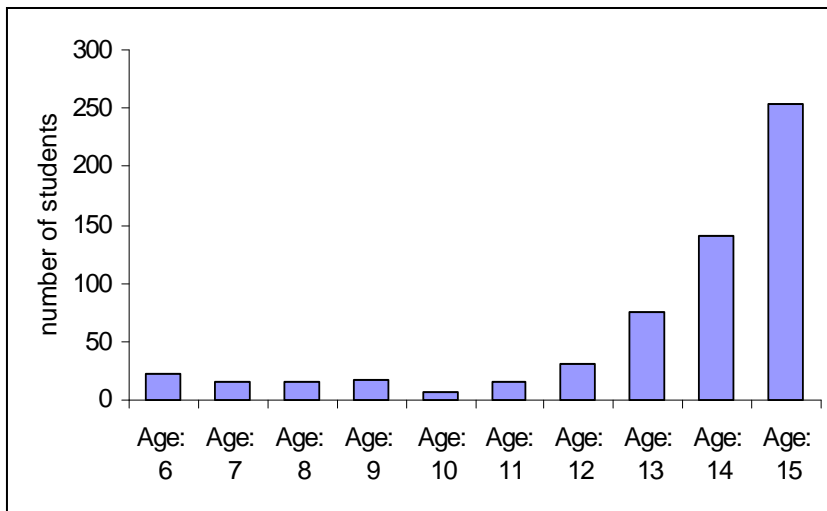
Key Fact:

In 2005 there were 558 young people aged 6 to 15 (inclusive) who were found to be 'true' non-enrolled truants referred by catchment schools

Key Fact:

In 2005 most 'true' non-enrolled truants referred by catchment schools were aged 13 years or over. Pacifica and especially Maori students were over-represented in NETS referrals.

True non-enrolled truants aged 6-15 inclusive, referred to NETS in 2005, who last attended a catchment school, by year of age

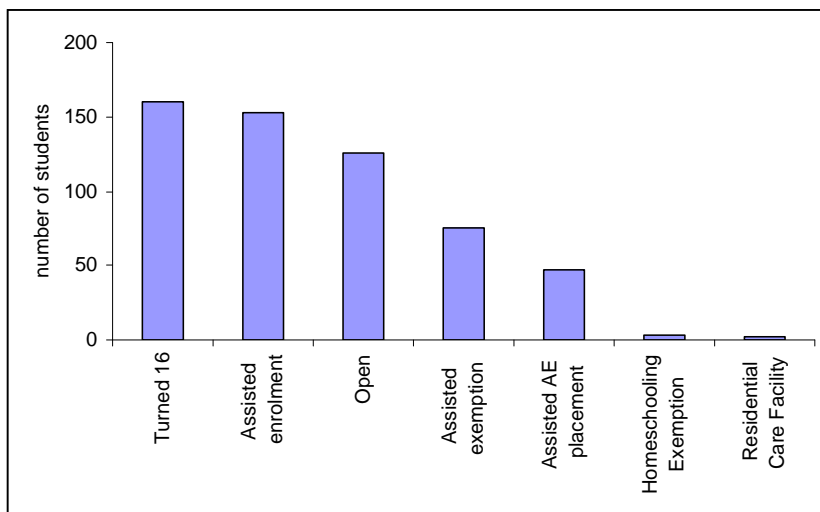


¹² NETS data is by last school attended rather than by student's address. Some young people who live outside Counties Manukau attend school in Counties Manukau and hence could be included in this data; conversely other young people reside in Counties Manukau but attend school out of the district.

The outcomes of referrals for 'true' non-enrolled students referred by catchment schools during 2005, as of October 2006, were that:

- 153 young people had been assisted to enrol in school
- 47 had been assisted into Alternative Education
- 2 were in a residential care facility
- 160 had turned 16 years
- 75 were assisted to gain an exemption
- 126 remained open.

Outcomes for True non-enrolled truants, referred to NETS in 2005, who last attended a catchment school



Not enrolled but not notified to NETS

Information from Alternative Education (AE), Youth Justice and other settings suggest that there are young people out of systems who have not been referred to NETS.

For example, of the most recent 14 consecutive enrolments to AimHi consortium AE's in July 2006, over half (8 out of 14) the students had been referred to AimHi by NETS and/or were known to NETS when they enrolled. The remaining students (6 out of 14) appeared to be not known to NETS; these young people had been referred by friends, family or community agencies and were not aware of NETS or truancy involvement in their case. The young people known to NETS had been out of school for an average of 11 months (including school holidays); the young people not known to NETS had been out of education for a very similar average period: 11.5 months.

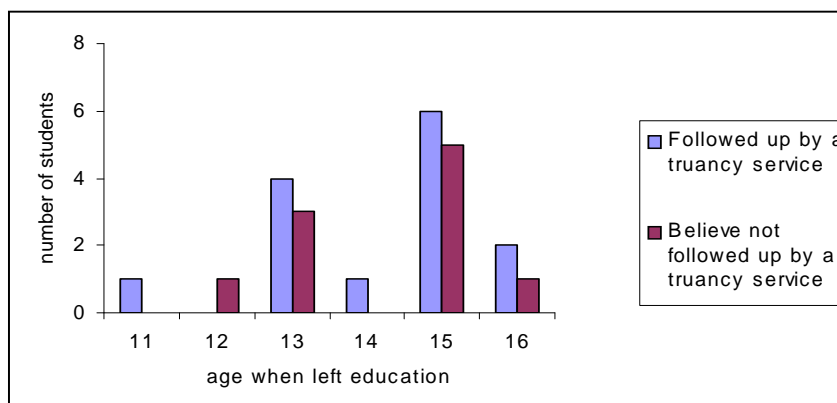
Key fact: Not all young people out of education appear to be referred to NETS. For example, out of 14 consecutive enrolments to AimHi AE about 60% were known to NETS and 40% not known.

Other AE providers also described significant proportions of their new enrolments not being known to NETS.

Further examples are:

- Out of 174 schools in focus areas during 2004, the Education Review Office (ERO) reported that 60% of schools had unclaimed student record cards. Schools believed 2031 unclaimed student record cards to belong to students who were overseas and the remaining 596 student record cards to be unclaimed for some other reason. In this survey about half of the schools holding unclaimed records for students that they believed had not gone overseas, had used NETS.
- Out of 21 Youth Justice residents who had been out of school since they were 15 or under, 57% believed they had been followed up by education, truancy or NETS services and 43% did not believe any of these services had tried to follow them up.
- As part of community consultations, several providers described cases of what some called '**Kiwi Suspensions**'. Each of these cases involved young people aged 12 years or over, who had been stood down or suspended from school, but had not been called before the Board of Trustees. Each of these young people had now been out of school for at least 6 months. As the young people and/or their families had described it, there appeared to be no truancy, NETS or other education follow-up. One youth provider had recently met 4 males aged 13 and 14 from two schools who were in this situation.
- A health worker reported that of 5 young people 16 out of systems that they have worked with recently, 3 had not been referred to NETS prior to their intervention. These young people were aged 13-15 and had been out of school for at least 3 terms.

Age at which youth justice residents reported that they stopped going to school or AE and reported follow up by truancy services



Estimated exemptions

In Counties Manukau approximately 516 students were granted early leaving exemptions from school in 2005.

These are exemptions to leave school to go onto fulltime work or a course. Early leaving exemptions are usually granted to young people aged 15½ or over.

About ¾ of young people granted exemptions were in the Manukau area with the remaining ¼ divided between Papakura and Franklyn districts.

Key Fact:
in 2005 there were approximately 516 young people aged 15 in Counties Manukau district who were given exemptions to leave school

Estimated Early Leaving Exemptions, CMDHB area, 2005¹³.

	Estimated number of 15 year olds	Exemptions per 1000 students	Estimated number of exempt students
Manukau	5775	66.1	382
Papakura	725	87.6	64
Franklin	1000	70.2	70
Total	6565		516

¹³ Source: Ministry of Education, 2005
<http://educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz/indicators/engagement/simu15.html>

Census population estimates compared to education enrollments

The New Zealand Census estimates of population do not precisely match with numbers of enrolments in education. Comparing census to Ministry of Education enrolment data suggests that nationally there may be slightly less than 100% enrollment in school of New Zealanders from age 11.

The census is estimated data for 2005 and may contain errors: dual enrolments (where some students are enrolled in more than one school at a time) may artificially decrease the gap between enrolments and population data while migration and overseas visits will also affect data. Thus this data should not be regarded as rigorous but as merely indicative.

With limitations to data in mind, if differences between enrolments and census data are extrapolated to Counties Manukau with no adjustment for variation from national norms, then we might expect:

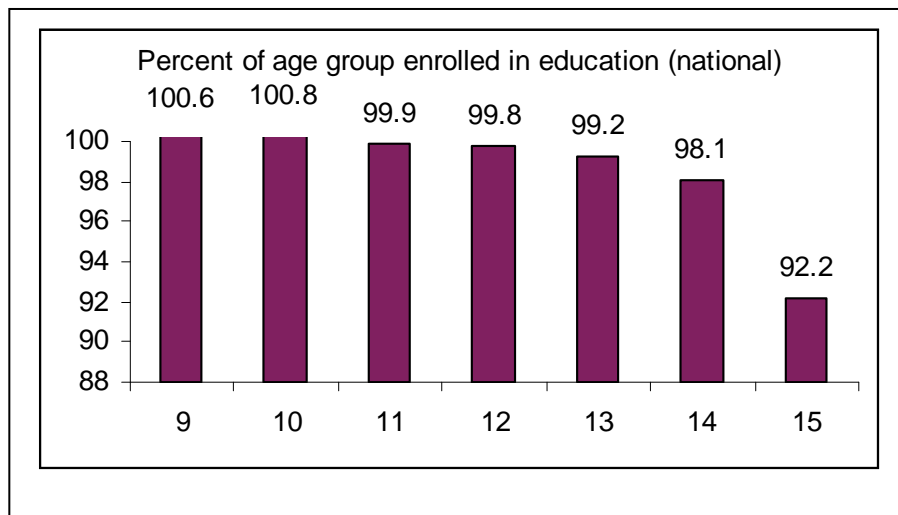
- 8 eleven year olds
- 15 twelve year olds
- 59 thirteen year olds
- 143 fourteen year olds
- 585 fifteen year olds

out of school in the region.

This is a total of 810 young people.

Counties Manukau has 2-3 times the national norms for rates of NETS referrals with no major differences from national norms in the proportion of referrals who are already found to be at school. Thus, extrapolating national data without adjusting for disparities is likely to provide a conservative estimate.

Estimated national proportions of young people 9-15 years of age enrolled in education based on MOE enrolments, compared to NZ Census estimates of young people (July 2005)



Estimates based on community perspectives

A range of people in communities such as Maori Wardens, young people, youth workers, transitions service providers, health personnel and police are aware of young people in their communities who are out of systems.

Informants were asked about young people out of systems that they knew of, or were asked to estimate numbers of young people out of systems in specific areas that they knew well. For example: one individual knew of 5 young people in a particular street who were out of systems; another estimated that about half the young people sex working in the car park at night were out of systems; young people in the Absolute Rush performing arts programme knew of 35 different young people who they believed were out of systems in their suburb.

Young people out of systems described by these informants were all 10-15 years old.

Limitations

There are important limitations to this data, which can perhaps be best described as '**informed guesstimates**'. Efforts were made to avoid double counting by delineating specific areas. However some young people could have been counted more than once.

Further, it is difficult at times to estimate whether young people seen regularly on streets/shops/parks are out of systems or 'just' chronically truant. Many persons or agencies, for example some librarians and recreation workers,¹⁴ notice young people who appear to be out of systems but may not be.

A broad range of total estimates for each area (e.g. 50-250 young people in one area) is given, which reflects the difficulty of accurately estimating numbers of young people out of systems.

Estimates

The following table lists the population of 10-15 year olds for each ward within Counties Manukau. The estimated young people out of systems from community consultations appear on the right for the relevant individual or combined wards (cells are merged where wards have been combined). The proportion of total 10-15 years that these estimates represent is calculated. For wards where there were no estimates from community consultation, estimates are made at 0.3-0.6%¹⁵ of the 10-15 year old population.

¹⁴ Some of these workers would appreciate clear guidelines regarding the best ways to get support for these young people.

¹⁵ This proportion was selected as it is at the conservative end of estimated proportions for other areas.

The total estimates using these methods are that there are between 226 and 632 young people 10-15 years (inclusive) out of systems in CMDHB area.

Ward name	Territorial authority	At 30 June 2005 by age (years) ¹⁶			Estimated Young people out of systems		
		10-13	14-15	Total 10-15	Estimates from community consultation	Proportion of 10-15 year olds estimated to be out of systems in community consultations	Extrapolated data (estimates of 10-15 year olds out of systems for wards with no community estimates)
Mangere Ward	Manukau City	4,550	2,260	6,810	50-100	0.7-1.4%	
Papatoetoe Ward	Manukau City	2,530	1,260	3,790		Extrapolated at 0.3-0.6 %	11-22
Howick Ward	Manukau City	2,270	1,330	3,600	20-30	0.3-0.4	
Pakuranga Ward	Manukau City	2,050	1,250	3300			
Botany-Clevedon Ward	Manukau City	2,540	1,180	3,710		Extrapolated at 0.3-0.6 %	11-22
Manurewa Ward	Manukau City	5,710	2,810	8530	50-250	0.6-2.9	
Otara Ward	Manukau City	2,960	1,470	4,430	30-100	0.7-2.3	
Total Manukau City including extrapolated estimates		22,610	11,550	34,170	194-568		
Pahurehure Ward	Papakura District	690	340	1,030	30-100	0.7- 2.3	
Ardmore Ward	Papakura District	690	370	1,060			
Drury Ward	Papakura District	640	350	990			
Red Hill Ward	Papakura District	780	400	1,180			
Total Papakura District		2,810	1,450	4,260			
Waiuku-Awhitu Ward	Franklin District	1,000	520	1,520	15-30	0.30- 60	
Northern Ward	Franklin District	920	500	1,420			
Pukekohe Ward	Franklin District	1,060	510	1,570			
Southern Ward	Franklin District	920	470	1,400			
Total Franklin District		3,900	2,000	5,900			
Total all including extrapolated estimates					226-632		

¹⁶ Ward and district population statistics as provided by the Population Statistics Unit, Statistics New Zealand, October 2006. Note statistics may not sum to stated totals due to rounding.

Findings

Section 2: Findings from specific sectors or groups

Young people out of systems: findings from specific sectors or groups

This section of the report details findings from specific sectors or groups who were able to help describe young people out of systems in Counties Manukau. Key themes from this section are highlighted below.

Findings from specific sectors or groups: key themes

Most young people in Counties Manukau (under 16 years) are engaged in education and other positive systems.

Being 'out of systems' is not spread evenly throughout our communities but occurs in clusters; i.e. particular groups appear to have much higher rates of being out of systems than most Counties Manukau youth. Examples are: young people involved in or on the fringes of gangs,¹⁷ those who are known to youth transition services,¹⁸ police or Child Youth and Family Services, those who are sex working, those who are illegal migrants and some who have high health needs.

Young people out of systems will be known to someone and are often known to services who may be able to support them and help ensure that their needs are met. For example, young people out of systems in this project were often known to two or more of the following groups:

- friends and family
- church
- community organisations
- health providers
- alternative education providers, schools or youth transition services
- police or Child Youth and Family services.

¹⁷ Ministry of Social Development, 2006

¹⁸ Benseman, 2006

Youth Justice Residents

Young people in Youth Justice residential care are plainly 'in systems' and are provided with targeted youth health services while they are in the residence. However this group includes young people who have often been out of systems for some years prior to their incarceration.

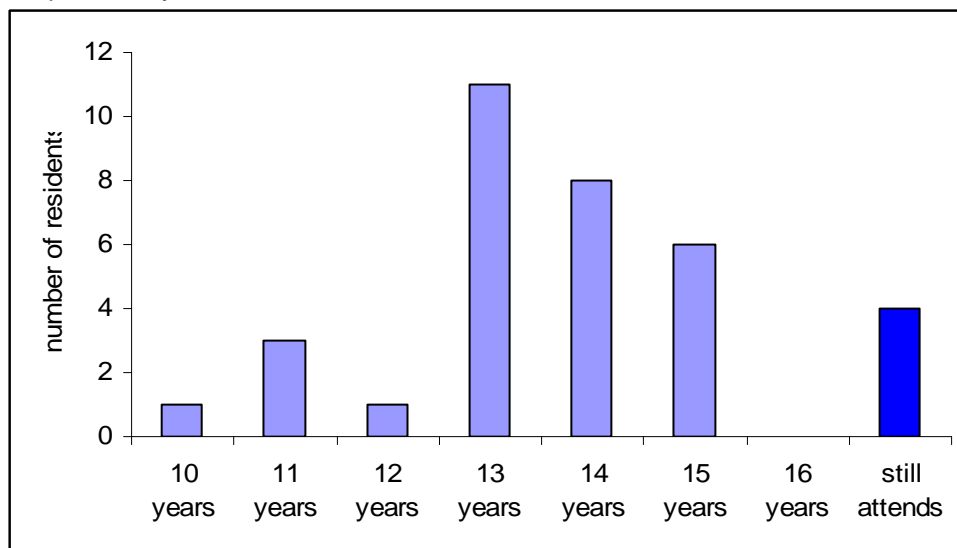
Young people in Korowai Manaaki (The Youth Justice residence in Counties Manukau) were approached as a key informant group, as they are likely to represent one of the higher risk groups of young people in our community¹⁹ and help to demonstrate perhaps the highest levels of need among young people out of systems.

Information from young people in Youth Justice residence suggests that, for this small group of young people, leaving school in early to mid adolescence is normative.

Both a health provider and the lead tutor at Korowai Manaaki report that it is common for residents to have not attended high school and many have not attended intermediate school. Neither of these informants could recall meeting any young people in several years who had never been enrolled in school or who had stopped going to school at younger than 8 years.

A 'snapshot' of residents in the education unit one July day (in 2006) identified that of this group, before they were incarcerated, about 47% had last attended school at age 13 years or younger, with 41% leaving at 14 or 15 and 12% not having left.

Age at which Korowai Manaaki residents last attended school or Alternative Education - 'snapshot' July 2006



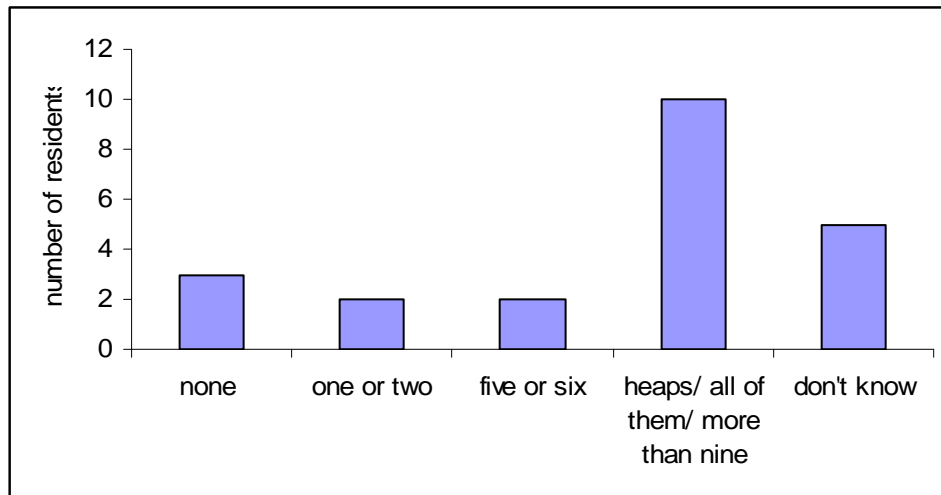
As part of a youth health consultation in October 2006 the Centre for Youth Health asked Korowai Manaaki residents (aged 14-17 years) themselves about how old they were when they stopped going to school or Alternative Education and whether truancy services had tried to follow them up. They were also asked whether they had friends (age 16 or under) who were not in school or alternative education and if they knew whether any truancy services were following up these friends. 26 of the 33 young people resident on the day of consultation at their unit answered some or all of these questions.

¹⁹ Teplin, L., McClelland, G., Abram, K., et al 2005

23 young people answered whether they had friends (aged 16 or under) who were not in school or AE. Of these young people the majority had 5 or more friends out of school, as illustrated below.

Most of these young people did not know whether any truancy services were following up these friends. Of those who did, 2 residents thought their friends were not being followed up by truancy services and 2 thought they were.

How many friends did Korowai Manaaki residents have who were out of school or Alternative Education and were under 16 years old?



Young people known to youth justice but are not in residential care

Most young people who have come the attention of Child Youth and Family because of offending are not in residential care (for example while there are 102 youth justice residential beds in New Zealand there were over 8 000 referrals for Youth Justice Family Group Conferences in 2005)²⁰. Usually the offending of these young people is of a less serious nature.

The Child Youth and Family Youth Justice team in Manurewa checked open cases on a particular day in September 2006. There were a total of 15 young persons who the team were currently working with, 60% of whom had not been in schools for 8-12 months at the time of coming to the attention of Child Youth and Family.

²⁰ Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2006 <http://www.msd.govt.nz/publications/statement-of-intent/2006/vote-child-youth-and-family-services.html>

Alternative Education Students

Alternative Education (AE) units are education programmes funded for young people aged between thirteen and a half and sixteen who are alienated from the education system and who are either unwilling to attend a regular school or whom schools are unwilling to enrol in a mainstream setting.

The target group is young people who fit one or more of the following criteria:²¹

- have been out of school for two terms or more
- have a history of multiple exclusions
- were referred to The Correspondence School as a last resort and have dropped out
- have been absent for at least half of the last 20 weeks, for reasons other than illness and the absence has meant that they are unable to maintain a mainstream programme
- have been suspended or excluded and are at risk of further suspensions/exclusions.

Alternative Education is often considered a last resort option to ensure that students remain engaged in education.²²

AE students are 'in systems.' While the students are at alternative education they are enrolled in a registered school. CMDHB has been working to support or develop health services for young people in specific alternative education settings.

AE students and providers were considered a key informant group as many young people have been out of school for substantial periods.

In Counties Manukau there are two AE consortiums:

- 1) the AimHi consortium
- 2) the Counties Manukau consortium

We looked closely at 14 consecutive enrolments in the AimHi consortium in mid 2006. This information is summarised below. The AimHi enrolment office reported that characteristics of this set of enrolments were not notably different from other enrolments. Additionally we consulted a Counties Manukau consortium AE provider, Te Ara Poutama. These findings were used to inform estimates of the number of young people out of systems, their ages, some of the issues they face and some possible responses to them. The findings are summarised below.

Findings

We looked at 14 consecutive enrolments during mid-2006 to AimHi Consortium Alternative Education.

These 14 young people were aged 13-15 years; 10 were male. The amount of time they had been out of education prior to enrolling ranged from 2 years to about 4 months, with the average being about 11 months (in calendar months, including school holiday times). As described on page x, over half of these students were known to NETS.

The informant noted that some schools did ensure that young people were referred to NETS or directly to AE quickly, and in these cases students sometimes began attending AE within two weeks of leaving mainstream school. These students appeared to be likely to engage well and to progress with the support of the tutors. Other schools were less likely to refer to NETS or AE and students would be out of systems for months prior to enrolment. These students appeared less likely to engage successfully with alternative education.

²¹ Sources: O'Brien, Thesing and Herbert, 2001 & Ministry of Education, Te Kete Ipurangi The Online Learning Centre <http://www.tki.org.nz/e/community/alterned/about/> accessed October 2006

²² Ministry of Education, Te Kete Ipurangi The Online Learning Centre <http://www.tki.org.nz/e/community/alterned/about/> accessed October 2006

Te Ara Poutama Alternative Education informants had come across a number of young people who were out of systems. This included young people who sometimes visited friends at the AE. They also described 26 young people (9 females and 17 males) who had enrolled but not come to the AE or who had refused to enrol.²³ These were young people aged 13-15 years who had been out of school for periods of months to years, with one who had left in 2002, one who had left in 2003 and the remainder having left between September 2004 and February 2006.

Young people with serious health issues

Some of the young people out of systems described in this project had been seen for injuries or illness at hospital, had been seen by primary health care services about complex health issues or by public health nurses or others about a variety of psycho-social issues. Young people out of systems are likely to be at high risk of a number of negative outcomes including health problems. Engagement with health services may provide an opportunity to support these young people to return to or remain engaged with education and other systems.

Young people with significant alcohol and drug issues were identified as having increased rates of early disengagement from systems. Young people who are resident in alcohol and drug rehabilitation units were described as being among those who have been out of systems from the youngest ages.

Mental ill-health has also been associated with early school leaving.²⁴ Several young people who had been seen by crisis teams or other mental health services had left school early. These teams had not always addressed or recognised the student's disengagement with education.

Explained absences were also highlighted as a concern. For example, young people with a serious chronic illness may need weeks away from school, but in some scenarios had been away for months or even most of a year. Improved communication between health providers and schools might help address this issue.

²³ These young people were referred or re-referred to NETS

²⁴ Denny, S., Clark, T., Fleming, T., and Wall, M., 2004

Young migrants

Informants noted that young people in New Zealand without any legal status might not enrol in school and could potentially be out of systems for many years. As non-residents these young people are not counted in 'true' NETS or exempted figures. It has been reported elsewhere that Counties Manukau has high rates of persons without current residency status. Without residency, young people are not entitled to free New Zealand schooling or health care. Some of these young immigrants may later become permanent New Zealand residents.

Anecdotal reports suggest there may be a significant number of young people who are not residents and are not enrolled in school. Systematic data about this issue was not gained as part of this report and is a limitation of the report. Future planning exercises may be required to scope the needs of young people who do not have New Zealand residency status.

Key point:

There may be a significant number of young people who are not New Zealand residents and are not enrolled in school. Future planning exercises may be required to scope the needs of young people who do not have New Zealand residency status.

The following examples of young people in Counties Manukau were given during consultation:

- a Pacific Island young person who had enrolled at Primary School but had not enrolled later in Intermediate or High School, as her birth certificate was requested
- a young person who had been in New Zealand (perhaps illegally) for several years without attending school, before presenting to enrol in Intermediate
- a young person who had recently migrated and enrolled in High School without being a New Zealand resident; the school maintained her enrolment even though they were not funded for her.

Several cases were described of young people in the greater Auckland region, who had come to New Zealand to care for others or for treatment of their own illness. These individuals were not eligible for schooling in New Zealand and yet have stayed in New Zealand for over one year and may seek permanent residency. All of the examples given were of young people from parts of the Pacific or Melanesia.

Young people who are transient or migrate within New Zealand

It is difficult to follow up young people who change schools and districts regularly.²⁵ Examples were given of young people who were out of systems but were difficult to follow up because they regularly moved between different family members or because their family frequently relocated. Informants often found the transfer of cases between district offices to be inefficient. It was recognised that personal relationships with young people or families out of systems are important and hence that it may be more effective for someone who knows the young person to continue working with them, even after they have moved away, rather than always referring their case onto others. It was suggested that working more closely with Work and Income New Zealand might assist in locating young people who were often transient.

²⁵ Education Review Office 2004

Findings

Section 3: Health issues for young people out of systems

Health issues for young people out of systems

Thirty-three young people out of systems were described in some depth by informants. These were young people known to one or more of the police, Child Youth and Family, education, community organisations or health providers.

The group included 19 girls and 14 boys aged between 12-16 years, who had left education at 10 years old (1 person), 12 years old (9 persons), 13 years old (10 persons), 14 years old (12 persons) and 15 years old (5 persons).

Some of the health issues for these young people and examples of their stories are outlined below. This is not a large or random sample and so can only be used as indicative of possible patterns. However, informants suggested that these patterns were not unusual for young people out of systems.

In this small group, the following health issues were described:

- 20 out of the 33 young people (60%) were described as having major care and protection issues such as current abuse or neglect
- 18 (55%) were known to have significant problem use of alcohol and other drugs
- 10 (30%) were known to have been involved in violent crime or property offences
- 8 (24%) were identified as being involved with fighting
- 4 out of the 19 girls (21% of females) were sex working
- 3 out of the 19 girls (15% of females) were known to be pregnant
- 8 (24%) were identified as having other sexual health issues
- 6 (18%) had a serious physical illness such as chronic lung disease
- 5 (15%) were identified as suffering from mental ill health
- 5 (15%) were identified as frequently caring for others such as elderly family members, physically or mentally ill parents and/or younger children

These findings suggest that young people out of systems are a high health needs group. This data and the sample scenarios given suggest that their health needs are comparable to groups of young people such as those in Alternative Education or Youth Justice settings.^{26 27}

²⁶ Fleming, Kainuku-Walsh Denny & Watson, 2004

²⁷ O'Brien 2006, Korowai Manaaki Health Report

Sample scenarios of young people out of systems²⁸

Tim is a 14 year old young man with a minor physical disability, who was 'permanently suspended' due to using drugs at school. His mother died in an accident not long after. There appeared to be no action to return Tim to education. Tim identifies as Maori, he is not sure of his iwi connections.

Peter is 14, his mother is Cook Island and his father is Tongan. He has refused to go to school this year. He has been hanging out with his older brothers and mates and with them has begun to use marijuana most days and to be involved with property crime. His parents want things to change for him but say he is a 'follower' who will do what those around him are doing. Peter says he's bored. He is a regular churchgoer, he is also known to police.

Waka is 13 and says he was suspended from school after being in a fight and told not to come back. This was over 6 months ago. He is bored and just hanging out at home most of the time.

I was told about several young people in situations like Tim, Peter or Waka.

Susan is a 14 year old Pakeha young woman who hasn't been to school this year. Susan was drinking and partying regularly and is known to the police. Susan is now pregnant; she doesn't seem to have plans or things to do at this stage.

Shan is a 15 year old Chinese young woman with a painful and disfiguring chronic illness. She was out of school for 6 months, apparently with her family's consent. Her school did not know where she was; when located the family said they were leaving New Zealand soon, but the informant believed this had not occurred.

Morgan is a 14 year old Maori young woman who moved to Auckland 18 months ago and attended schooling for only a few days since. Morgan was assaulted recently and hence was seen by health providers. She is said to be sex working and has had Child Youth and Family Service involvement. Her family is said to be using and selling drugs and to be gang affiliated.

Maddie is a 12 year old girl whose mother has a major mental illness. Maddie is apparently caring for younger siblings. She had never been to Intermediate School but was briefly enrolled with Correspondence School before she moved out of the area. Maddie's current whereabouts are not known to health or education services.

I was told about several young women in situations similar to Susan's and a few young people in situations like Morgan's or Maddie's. I was not told about any other young people in situations similar to Shan's.

²⁸ Potentially identifiable details such as names are changed.

Findings

Section 4: Possible approaches to support the health of young people who are not in systems

Possible approaches to support the health of young people who are not in systems

This project was not designed to advocate particular approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people out of systems. However, suggestions and ideas for interventions did come up in consultations and in reviewing literature for this project, and these are recorded here.

Common themes of approaches suggested:

- It is essential that approaches work effectively with Maori and/or Pacifica young people, their families and communities
- Approaches must include the families/whanau and individual young people
- Approaches need to include active outreach rather than expecting young people and families to come to them
- Approaches should include re-engaging young people with education in some form, as this is so critical to young people's wellbeing
- Approaches must work alongside or support existing services that are engaged with young people. It was noted that health services are likely to be part, but not all, of the solution for young people out of systems.
- Approaches should fit in with other intersectorial youth initiatives, such as those in the Counties Manukau Youth Health plan or in the 'Improving Outcomes for Young People in Counties Manukau'²⁹ plan.

Types of approaches suggested or raised:

1. Approaches that strengthen families

Approaches that strengthen families may be expected to reduce the number of young people out of systems; for example, approaches that:

- increase parental time with children and young people
- reduce neglect
- support family engagement in communities
- support healthy parenting
- allow families to gain support with, or information about, dealing with their teenage children without shame.

It was noted that some families appear to be working very hard to support young people and yet struggling to find effective ways to parent. It was suggested that they may benefit from 'hands on' appropriate advice or support, e.g. provided through churches, hapu, strengthening families meetings, community liaison staff or other options.

2. Approaches that strengthen student engagement in schools

Various methods were also suggested of working to strengthen student engagement in schools. For example:

- ensuring culturally inclusive environments
- ensuring relevant curriculum and environments for diverse learning styles and needs
- promoting environments where participation and belonging is increased.³⁰

Approaches that might strengthen student engagement also include mentoring, peer support, community or cultural liaison, Maori specific environments or/and improved support of Maori students.

A more health-specific intervention might be to support intersectorial teams in all schools to strengthen student achievement and address health and wellbeing issues. It was suggested that such teams should include health and community support and include regular pastoral care and communication meetings. Teams could be based on successful AimHi models.

²⁹ Auckland Youth Support Network, 2006

³⁰ O'Neill, 2004

3. Approaches that reduce risk factors associated with disengagement

Other approaches that might help prevent young people from disengaging from systems are those targeting specific risk factors for disengagement from school. For example:

- bullying prevention
- increased special education or other targeted support for students with learning needs or challenges with schooling at an early stage
- universal health screening and follow up for identified issues; i.e. an opportunity for all school students to be seen by health professionals and have any outstanding health issues addressed. An example of this is Year 9 assessments carried out in some high schools.

4. Approaches that target young people who are becoming disengaged

Approaches that target young people who are becoming disengaged from school were identified as possible opportunities for intervention. Most providers thought that young people who would eventually be 'out of systems' were identifiable early in their schooling years. Interventions could come earlier or later in this process of being 'at risk' of disengagement. Such approaches might include:

- **Support with transition to intermediate or high school** for students who have difficulty with basic skills and may lack family support.
- **Social workers in schools** who have the skills and time to work with students and families where students are frequently truant or not well engaged with school. This was given as an example of an effective, 'tried and true' approach to reducing school disengagement.
- **Truancy services** that are more highly resourced than current services and are able to follow up individuals and families before patterns of absence become established.
- **Community wide truancy focussed initiatives** for example programmes where young people of school age are not served in local shops during school time without a school pass or guardian present.
- **Church ministers or youth workers** may be able to work with young people who are becoming disengaged with school, as many of these young people continue to be involved in churches.
- **Pre-exclusion health assessments.** Young people who are referred to Family Group Conferences (FGC's) for offending who are considered likely to re-offend are offered free (voluntary) health and education assessments prior to the FGC. The information from these assessments is presented to the family and others at the FGC to help them make plans which will address the young person's needs and reduce the risk that the young person will re-offend. Making an expert health assessment available when a young person was at risk of being stood down or excluded from school might help in addressing problems and keeping them in education.
- **Pre-exclusion intensive wrap-around support.** For example, the Howpak wrap-around programme takes young people who are becoming disengaged from education out of mainstream schooling for an intensive programme for one term and then re-integrates them into school. This was described as a successful model that has been evaluated.³¹

5. Approaches that improve intersectorial collaboration

Many young people who are out of school are known to health or community organisations, police or Child Youth and Family. Often these providers were not sure whether some of the young people they were concerned about were frequently absent, suspended or not actually enrolled in education. An approach that encouraged providers (including police, alcohol and drug workers, crisis teams and other mental health staff and other health and community

³¹ Chile, 2005.

providers) to establish whether young clients were enrolled in school and to inform appropriate services, may help reduce the number of young people who are out of systems.

Specific community workers identified that they would like to know whom to contact about young people who they believe are out of systems.

At times schools appear to have been informed that students are overseas when this is not in fact the case. Systems which help ensure that accurate information is available to schools would help to address this issue.

At times students appear to have become lost from systems because they had moved away from current providers. It was suggested that WINZ might be able to update other sectors when they lost contact with young people about whom they were concerned.

6. Approaches that target young people who are disengaged.

- Youth development model suggested by the young people involved with the Absolute Rush performing arts programme

The Absolute Rush performing arts programme Music and Arts group includes young people from Otara and other parts of Counties Manukau. They are aged between 12 and 18 years, including some who have been out of school. In an in-depth discussion, these young people offered the following suggestions, which could be described as a youth development model which would proactively engage with and support young people, via activities in which they were interested. This would involve:

- **Caring adults** who get to know the young people, are consistent over time and care about the young people like parents would. This should be team of adults rather than one-to-one support, which raises large challenges when one of the parties leaves. Preferably adults should be able to bring in the young people's parents sometimes (but not all the time); for example, for performances or to help young people cook food and to eat together.
- **Activities:** the approach should be built around things that the young people are into, such as music, arts, boxing or drama. It was suggested that staff would need to work closely with each individual, getting to know them and working with their interests to get them involved, give them something to do, have some fun, help them develop skills and motivate them to make healthy decisions. There should be staff who have skills or interests in the areas young people want to learn about. There could sometimes be workshops and information about health issues to help the young people.
- **Ways to contribute or belong:** rather than just being recipients, or people who are helped, the young people described wanting to have opportunities to contribute, to lead, to grow skills and to demonstrate talents.
- **Safe places to go**, such as a youth refuge, and places in the young people's areas where they could do these activities; preferably via an outreach van or bus that goes where the young people are, so they get to see the programme and people.

- **Activity based interventions.** Other suggestions for young people already out of systems included more general activity-based programmes. These would not necessarily be provided by health teams, but might include sports teams or events and cultural, music or arts programmes that engage young people both in and out of systems.

- **Combined youth activities and home education approach.** One informant suggested developing a programme where young people out of systems would come into an engaging, activity-based youth programme on certain days of the week and do school work at home with their parents on other days. A key focus of this suggestion was having a mechanism that got parents involved with their children and their learning.

- Approaches that are in concert with, or are combined with, new **youth gangs initiatives**,³² or actions under the '**Improving Outcomes for Young People in Counties Manukau Plan of Action 2006**'³³ were suggested.

- **Intersectorial outreach teams** with integrated case management models. These teams would need to have strong skills in engaging with young people and families, to be able to be available when needed and to be responsive to families and communities. Such a team could play a lead role in working with young people. It might include support from community organisations, education and or transition teams, police, and health.

- **A health support team:** a team which provides health support and/or advice and can be easily accessed by agencies that encounter most 'high risk' or disengaged young people, such as Maori Wardens, police, NETS and WINZ.

Similar concepts were a health support team which specifically works in partnership with **Youth Transition programmes** (transition programmes often work with young people who have left school at or before the legal school leaving age), and/or a health support team that specifically works with **NETS** to support the successful re-enrolment of young people in education.

Finally, the concept of an **intersectorial advisory group** where concerning young people and issues can be discussed and solutions to individual and community challenges can be developed has been raised. The models of Local Prioritization Groups (part of the High and Complex Needs Unit processes) and Youth Offending Teams or intersectional case review meetings were given, as being effective in progressing intersectional responsiveness in some communities.

³² Ministry of Social Development, 2006

³³ Auckland Youth Support Network, 2006

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