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ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

1. What is Te Hurihanga?

Te Hurihanga is a therapeutic programme for young males aged 14 to 17 years who have been before the court. The aim of the programme is to stop the young people from offending and to give them the help they need to become positive members of society.

The programme will take each young person between nine and 18 months to complete. The programme has been designed to be flexible to respond to the individual needs of each young person and their family.

At the beginning of the programme, participants will spend some time living in a specially-built family home run by house parents. Initially they will be required to stay at the home 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During this time, specialist staff will work with them to help tackle their biggest problems, like being unable to read, having a drinking problem, or learning anger management.

There will be a maximum of eight young people living at the home at any one time.

Once the young person has settled into healthy routines and has started to learn new skills, they will be given the opportunity to try their skills in different places; like at home with their family, on work experience, or back at school.

Once the young person has proven that they are ready to move out of the Te Hurihanga home, they will live at their own home full-time but will still be under the supervision of programme staff.

2. What does “Te Hurihanga” mean?

“Te Hurihanga” loosely translates as “the turning point” which symbolises the programme’s intent to help young people turn their lives away from their current pathway toward imprisonment and give them the help they need to become positive members of society.

3. Why is it being set up?

As the leader of the justice sector, the Ministry of Justice is setting up this innovative new programme. The programme will be run as a pilot for three years and will be evaluated.

The programme will address a gap in programme provision for young offenders. Currently, the longest residential order available is three months in a residence, followed by six months of supervision in the community. Members of the judiciary and youth justice practitioners agree that this is not long enough to work with young people who are most likely to continue to offend.

The Te Hurihanga programme is based on the best information available about what works to prevent young people from reoffending. The programme will trial a number of new approaches. These include:

- Delivering an individualised programme to each young person that is designed specifically to meet all of their needs e.g. health, education, life skills etc
- Having the same staff working with the young person when they are living at the Te Hurihanga home and when they are living in the community (as opposed to having one group of staff members working at the home and a separate group of staff members working in the community)
- Providing a transition period between the young person living in the controlled Te Hurihanga home full-time and living in the community
- Restricting the participants on the programme to only those young people who live in the area, rather than accepting young people from all over the country onto the programme.

4. How is it different from other sanctions for young people?

The “toughest” sanction currently available to the Youth Court involves a young person spending up to three months living in a youth justice residence (usually some distance from their home town), followed by six months of being supervised by a Child, Youth and Family social worker while living back home in the community.

In comparison, young people on Te Hurihanga will spend up to six months living at the Te Hurihanga home, followed by up to 12 months of being supervised in the community by the same staff that were working with them in the residence.

5. What will the young people do in the Te Hurihanga home?

The residence is essentially a large family home. The home will have eight bedrooms, on-site education facilities, rooms for crafts and therapy sessions to take place, as well as an enclosed courtyard and a meeting room for cultural activities.

Participants will be involved in a wide-range of therapeutic and educational activities on a daily basis. This is reflected by the number of staff that may potentially be on-site during the day:

- House Parents
- Practice Manager
- Kaumatua
- Psychologist
- Education and Activity Coordinator
- Education Contractors
- Specialist Youth Workers.

It is likely that during the day, the young people will be split in to groups of 2-3 and will work on different activities. For example, one group of young people may spend the morning doing classroom based education activities with a

teacher, while the other group learns lifeskills such as cooking, budgeting or washing clothes.

Each day young people will spend time working one-on-one with trained staff, like the clinical psychologist, tackling their personal problems, like experiencing abuse or having a drug problem.

It will be run like a typical home. The House Parents will make sure that the young people do chores, and there will be occasional communal activities, like watching a movie.

6. What is a “Transition Phase”?

Once the young person has settled into healthy routines and has started to learn new skills, they will be given the opportunity to try their skills in different places.

Before moving home full-time, the young person will have a few weekend visits with their family. Te Hurihanga staff will have worked with their parents or guardians to teach them new strategies for managing their child’s behaviour; like how to set a curfew and make sure that they stick to it.

The young person will also start community-based activities like work experience, or may start attending their local secondary school. Initially, the young person will be accompanied by a specialist youth worker to support them and help them settle in.

7. What will the young people do in the community?

When the young people are living in the community, they will still be regularly supervised by Te Hurihanga staff. The youth workers will visit the young person at their home or at school to make sure that they are keeping on-track with their programme.

During the community phase, the young people will be required to keep setting goals for themselves, like finding a job or joining a sports-team. Staff will work alongside them to help them achieve their goals.

8. Why was Hamilton chosen for the Te Hurihanga programme?

The Waikato area was chosen for the Te Hurihanga programme for a number of reasons. First, analysis of youth offending and sanctions suggested that there would be sufficient young people in the Waikato area, who meet the minimum criteria, to run the pilot.

Second, there are no similar programmes operating in the Waikato. The Government’s *Youth Offending Strategy* recommended that three pilot programmes for young offenders be established to meet an identified gap in programme provision. Two of the pilots, the *Reducing Youth Offending Programme* and the *Youth Drug Court*, are being trialled in Auckland and Christchurch. The Waikato area was chosen as the location for the third pilot, *Te Hurihanga*.

Third, there is particularly good co-ordination and collaboration across government agencies and community groups in the Waikato area, especially

in Hamilton. It is essential to the success of this programme that government agencies, social service agencies, and community groups work well together.

9. Is this a soft option?

No. Te Hurihanga is not a soft option for two key reasons.

First, the Te Hurihanga programme is likely to take longer to complete than the most severe sanction available in the Youth Court (see question 4 above).

Second, Te Hurihanga will be very demanding on the young people who participate in it. The young people will be required to turn their entire lives around, including accepting that they have problems they need to address (e.g. substance dependency), re-engaging in education, entering employment, and learning new skills (e.g. anger management).

If a young person doesn't make real progress while on the Te Hurihanga programme and begin achieving the goals set for him by staff members, he risks being removed from the programme and returned to court.

The Te Hurihanga programme will be hard work, but will have very real rewards for those young people who put in the effort. Participants will receive support and intensive assistance in the areas where it is most needed, opportunities provided by educators and employers within the community, and positive experiences (e.g. carving and kapa haka) which they may not otherwise have been exposed to.

10. Who will be running the Te Hurihanga programme?

Youth Horizons will be running the programme, along with Maatua Whangai from Hamilton. Youth Horizons is a national organisation that specialises in working with young people with severe behavioural problems. They are recognised as New Zealand's experts and, as such, are able to employ people who are the best in their field.

Youth Horizons runs six homes across the Auckland region and one five bedroom home in Hamilton for young people with severe behaviour problems. Youth Horizons has other contracts with District Health Boards and Child, Youth and Family in the Waikato/ Bay of Plenty region, as well as in other New Zealand cities.

Maatua Whangai is an experienced and respected provider in the Waikato. They are very experienced in working with young people in Hamilton, and were instrumental in setting up the Hamilton Youth Offending Team.

ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE

11. Who will go on the Te Hurihanga programme?

Te Hurihanga is for:

- Males;
- Aged 14-17 years;
- Who live within 60 minutes of the residence;

- Who have appeared before the Court.

Young people will be selected for Te Hurihanga based on their need, not on the number or nature of the offences they have committed. Te Hurihanga is for those with the greatest likelihood of reoffending who require the most intensive level of intervention.

12.What does “high-risk offenders” mean?

In research and academic publications, young offenders are often classified according to their risk of continuing to offend.

At some stage, most young people will commit an offence; e.g. shop-lifting, tagging or drinking alcohol illegally. For most young people, this is part of the normal maturation process, and they will “grow out of” their offending of their own accord. These young people are referred to as “Low-risk offenders”, and comprise 80% of all young offenders.

“High-risk offenders” are those young people who have the greatest risk of continuing to offend without intervention.

Risk of re-offending is not linked to the type of offences that the young person has committed, but rather to the risk factors (negative influences) in their life, such as drug and alcohol problems, mixing with friends who are involved in crime, problems at home, and problems at school, particularly truancy and academic failure.

It is possible that, where two young people have committed exactly the same offence, one could be labelled “High-risk” and the other could be labelled “Low-risk”.

13.What kind of offences will they have committed?

Young people tend to commit a broad range of offences. However, dishonesty offences (e.g. burglary, theft and motor vehicle conversion) are by far the most common offences for which young people are apprehended. Young people on the Te Hurihanga programme are likely to have a history of offending that includes a range of different types of dishonesty offences.

Young people who have committed very serious offences, such as murder and manslaughter, will **not** be able to attend Te Hurihanga. These young people will continue to receive a term of imprisonment.

Young people who have committed sexual offences will **not** be able to attend Te Hurihanga.

14.Who decides who attends Te Hurihanga?

Young people will be directed to attend the programme by a Judge. However, a Judge cannot direct a young person to the Te Hurihanga programme unless Youth Horizons has assessed the young person and approved them and the young person and their family have agreed to go on the programme and abide by the programme rules.

Youth Horizons will not accept a young person onto the programme if they are assessed as posing a safety risk to staff, other participants, or the community.

ABOUT THE HOME

15.What will it look like?

The Te Hurihanga home will look like a large, modern family home. It will have typical domestic style fencing, gardens and landscaping.

The Te Ara Hou Village was recommended for consideration by a Site Selection Steering Committee established by Mayor Michael Redman at the invitation of Justice Minister Phil Goff.

If located in the Te Ara Hou Village, the house will be located down a long driveway behind an already established village complex, and will not front any streets. The village is elevated above the road, and bounded by large established trees. The building will not have additional lighting or other features to distinguish it from any other residential home.

The village complex contains a number of Christian agencies offering social services (including some residential services) to the community. The Anglican Diocese, who own the land, have invited Te Hurihanga to join them as the goals of the Te Hurihanga programme are totally in line with the village's.

As the house will be a part of the established village complex we do not expect it to have any impact on house prices in the area.

16.Isn't it just a borstal?

No. The Te Hurihanga home is not a "borstal" or a prison. It is a large family home that will house young people for up to six months while they are on a therapeutic programme.

The bedrooms will look like normal teenage bedrooms, with a desk for doing school work, cupboards for clothes, a bed, and a window.

During the day, the young people will be working with staff to tackle their problems, but in the evenings the residence will be similar to any other home with teenagers. Everyone will help cook dinner, and clean up after the meal. Sometimes after dinner, the young people will watch television with the House Parents before doing their homework.

17.Is there anything else like this in Hamilton?

Yes. There are lots of specialist residential homes running therapeutic programmes throughout Hamilton.

Some examples are:

- Youth Horizons runs a five bed home for young people with severe behavioural problems.
- There is a residential drug and alcohol programme for young people in Hamilton which can take up to 12 young people.
- There is a residential programme for adult offenders who have been released from prison.

Most people don't know where these residential homes are located, which is testament to the fact that they have very little impact on the people living around them.

18. Is this the same thing as the proposed new Child, Youth and Family Youth Justice Facility?

No. Child, Youth and Family are currently investigating sites for a new youth justice facility, to be called Youth Justice Central. They are investigating a number of different site options in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty area.

Child, Youth and Family's Youth Justice Facility will hold up to 24 young people and be one of four nationally. It is a secure facility for young male and female offenders who are either on remand from the Youth Court or serving a three month sentence of Supervision with Residence. The offenders will be either persistent minor offenders and/or young offenders on remand for serious violent offences, and they will be in the custody of Child, Youth and Family.

The facility will be sited on a large piece of land with perimeter fencing and a range of other security features.

ABOUT COMMUNITY SAFETY

19. What is being done to ensure the safety of the community?

Te Hurihanga has an over-riding principle that **community safety shall be maintained at all times**.

Before being accepted onto Te Hurihanga each young person will be assessed intensively by trained psychologists. If the young person poses a risk to the local community, he will **not** be accepted onto the programme.

Young people who have committed very serious offences, such as murder and rape or sexual offences, will **not** be accepted for Te Hurihanga.

Importantly, before being accepted onto Te Hurihanga, the young people must agree to abide by the rules of the programme. If they break the rules, they risk being expelled from the programme and would then be returned to court for re-sentencing,

During the residential stage of the programme, the young people will be required to remain within the home at all times unless they are being escorted somewhere by a staff member. Qualified staff will provide constant supervision for the young people 24 hours a day, seven days a week. At all times there will be a minimum of two staff members on duty.

Immediate family members wishing to visit the young people will need to obtain prior approval from the staff. While it is expected that young people will maintain contact with their families, visitors will be kept to a minimum. Any visitors will be asked to park off the street within the grounds of the village.

20.What stops a young person just walking off?

Participants on the Te Hurihanga programme are not in the custody of a government agency, which means that they cannot be placed under “lock and key”. However, while the young people on the programme can’t be locked up, the residence has been designed to ensure that participants are not able to leave the facility without being observed by a staff member.

Programme staff will be required to monitor the activities of the young people much as the staff at a boarding school monitor the activities of their pupils. On behalf of the young person’s parents or guardians they accept responsibility for the wellbeing of the young people in their care, and to meet this responsibility have to know where they are, and what they are doing at all times.

However, if a young person leaves the house they are breaking the programme rules. They risk being expelled from the programme and if this happens, the young person will be called to appear before the court, where their sentence to attend Te Hurihanga will be cancelled and they will be re-sentenced.

21.Should neighbours feel concerned for their safety?

No. The young people who will end up on the Te Hurihanga programme are living in the community right now. The programme is not bringing young offenders into the community, rather it is putting young people, who are currently living in the community unsupervised and committing offences, into a structured programme where they will be constantly monitored by trained experienced staff.

Any young person who is assessed as posing a risk to the safety of the community **cannot** be accepted onto the Te Hurihanga programme.

Any young person who does not engage in the programme or abide by the rules will be removed from the programme and returned to court.