EDUCATION REVIEW OFFICE
TE TARI AROTAKE MATAURANGA

Evaluation of
Teen Parent Units

October 2014

Contents

Overview

This evaluation reports on the quality of education in 21 Teen Parent Units (TPUs) reviewed in Term 3, 2013. The review focused on student induction; planning for individual students; teaching and learning; transition into further education or employment; and partnerships that supported the positive development of students' educational, social, health and wellbeing outcomes.

Breakdown of the overall effectiveness of the TPUs

Innovative and cohesive	Mostly effective	Less engaging teaching and learning	Poorly performing
5	10	3	3

Most of the TPUs were operating well. Fifteen of the 21 units displayed effective teaching and had good processes for student induction, partnerships with other agencies and student exit transitions. Anecdotal evidence also showed that these TPUs helped improve the social, health, academic and vocational outcomes of individual students – especially those who stayed for more than 12 months.

Five of these 15 TPUs were identified as especially 'innovative and cohesive'. They performed well across the range of indicators examined in this evaluation. These units used a variety of teaching approaches that enabled students to work together in groups and to learn through contexts that were highly interesting and useful for a new parent.

The 10 TPUs identified as being 'mostly effective' typically had a few moderate to significant areas where they needed to improve. Most needed to improve their self review, the overall quality of their curriculum and their focus on student careers and destinations.

Three TPUs were found to have 'less engaging teaching and learning'. The quality of leadership was a key factor in the under-performance of these TPUs. Students had more limited options as most learning was provided through distance learning materials from Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School (Te Kura), despite having qualified teachers. Students would benefit from experiencing the variety of teaching approaches observed in the 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs.

ERO found that the remaining three TPUs were 'poorly performing'. ERO has identified significant concerns at two of these units in previous reviews. ERO has also identified quality concerns at each of the host schools of these TPUs. Many of the important relationships at these TPUs, both within the unit and with external partners, were not strong. Teaching and learning was especially reliant on off-site learning programmes (such as Te Kura courses). Leadership was poor, as were induction processes, planning, and student transitions into further study and work.

Development areas

This report identifies development areas for all TPUs. These include the need to ensure their curricula actively support the strengths, needs, interests and aspirations of

students. It is also important that all TPUs understand and respond to the reasons some students enrol and subsequently fail to engage with TPU education. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the introduction of the Young Parent Payment has seen higher numbers of students enrol, but not all subsequently engage. More information is needed about the impact of welfare reforms and how TPUs generally support all students to effectively engage.

This report also identifies the following development areas for the Ministry of Education (the Ministry):

- In most TPUs, ERO found disparities in the number of leavers recorded by the individual unit and the numbers collated by the Ministry. Inconsistencies in collated information about achievement and engagement make it difficult for the Ministry or ERO to analyse and compare the academic achievement of TPUs.
- ERO identified attendance and retention as an issue across the TPUs. A centralised process and/or common data protocols for student attendance, retention and destinations at TPUs would help identify significant national patterns.
- The Ministry has begun developing guidelines for TPUs. This work would benefit from cross-agency collaboration on a strategy that responds to teen pregnancy. In particular, an overarching policy could help clarify how agencies and TPUs should support the student and their whānau through programmes such as parenting, health education and budgeting. Comprehensive policy guidelines would also help those establishing new TPUs.

ERO identified the need to update the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in two previous reports. The continuing lack of an up-to-date MoU and guidelines is likely to have contributed to confusion about roles and responsibilities. ERO found instances where TPUs and host schools were not managing their respective roles well. Since this review, up-to-date MoUs have been completed and signed by the Ministry.

Anecdotal evidence from this review indicates that effective TPUs, in partnership with health and social agencies, already help improve the social, health and wellbeing outcomes of many students and their children. However, there is a lack of data to clearly show wellbeing improvements while enrolled in a TPU. When developing policy and guidelines for TPUs, a cross-agency group should also consider a more focused approach on student wellbeing. Such an approach could provide a basis for the Ministry, other government agencies, host schools and the units to analyse TPU effectiveness and systematically identify ways they can further improve the wellbeing of the students and their children.

Next steps

ERO recommends that the Ministries of Education, Social Development and Health work together:

- With other government agencies and community representatives to develop a national strategy on teen pregnancy. The strategy would include a focus on improving the education, wellbeing and health of all teen parents and their children.

- To develop cross-agency individual plans for Teen Parent Unit (TPU) students and their children, drawing on personnel from the unit as well as from community health providers and the Youth Service (Work and Income New Zealand).

- To develop a set of data collection tools so TPUs, their host schools and government agencies can effectively monitor the educational, destination, health, social and wellbeing outcomes of all students and their children.

- To investigate the impact of the new Youth Welfare Reform policy on TPUs, their students and their children. This investigation should include a focus on students' participation, engagement, achievement, wellbeing and their progress to further training, employment and improved life outcomes.

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education:

- Works with the host schools of the six lowest performing TPUs to address the issues identified by ERO.

- Completes guidelines that set out the key principles of effective TPU practice. These guidelines should include good practice in: how host schools, their boards of trustees and TPUs can work together; strategies that monitor and improve student engagement, achievement and wellbeing; the development of student individual education plans; and approaches that support student career planning, exit transitions and improved life outcomes.

ERO recommends that all TPUs:

- Use the findings, indicators and conclusion of this report to inform their own inquiry and improvement programme.

- Ensure that their curriculum offers students a broad range of courses, activities and opportunities in line with *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Key priorities include developing engaging activities that reflect students' strengths, interests and needs; careers and vocational opportunities; and education relevant to student health and wellbeing.

- Continue to investigate and respond to the issues affecting student engagement in TPUs, in particular, student attendance and students who initially enrol but do not go on to regularly attend and succeed.

Introduction

Teen parents in New Zealand

New Zealand has a high proportion of teen parents compared to other countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[1] Young parents are a diverse student group who face challenges additional to those experienced by other young people in secondary education. The most obvious challenges are those associated with pregnancy and parenting, including having dedicated time for pregnancy, birthing, the care of infants and costs associated with family living. High proportions of teen parents come from at-risk backgrounds and experience ongoing challenges connected to family violence, drugs, alcohol and poverty.

There has been an overall decline in the proportion of teenagers giving birth in New Zealand including Māori, but the number of Māori young mothers is still high. The Ministry of Social Development reported that in 2009, across all ethnic groups, there were 29.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19, a decline from 33.1 per 1,000 in 2008. For Māori women aged 15-19, the number of births was 71.6 per 1,000 in 2009, down from 80.7 per 1,000 in 2008.[2]

The options for young parents to continue their secondary education include mainstream schooling, alternative education, Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School or enrolling in a Teen Parent Unit (TPU). The education that young parents receive in a TPU is the focus of this report.

Teen Parent Units in the New Zealand education context

The first Teen Parent Unit (TPU) was established in Porirua in 1994 and was initially funded by the Ministry of Justice. Since then, the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) has developed policies on establishing, managing and resourcing these establishments and now funds 22 education facilities around New Zealand for pregnant and parenting young people.

The establishment of a TPU is driven by the interest of a potential host school and is subject to an intended unit having:

- links with an early childhood service
- a space available to accommodate a TPU
- a sustainable roll of teen parents.[3]

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[1] Young parents are described as those under the age of 20 as per The Families Commission (2011) *Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting in New Zealand*

[2] Ministry of Social Development (2010) *The Social Report* as downloaded from http://socialreport.msd.govt.nz/. More recent information from the Ministry of Social Development shows that, in 2013, there were 22 live births for all 1,000 females aged 15-19.

[3] More information on the Teen Parent Unit Policy is available from the Ministry's website http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/PolicyAndStrategy/SchoolingInNewZealand/TeenParentUnitsPolicy.aspx

TPUs function as part of a 'host school'. The host school signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry confirming its responsibilities. TPUs are managed by a teacher-in-charge who reports to the host school's principal and board of trustees, often with the support of a management committee. Partnerships for learning have become a strong aspect of TPUs and are intended to provide for students' learning and pastoral care needs. It is common for TPU staff to have relationships with social workers, school guidance counsellors, public health nurses, early childhood professionals, advocates, budgeting and careers advisers.

Previous ERO reports on Teen Parent Units – 2007 and 2011

ERO completed national evaluations on the effectiveness of TPUs in 2007 and 2011. In 2007, ERO reported that the majority were successful at assisting many teen parents to stay in education. Good relationships were identified as a key strength in most units. Some TPUs needed to address issues in how they collected and reviewed achievement information. ERO also found that there was "confusion between schools and providers about roles and responsibilities that stemmed from a lack of clarity in their MoUs with the Ministry of Education."[4]

In 2011, ERO identified that TPUs were again mostly doing well. Staff had high expectations for students. Most students valued their time there and were progressing towards their goals. Some units and host schools were still struggling with their roles and responsibilities. ERO identified that there was also an ongoing need for TPUs to have support in developing their self review, although a professional development project at the time was helping staff analyse academic achievement data.

Teen Parent Unit developments since March 2011

Since ERO's March 2011 report, four more TPUs have opened. There are now 22 units across the country, including one in Levin that did not have students at the time of this review.[5]

In 2012, the Government introduced the Young Parent Payment (YPP). Along with other conditions, young people aged 16 to 18 in receipt of the YPP must be undertaking or available for full-time education or training leading towards NCEA Level 2. They are expected to attend full-time education or training from the time their child turns one, or from six months of age if places are available at a TPU and associated early childhood service.[6]

At the time of this review, the Ministry was updating the base MoU document for all TPUs and host schools. Since 2008, the Ministry has also intended to develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for TPU operations. These guidelines have yet to be published[7] but are intended to identify effective management and governance

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[4] ERO (2007) *Teen Parent Units: An Evaluation* page 11
[5] A full list of those reviewed is included in Appendix 2 of this report
[6] An outline of the Young Parent Payment Policy can be found at the following website: http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/a-z-benefits/young-parent-payment.html
[7] The Ministry's website suggests that there have been plans to develop a comprehensive set of Guidelines for TPUs since 2008. http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/PolicyAndStrategy/SchoolingInNewZealand/TeenParentUnitsFAQ.aspx

practices as well as strategies to raise student achievement. One of the difficulties facing the Ministry in developing comprehensive policy guidelines for TPUs is the lack of an overall government policy or strategy in relation to teenage pregnancy. ERO discussed this issue with staff from the Ministries of Education, Social Development and Health, who agreed that a national policy framework that helps structure New Zealand's approach to teenage pregnancy could be useful. The strategy could potentially address:

- pregnancy prevention
- sexual and reproductive health
- sexuality education
- parenting education and support
- educational and career pathways
- the health and wellbeing of teenage parents and their children.

The lack of a national policy and strategy for teenage pregnancy is addressed in the recommendations of this report. This strategy could also respond to recommendations made by the Families Commission at the end of 2011.[8] The Commission noted that a "sharper focus" could be taken on:

- relationship education and ongoing contraceptive advice for two years after the birth
- support for transitions to education, training or sustainable employment
- access to coordinated social services that respond to students' complex needs
- connected local networks focused on teenage pregnancy and parenthood that can be replicated throughout New Zealand
- valuing and understanding cultural needs of Māori teenage parents
- inclusive and responsive services aimed at the needs of teenage fathers.

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[8] The Families Commission (2011) *Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting in New Zealand* page 23.

Methodology

This review was carried out during Term 3, 2013. ERO reviewers visited each Teen Parent Unit (TPU) and observed programmes, spoke with students, teachers, school leaders and board trustees, and reviewed student and TPU plans and records.

Evaluation questions

The specific evaluation questions were:

1. How effective are TPUs in promoting and supporting positive outcomes for students?

2. How well do processes for induction, individual planning and support, and transition promote student engagement and success at TPUs?

3. What is the quality of teaching and learning at the TPUs?

4. How well do TPUs work within their educational and community context to promote student outcomes?

5. How effective is the leadership, management and organisation of the TPUs?

The evaluative framework was supported by specific indicators of effective practice at TPUs.[9] These indicators were used in combination with ERO's Education Indicators for School Reviews.

Data collection and analysis

A synthesis sheet was used to record the data and identify key findings from each TPU review. This information was also used to prepare an individual report for each unit.[10] Following the final visit to a TPU, the review team came together to discuss and analyse the overall findings. This meeting was used to help with moderation of ERO's findings across the country and to assist in the preparation of this national report.

Some of the recommendations of this report were developed with joint input from the Ministries of Education, Social Development and Health. The involvement of these agencies reflected the willingness for cross-agency work to improve the planning, monitoring and support for TPUs.

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[9] See Appendix 1: Teen Parent Units: indicator framework for 2013 reviews

[10] These individual reports can be found on ERO's website by searching the name of the TPU.

Findings

Breakdown of the overall effectiveness of the TPUs

Innovative and Cohesive	Mostly effective	Less engaging teaching and learning	Poorly performing
5	10	3	3

Most of New Zealand's Teen Parent Units (TPUs) are performing well. Fifteen of the 21 units in this evaluation demonstrated practices that led to better educational, social and health outcomes for students. Many of the students at these TPUs had previously struggled in mainstream education, and following the birth of their children, would have been unlikely to return to normal secondary schooling.

Five of these 15 TPUs were particularly 'innovative and cohesive' in their approach. These TPUs had coordinated systems, teaching and support. They responded well to student needs and aspirations. The 10 TPUs that were 'mostly effective' had similar qualities to the 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs, although they also had a variety of moderate areas where they could improve.

Six TPUs were not performing well. Three of these had 'less engaging teaching and learning' programmes. Some of the students at the less engaging TPUs improved their education, health and social outcomes, although ERO also identified significant development issues at these units. The final three TPUs were 'poorly performing'. These had several significant areas that affected their performance. High numbers of students at the 'poorly performing' units had not significantly improved their educational, social and health outcomes.

Common features found across the Teen Parent Units

In most of the Teen Parent Units (TPUs) in this evaluation, ERO found examples of students who had transformed from being relatively unsuccessful students to having good or very good school-leaving qualifications. In all but the three 'poorly performing' units, ERO found good relationships between staff and students. In most cases, TPUs worked well with their host schools and had very good partnerships with health and social agencies.

> *One student told ERO how she had become pregnant at 15 and had hidden her condition from her parents right up until she was going into labour. She started at the TPU a few weeks after the birth of her child. Her regular routine involves walking to the station each morning with her child and catching a train just before 6.30am. They then catch a bus and walk to the TPU. At the end of the day this journey is reversed to get back home. The staff report that she is never late or absent and is seen as a student leader at the unit. At the time of the review the student was on track to complete NCEA Level 3 in 2013 and begin a tertiary training course in 2014.*

ERO identified some common concerns across the TPUs. Attendance is an issue in even the most successful unit. High numbers of students had difficulties engaging and left their TPU within 12 months. Often students were enrolled for less than three

months. Although some TPUs track student destinations, more needs to be done to identify why there are so many students who drop out early.

ERO also found curriculum delivery was a challenge for TPUs. The small numbers of staff and the diverse needs of students make it difficult to deliver *The New Zealand Curriculum* and provide a suitable range of options for students. Some modes of curriculum delivery were also not engaging for some students. For example, while courses through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School provided individual programmes for students learning from distance materials, this approach was less useful for those students who had not been successful in mainstream settings. This was especially the case when learning by correspondence made up a significant portion of their day. The best TPU used a variety of teaching approaches that enabled students to work together in groups and to learn in contexts that were highly interesting and useful for a new parent.

Much of the teaching in TPUs was also strongly linked to NCEA assessment. Students experienced a more limited range of learning activities than could be expected in *The New Zealand Curriculum*. In particular, many TPU students did not regularly experience high quality, authentic and meaningful learning activities. Nevertheless, these assessment-led programmes were aligned to the pathways of TPU students and did help them gain NCEA credits.

At the time of ERO's review there were no up-to-date Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or guidelines from the Ministry of Education that clearly outlined roles and responsibilities of TPUs and host schools[11]. Despite this, the roles and responsibilities were mostly understood and constructive working relationships were evident. In a minority of cases, the lack of an up-to-date MoU compounded the relationship difficulties that existed between host schools and their TPU.

Most Teen Parent Units were performing well

Fifteen of the 21 Teen Parent Units (TPUs) in this evaluation were performing well. Five of the 21 were 'innovative and cohesive' units that promoted student achievement and wellbeing effectively. The leadership of these units was strong and contributed to positive learning cultures. Many students benefitted from their time at these TPUs. Those who stayed for more than two years showed evidence of having improved their academic, social and health outcomes. Most of these students also went on to tertiary education and employment.

Another 10 TPUs were identified as 'mostly effective'. While these TPUs had similar outcomes for students as the 'innovative and cohesive' units and very good practice in some areas, they also had one or more areas where they could improve. Particular areas for improvement were self review, the overall quality of their curriculum, and their focus on student careers and destinations.

The characteristics of 'innovative and cohesive' and 'mostly effective' TPUs are discussed together in this section. The specific features of these 15 units are set out in the following sections:

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[11] The Ministry of Education advises that the MoUs were all updated in Term 4, 2013.

- Student outcomes
- Culture, leadership and relationships
- Induction processes and planning
- Teaching, pathways and curriculum
- Partnerships and wrap-around supports
- Exit transitions
- Inquiry and improvement.

Student outcomes

Students at the 15 effective TPUs made considerable academic and social gains. Based on the information available, most students who attended an effective TPU for 12 months or more gained an NCEA qualification. Many students who stayed for more than two years at an effective TPU went on to achieve NCEA Level 2 and/or Level 3.

> *At 16 I left school, was never going back. I fell pregnant and found this place. I had no NCEA at all. Being here for two years I have gained my NCEA Level 1 and 2 and am working on my Level 3. I also got my [driver's] licence here too.*
> Student at one of the five 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs

It was not clear what overall health gains students made during their time at the TPU. However, many students benefitted from having easy access to a range of health professionals, including doctors, nurses and Plunket. Individual students could also attest to gains in their health and wellbeing – even if these were not systematically noted by the TPUs.

The five 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs also had evidence that their students were going on to positive destinations. Again, this was especially the case for those students who stayed longer than 12 months. For example, at one unit, six of the eight leavers from 2012 (all of whom had stayed for more than 12 months) went on to tertiary education courses. One was in employment, while another was full-time parenting.

Another of these TPUs had an excellent breakdown of its destination data. These data identified that of the 12 leavers who had stayed for more than 12 months, eight left to tertiary education, two were in employment, one was overseas and another was full-time parenting. None of the 23 students who stayed for less than 12 months at this TPU had gone on to tertiary education.

Culture, leadership and relationships

The culture of the 15 most effective TPUs was orientated towards values of respect, care and acceptance. Leaders, teachers and students interacted positively, in an adult-to-adult way that was caring and mutually trusting. The relationships between staff and students were typically focused on students' learning and future pathways. There were high expectations for students. The culture evident in these units was captured below by one student:

If it wasn't for [the TPU] I wouldn't have gotten a job from doing work experience. [The TPU] has really made me look at things in a whole different light. I came here with no credits or confidence, now I'm on [NCEA] Level 3, have a part-time job, also have my own house, sorting out money issues all while getting an education to follow my career path.

Leaders and staff emphasised the importance of responding to the range of student academic, social, health and wellbeing needs. This was often articulated as taking a holistic approach to learning. For example, one of the most successful TPUs used Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model to guide their approach.[12] The strong relationships staff had with students made these units a safe place for students to find support and solve problems associated with living independently as a teenage parent.

The strong focus on supportive relationships worked well for all students. Some staff had taken part in professional learning and development (PLD) specifically focused on building relationships with Māori learners and whānau. In these TPUs, te reo Māori was often used in the classroom and pōwhiri were held when welcoming new students. One TPU had the host school's head of department in Māori studies visit the unit once a week to teach and support students. Another unit developed their te reo and tikanga Māori through connections to a local wānanga. This TPU had also focused on Māori success and had encouraged Māori students to explore aspects of their language, culture and identity across the curriculum. One student at this TPU had developed a speech for NCEA Level 3 English focusing on the negative attitudes that existed towards Māori youth, especially those who were teen parents.

Despite the good relationships TPU leaders had with Māori and Pacific students, and the examples of good practice, it was evident that most units could further develop their responsiveness for Māori and Pacific students. Some teachers were developing their knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori, including through the completion of formal courses. Māori and Pacific students also needed more opportunities to draw on their interests, strengths and aspirations across the curriculum. Given the high staff to student ratio, many Māori and Pacific students could benefit from working closely with staff to design learning activities that respond to students' interests and culture.

The strong focus on relationships and support at the effective TPUs was linked to stable, strategic and knowledgeable leadership and staffing. In many cases, staff members and leaders were long-term employees and had developed considerable expertise in a TPU context. They set clear strategic goals that focused on improving the unit's performance.

Most of the 15 effective TPUs also had good working relationships with their host school. Host schools saw the TPU as part of their responsibility, while also recognising that the TPU students had different needs from mainstream learners. Host schools understood the nature and importance of teen parent education. High levels of communication and collaboration between the unit and host school meant that they worked as a team to support TPU students. For example, host schools ensured that TPU students could access resources such as the careers adviser, the school nurse and guidance counsellor.

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[12] For more information on Te Whare Tapa Whā see ERO (2013) *Wellbeing for Success: Draft Evaluation Indicators for Student Wellbeing* page 25.

Two of the 15 TPUs faced some difficulties associated with the relationships they had with their host schools. One host school's principal believed that celebrating the successes of the young women at the TPU could be misinterpreted as condoning their circumstances. The principal made very few visits to the TPU, had little engagement with its manager and encouraged little inclusion of the TPU and its students in the host school. At another TPU, while the school's leaders worked well with the unit staff, the TPU students reported that the host school students were not so welcoming.

Induction processes and planning

Induction activities were well planned, focused, deliberate, responsive and flexible to the needs of new students. Students were warmly welcomed and, over the course of their induction, introduced to the TPU and early childhood service staff along with other students. Often a tuakana-teina[13] model was used to support students as they settled into the TPU, particularly if students preferred small group introductions.

In the most effective inductions, TPU staff gave priority to settling a new student's children into the early childhood service. One unit, for example, allowed as much time as needed for young mothers to settle their children into the service before they began their learning programme at the TPU. Other units had a focus on building trusting, open relationships with early childhood service teachers.

Comprehensive interviews were held with the young parents to identify their strengths, interests, aspirations and future pathways. These interviews valued the previous experiences, knowledge and skills of young parents and helped to build trusting and mutually respectful relationships with the teachers. New students were introduced to health, social and education services run on site or locally.

A range of formal and informal diagnostic tools was implemented during the induction process. This included nurses carrying out a HEEADDSS[14] assessment. The five 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs focused on identifying each student's strengths, interests, aspirations and needs. One unit had developed a tool simply titled, 'Teen Parent Learner Aspirations and Child'. Prompts based around the following questions were used:

- What do I already know about the learner?
- What do I need to know about the learner?
- What and who do I need to support the learner?
- How will I know that it is working for the learner?
- What are the next steps for the learner?

This type of knowledge about the student formed the basis for individual education plans (IEPs).[15] The learning plans were explicitly linked to future pathways,

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[13] Tuakana-teina provides a model for buddy systems. An older or more expert tuakana (brother, sister or cousin) helps and guides a younger or less expert teina (originally a younger sibling or cousin of the same gender).

[14] HEEADDSS is an acronym for Home, Education/Employment, Eating, Activities, Drugs and Alcohol, Sexuality, Suicide and Depression, Safety. More information is available at www.werrycentre.org.nz

[15] Individual Learning Plans are also known as Individual Education Plans in some contexts.

especially at the 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs. Some young parents reported that this was their first positive educational experience. At some of the 'mostly effective' TPUs there was slightly less focus on students' careers and destinations.

The following example describes how one young woman had enrolled at the TPU after having disengaged from formal education.

> *A student had only been at the TPU for a few weeks when ERO visited. She found out about the TPU via a Facebook friend who was already attending. She had left school some months into her pregnancy but had not received any information from any agency, including her high school, about the TPU service. She had been at home, very bored, for nearly two years. She feels already very much a part of the culture and focus of the TPU. Her individual education plan goals are referred to regularly. She has a clear direction and has already accumulated a number of NCEA credits at merit level. She told ERO that she loves the learning focus of the TPU, the fact that all the other students are mothers too, and that teachers are supportive and available.*

Some of the units had also introduced a learning journal that students began at their induction into the unit. This was seen as a living document, reflecting changes and, as they arose, new directions in student pathways. These journals included plans, goals, attendance data and strategies for critical thinking and inquiry learning. Individually, these documents provided a broad-ranging insight into a student's time at the unit. Because these journals tended to show the journey of each student through the TPU experience, the contents of these journals could be better used to inform self review.

Effective induction to the unit processes had immediate benefits for the young women. These benefits included the development of relationships and partnerships within the TPU and externally with health providers and social services, thus attempting to address factors that impeded student learning. One unit had documented a clear and concise referral process for pastoral care and sensitive issues. It involved extensive support networks and partnerships with mental health services, parenting support, youth services, specialist counselling, housing support, relationships services and health services.

Teaching, pathways and curriculum

Good relationships with students at these units helped staff provide a supportive and focused learning environment. Staff created IEPs for students, which provided a basis for their learning programme. In some cases students used this IEP to help monitor their own progress.

The 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs used a variety of teaching approaches. These included individual and group teaching, courses or tutorials by teachers from the host school, STAR[16] courses, and distance learning options – most often from Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School . Staff taught or supported a range of curriculum opportunities for students. Core subjects were often taught by TPU staff, including mathematics, English and science. Some staff also taught social studies,

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[16] Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource courses. For more information about STAR courses see www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/Initiatives/STAR.aspx

geography and physical education. Students also took part in other programmes such as parenting courses, home economics, early childhood education training and life skills. At one of the TPUs, students took part in the BP challenge.[17]

Overall, student pathways were a strong focus at these TPUs. This typically started during a student's induction, and was maintained through tutor groups, student reports and IEPs. At one unit, a focus on careers included an interview with the careers adviser, an exploration of the *Career Quest*[18] website, curriculum vitae development, life-skills programmes, opportunities to take part in work placements and visits to tertiary education providers.

'Mostly effective' TPUs shared many of the curriculum qualities evident in 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs. ERO found well-established routines where teachers used a range of teaching knowledge and approaches. Teachers and students had good relationships characterised by warmth and mutual respect, as evident in the example below.

> *A discussion between students and teachers about genetics involved a high level of questioning from the students. The content was linked to students' lives as mothers and the genetic connection they have with their child/children. Students were interested and engaged. They appeared to have a good understanding of the subject matter because the teacher had made it relevant to them.*

While some of the 'mostly effective' TPUs used very few, if any, resources from Te Kura, others used these materials more heavily. TPU staff often taught English, maths and science programmes as well as a range of other courses. These courses included computing, parenting, driver-training, life skills and cooking (rather than food technology). Some staff were able to teach specialist courses in the arts and social sciences, which greatly added to the programme's overall quality. Young women were also engaged in courses with links to external providers – these included budgeting, Young Enterprise[19], parenting, kapa haka, tikanga and a range of STAR courses.

Although the 'mostly effective' TPUs were able to draw on some externally-linked courses as well as occasional support from host schools, their curriculum was somewhat reliant on what staff could effectively teach, rather than developed in relation to students' needs and interests. Students didn't have the same range of options as provided in the 'innovative and cohesive' units. Some of the TPUs also had only minimal health and physical education programmes. Three of the 10 units needed to substantially broaden their curriculum in order to respond to student pathways.

Partnerships with outside agencies and other education providers

The effective TPUs had well-established working partnerships with a significant range of health, education, housing and support providers. These partnerships were developed through the positive relationships between the TPU staff and the staff at

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[17] For more information on BP challenges see http://www.starters.co.nz/bpchallenge-index.html
[18] www.careers.govt.nz/tools/careerquest/
[19] For more information see http://www.youngenterprise.org.nz/

these agencies. In some cases, relationships were strong because of the TPUs co-location with health services (Plunket, nurses and doctors), social services (counsellors and social workers) and other educational providers (university lecturers and parenting, life skills and careers advisers).

The partnerships between TPUs and early childhood services were of particular importance. At one of the units, meetings between students and the early childhood service manager were held each week. These meetings provided a place where students could put forward suggestions and communicate with staff through a dedicated forum.

Exit transitions

Leaders and teachers successfully developed relationships to help the young women make smooth transitions into further study or work options. Most of the five 'innovative and cohesive' TPUs used careers advisers from their host school. One had a dedicated careers adviser position. This well-qualified adviser provided support for students entering further study as well as those going into work pathways. The adviser kept in contact with students following their transition to help ensure a smooth pathway from the TPU.

Several of the 'mostly effective' TPUs used variations of a 'graduate wall' to provide a record of the various training and employment destinations of former TPU students. In one of these units, careers advisers regularly visited and provided students with access to Gateway programmes and STAR-funded courses. Staff in some units had also completed careers training, which provided continuity of careers education and advice for the young women.

Inquiry and improvement

'Innovative and cohesive' TPUs had useful approaches for analysing NCEA data to support student learning. Staff also used student feedback to identify areas for improvement. In one of these units, teachers developed block courses and tutor groups in response to student suggestions. In another unit, the students had identified timetable flexibility as a priority and the TPU altered the times it transported students to and from the unit.

The 'mostly effective' TPUs demonstrated some sound inquiry approaches, including monitoring and tracking individual student achievement. However, several areas needed a more cohesive approach. ERO identified that the 10 'mostly effective' TPUs needed to improve their inquiry and improvement processes for curriculum, exit destinations, achievement and attendance. Their curriculum review needed to focus more on responding to students' interests and aspirations. Some of these 'mostly effective' TPUs identified differences between Māori attendance and achievement compared to that of non-Māori. Deeper inquiry into the extent of these differences, and introducing initiatives or approaches to effectively respond to identified issues, could raise the overall achievement of students.

One feature of all 15 'innovative and cohesive' and 'mostly effective' TPUs was their ability to provide wrap-around support for students and increase their overall wellbeing. They did not, however, review how effective they were in supporting

students or in identifying the social, health and wellbeing gains students made over time.

Teen Parent Units with less engaging teaching and learning

Three of the Teen Parent Units (TPUs) had 'less engaging teaching and learning' than more effective units. Students had limited choice or flexibility in how they learnt. For example, most Māori students at the units did not have suitable opportunities to learn te reo. Teachers often lacked the range of knowledge needed to deliver a range of courses and there was too much focus on programmes through Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School (Te Kura).

These TPUs were each performing satisfactorily in some areas but had significant areas where they needed to improve. Although there were different areas for improvement for each of these units, they all required considerable leadership improvements. At one TPU the leader did not have the capability to lift the quality of teaching. At another, the leader implemented poor curriculum options and had a poor relationship with the host school. This was affecting the options available to students.

Across these units, sound performance areas included their induction programmes and individual support for students. They had good relationships with their early childhood service and some good relationships with community organisations.

The overall level of achievement at these TPUs was slightly below that of the 15 effective units. As in other TPUs, those students who were enrolled for more than 12 months tended to achieve better than those who were enrolled for a relatively short time.

While staff and students had reasonable relationships, ERO found some negative attitudes from staff towards students and their situations. Some staff tended to see students more as failures and less as students with potential who deserved excellent teaching and learning opportunities.

Poorly Performing Teen Parent Units

Three Teen Parent Units (TPUs) were judged as 'poorly performing'. While these units had developed some good partnerships, especially with outside agencies, their overall performance was poor. A majority of the students did not achieve well or go on to positive destinations. These units were not well led and not well supported by their host schools. The teaching and learning opportunities for students were limited. One of these TPUs was new and this was its first ERO review. At the other two units, ERO had previously recommended significant improvements be made to teaching and learning. ERO had also identified significant areas for improvement at each of the host schools.[20]

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[20] Each of the host schools is currently on a return time of one to two years for their school review. A return time of one to two years indicates a significant quality issue for the school across at least one dimension. For more information on ERO review return times go to www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/Return-Times-for-School-Reviews

ERO found generally poor relationships between the staff and students at these TPUs. Some staff had poor perceptions of the young women and held negative beliefs and attitudes about young mothers. In one TPU, a lack of trust between the students and teachers strained relationships and contributed to a culture of coercion.

Poor quality relationships were evident between the TPU managers and host school leaders. Typically, leadership styles and philosophies differed between the TPU managers and the host school principals. There was often conflict over resource allocation and access to host school facilities. The boards of trustees provided little oversight of the TPU activities.

Leaders in these TPUs were often reactive, isolated and overwhelmed. There were low levels of staffing at these units and professional support for teachers was limited. Appraisal processes were poor and staff had few opportunities for professional development. Underlying these poor relationships was a lack of formal documentation, such as a Memorandum of Understanding outlining roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes.

Induction processes were poor. One unit's induction involved the host school's principal carrying out a 'screening' interview where students were assessed for their suitability for the TPU. In another unit, each young women's competencies in literacy and numeracy were a focus. If young women were not at the expected curriculum level, a programme was imposed on students comprising five compulsory courses and one student-selected option. Student careers, aspirations and goals were not a focus for induction, planning or the curriculum.

Teaching and learning in these TPUs was generally of a poor quality. Most of the TPUs relied, almost exclusively, on learning materials provided by Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Correspondence School. While teachers were qualified, they displayed limited curriculum and pedagogical approaches. Students did not take part in any authentic and meaningful activities. Similarly, few opportunities were seen for the curriculum to reflect the strengths, interests and future pathways of the young women. These TPUs were essentially operating more as home rooms for students to complete correspondence materials than as classrooms oriented to the needs of pregnant and parenting learners.

Conclusion

A majority of the Teen Parent Units (TPUs) in this evaluation were found to be performing well. Fifteen of the 21 TPUs in this evaluation demonstrated practices that led to better educational, social, health and wellbeing outcomes for students. Five of these TPUs were judged to be 'innovative and cohesive' services that had demonstrated effective practice across the range of areas. Another 10 TPUs were judged to be 'mostly effective'.

Six TPUs were not performing well. Three TPUs were judged to have 'less engaging teaching and learning'. These TPUs had some strengths as well as some significant weaknesses. A key feature affecting the quality of these TPUs was their leadership. While some students were achieving well and going on to positive destinations, the quality of leadership at these units potentially limits the extent to which they can improve.

The performance of three TPUs was of serious concern. The majority of students did not perform well at these 'poorly performing' units. ERO found low quality teaching and poor relationships between staff and students, and between host schools and their TPUs. These were exacerbated by the lack of an up-to-date Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or clarity from the Ministry of Education (the Ministry) of the roles and responsibilities of the TPUs and their host schools.

The development and updating of guidance documents has fallen behind and is affecting some TPUs. The Ministry must ensure that the MoUs for host schools and TPUs are up to date, understood and used across the country. This document should help provide guidance about resource allocation and the roles and responsibilities of the host school and TPU staff. Further guidelines are needed to provide a clear set of principles of effective practice at a TPU. The guidelines should also outline expectations for curriculum delivery, individual education plans (IEPs), careers education, transition practices and self-review processes.

Across the TPUs, a range of other issues could be improved. ERO found ongoing attendance and retention issues. Based on anecdotal evidence, attendance and retention issues appear to have become more difficult since the introduction of the Young Parent Payment and the expectation that teenage parents enrol in education. To help identify how to improve attendance, retention and achievement in TPUs, the Ministry should ensure that the achievement information they collate is accurate for each unit. The Ministry should also consider developing more centralised systems for recording attendance and retention data.

The most successful TPUs are focused on supporting students and their children to gain better social, health and wellbeing outcomes. More could be done, by TPUs and by the Ministry, to identify the gains students make – not just in their education outcomes (including their career plan and final destination), but also in their health and wellbeing outcomes and that of their children. Gathering more information about the wellbeing of students and their children will give each TPU and the Ministry a much better evidence base for considering TPU performance.

In developing the Ministry's approach to TPUs it would be helpful if there was a national strategy for dealing with teenage pregnancy. A whole-of-government strategy could help specify the roles for other government agencies and provide guidance on such issues as sexuality education, sexual and reproductive health, and promoting health and wellbeing of teen parents and their children.

Next steps

ERO recommends that the Ministries of Education, Social Development and Health together:
- Work with other government agencies and community representatives to develop a national strategy on teen pregnancy. The strategy would include a focus on improving the education, wellbeing and health of all teen parents and their children.
- Develop cross-agency individual plans for Teen Parent Unit (TPU) students and their children, drawing on personnel from the unit as well as from community health providers and the Youth Service (Work and Income New Zealand).
- Develop a set of data collection tools so TPUs, their host schools and government agencies can effectively monitor the educational, destination, health, social and wellbeing outcomes of all students and their children.
- Investigate the impact of the new Youth Welfare Reform policy on TPUs, their students and their children. This investigation should include a focus on students' participation, engagement, achievement, wellbeing and their progress to further training, employment and improved life outcomes.

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education:
- Works with the host schools of the six lowest performing TPUs to address the issues identified by ERO.
- Completes guidelines that set out the key principles of effective TPU practice. These guidelines should include good practice in: how host schools, their boards of trustees and TPUs can work together; strategies that monitor and improve student engagement, achievement and wellbeing; the development of student individual education plans; and approaches that support student career planning, exit transitions and improved life outcomes.

ERO recommends that all TPUs:
- Use the findings, indicators and conclusion of this report to inform their own inquiry and improvement programme.
- Ensure that their curriculum offers students a broad range of courses, activities and opportunities in line with *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Key priorities include developing engaging activities that reflect students' strengths, interests and needs; careers and vocational opportunities; and education relevant to student health and wellbeing.
- Continue to investigate and respond to the issues affecting student engagement in TPUs, in particular, student attendance and students who initially enrol but do not go on to regularly attend and succeed.

Appendix 1: Teen Parent Units: indicator framework for 2013 reviews

The tables below set out the basic indicators for the review of the education in Teen Parent Units (TPUs). These indicators should be used in conjunction with ERO's indicators, as published in *Evaluation Indicators for School Reviews (2011)*. In total, the indicators provide an outline of the sorts of features anticipated in high quality teaching and learning for the students in TPUs. Depending how the education provision is managed, additional features may be apparent. Likewise, some of the indicators below may not be directly relevant.

TPU organisation and overall effectiveness	
The TPU has a clear sense of purpose and direction.	• The TPU has a clear sense of direction in terms of the desired educational, social and health/wellbeing outcomes for students and their children and how it will contribute to these outcomes. • The TPU goals, strategies and planning reflect community aspirations, as well as effective processes to improve the educational, social and health/wellbeing outcomes of students.
The TPU promotes and supports improved educational, social and health/wellbeing outcomes for students and their children.	• Levels of student attendance are high. • Students can say how their learning is contributing to their ongoing achievement and future pathway. • Students are engaged in learning and positive about the progress they are making. • Students are achieving the academic and social/wellbeing goals established in their individual education plans (IEPs). • Student achievement occurs in line with their identified career pathways/pathways to future education and employment. • The TPU's students effectively transition to further education, training or employment. • The TPU reviews the effectiveness of practice on the basis of the outcomes achieved.
Induction, individual planning and support, and transition processes	
There is a well planned and implemented process for student induction that identifies students' strengths, interests and needs.	• The induction programme enables students to build positive relationships with staff and other students. • Appropriate multi-disciplinary and/or special educational support is identified and made available as early as possible. • Teachers and leaders use valid and reliable processes to identify the educational strengths, interests, and next steps of new students. • Teachers/leaders seek and use the student's point of view with regard to inclusive practice and learning. • The school has processes in place for identifying and supporting students in relation to their physical, sensory, psychological, neurological, behavioural or intellectual needs. • The school has culturally responsive processes to identify and support the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pacific students.

Each student has an individual education plan (IEP).	• Student whānau are included in the IEP process in a way that reflects the best interests of the student (for instance, as the relationship between the student and his/her whānau allows).
	• IEPs include goals that respond to the student's identified interests, aspirations, strengths and needs **and** contain social, health and behavioural goals as appropriate.
	• IEPs set out how students will develop their core competencies, as applicable including their independence and abilities to manage themselves (and their child/children).
	• IEPs explain the processes to be used to support students to reach their goals, including what the roles are of those supporting each student (for instance, in the case of whānau).
	• IEPs are regularly reviewed and revised in line with student progress and needs.
	• IEPs will form the basis of individual plans for each student's exit transition, including what has to happen to support that transition.
	• There is evidence that IEPs have been informed with good practice models, such as the Ministry of Education guidelines for developing IEPs.
	• There are good systems in place to report on student achievement to students and their whānau (as appropriate).
Planning and processes for exit transitions are effective.	• Exit transitions reflect the career and/or pathway goals developed by each student.
	• There are high quality transition processes in place for students transitioning to mainstream education settings, (includes budget planning, childcare arrangements and course suitability).
	• The exit transition planning includes clear expectations and goals for each student, and the roles and responsibilities to be carried out by those involved in the transition process.
	• Whānau are included in the exit transition process in line with their relationship with the student.
Quality teaching and learning	
The TPU provides a learning environment that is caring, inclusive and collaborative.	• There is a focus on learning and achievement and improving student outcomes (educational, social and health/wellbeing).
	• Staff interactions reflect an ethic of care (staff are compassionate, actively listen to students and reflect their points of view).
	• Power is shared between the student and teacher – authoritarian and coercive approaches are absent – for example, classroom rules are jointly decided.
	• Staff have a good understanding of, and affirm, the cultural backgrounds of the students (they observe and promote students' culture, identities, language).
The curriculum and pedagogical approaches reflect the vision and principles of *The New Zealand Curriculum*	• Teachers have high expectations that all students will succeed.
	• There are good links between students' identified strengths and interests and their individual programmes.
	• Teachers use innovative approaches and strategies in responding to each student's interests, strengths, aspirations and needs.
	• The school curriculum effectively promotes the identity, language and culture of students.
	• Educational activities involve authentic problems, provide opportunities to investigate questions of interest and are relevant to students.
	• There are good opportunities for students to learn in a variety of ways – with others,

and respond effectively to students' identified needs.	on their own, using technology. • Classroom activities are engaging and intellectually challenging. • Students evaluate their own learning and are aware of their achievements and next steps. • The curriculum provides scope for students to develop career management competencies – developing self awareness, making decisions and exploring options. • Students receive high-quality career education and guidance with an emphasis on transition to the workplace or further education/training. • There are good systems in place to report on student achievement to students, their whānau (as appropriate) and the host school.
Learning programmes promote and accelerate student achievement in literacy and mathematics.	• Programmes appropriately address individual student needs in literacy (reading, writing and oral language), mathematics (numeracy and strand) and statistics. • Literacy and mathematics teaching is appropriate for each student. • Diagnostic assessments identify each student's achievement in reading (especially in decoding and comprehension), writing and mathematics (eg for students at NCEA Level 1 and below). • Students' progress and achievement in literacy and mathematics is well monitored.
Relationships with external partners	
An effective relationship with the host school (and host school) supports student outcomes.	• A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is in place between the host school and the TPU. • The MoU spells out the respective roles of the management committee and the teacher-in-charge of the TPU. • There are processes in place for the TPU to report on its effectiveness (including the full range of student outcomes) to the host school and the management committee. • The host school (and base school if appropriate) fulfils its obligations regarding employment, reporting, resourcing and health and safety. • The relationship between the host school (and base school, if appropriate) is positive and supportive of the TPU's effective practice regarding the improved educational, social and health outcomes for students and their children.
An effective partnership with the TPU's early childhood service provider(s) supports student outcomes.	• The children of TPU students participate in high quality early childhood services (see ERO reviews of early childhood service provision). • TPU students see early childhood services as a valuable partner in the education and care of their children and the health of their whānau. • Early childhood service staff support (and participate in specific strategies where applicable) students and their children, including the transition of students and their children to new settings.

Effective relationships education, health/ wellbeing and social agencies support student outcomes.	• The TPU has developed partnerships with education, health and social agencies and providers in support of improved student outcomes. • The TPU works with other agencies and organisations to ensure that social or health issues do not become barriers to engagement. • The TPU is seen as a partner by community agencies in improving the social and health outcomes of young people at risk. • The partnerships between the TPU and community agencies ensure that processes are in place to manage social, financial and health barriers to achievement.
Effective relationships with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu - The Corresponden ce School (Te Kura)in support of student outcomes	• The TPU operates in accordance with Te Kura's 2013 Service Level Agreement for Dual Students. • TPU staff work with Te Kura staff to identify the best possible Te Kura learning materials. • The Te Kura learning materials used by students reflect their identified learning pathways. • Students receive timely resources, support and feedback from Te Kura staff.

Appendix 2: Teen Parent Units reviewed

Teen Parent Unit	Location	Host school
He Mataariki School for Teen Parents	Titoki, Whangarei	Mangakahia Area School
He Wero o nga Wahine	Henderson, Auckland	Henderson High School
Clendon Teen Parent Unit (Taonga Education Centre)	Manurewa, Auckland	James Cook High School
Eden Campus	Newton, Auckland	Auckland Girls' Grammar School
Connected Learning Centre	Otara, Auckland	Tangaroa College
Hamilton's Fraser High School TPU	Dinsdale, Hamilton	Fraser High School
Pa Harakeke Teen Parent Unit	Tokoroa	Tokoroa High School
Rotorua School for Young Parents	Hillcrest, Rotorua	Rotorua Girls' High School
Te Whakatipuranga	Tauranga	Otumoetai College
Te Tari Ako Matua Taiohi Teen Parent Education Centre	Kawerau	Kawerau College
Hawke's Bay School for Teenage Parents	Onekawa, Napier	William Colenso College
Te Whare Whai Hua Teenage Parent Centre	Gisborne	Lytton High School
Whaimana Ako Second Chance Taranaki	Stratford	Stratford High School
Whakatipuria Teen Parent Unit	Palmerston North	Freyberg High School
Wairarapa Teen Parent Unit	Masterton	Makoura College
Titiro Whakamua	Trentham, Upper Hutt	Heretaunga College
He Huarahi Tamariki	Tawa, Wellington	Wellington East Girls' College
Nelson College for Girls Teen Parent Unit	Nelson	Nelson College for Girls

Karanga Mai Young Parents College	Kaiapoi	Kaiapoi High School
Kimihia Parents' College	Linwood, Christchurch	Linwood College
Murihiku Young Parents Learning Centre	Invercargill	James Hargest High School

Appendix 3: References

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