



FORMATIVE AND PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROTOTYPE

Second evaluation report

January 2020



ALLEN+CLARKE

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Ngā mihi nui rawa ki a koutou katoa.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from the second stage of the formative process evaluation of the 'Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work' (Mana in Mahi) programme, implemented by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) from August 2018. *Allen + Clarke* presented the first evaluation report in May 2019 and conducted field work for this second report in September and October 2019.

Evaluation background

The main aim of the Mana in Mahi programme in Phase One was to provide young people with sustainable employment outcomes by facilitating entry into the workforce and an industry training qualification pathway. A secondary aim is to address the national skills shortage.

The prototype of the programme, launched in August 2018, leveraged elements of the existing Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Skills for Industry model and was further developed through engagement with young people and employers.¹

Key components of the prototype (that is, Phase One) included:

1. a wage subsidy paid to the employer by MSD to offset some of the initial costs and risks associated with undertaking the programme;
2. financial payments to clients to incentivise them to stay in work and recognise their achievements for long-term success;
3. pre-employment and/or 'on-the-job training' for the clients; and
4. pastoral support services for clients from their employer and MSD to support and enable clients to achieve successful enrolment and participation in an industry qualification.

In the 2019 budget, the Mana in Mahi programme received an additional \$49.9 million which increased the number of possible opportunities from 150 to close to 2,000 across four years.² Drawing on insights gained from the first phase of the programme, the second phase of Mana in Mahi has a modified aim and modified policy settings.³ The modified aim is to 'provide apprenticeships and an industry training pathway leading to sustainable employment for young people who are at-risk of long-term benefit receipt' and the changed policy settings include: changes in the eligibility criteria to encompass a broader range of 'at risk' young people and to allow for part-time employment agreements; removal of the work readiness component, given that participants are generally able to access similar funding through existing MSD grants; and increased support and pastoral care for both young people and employers.⁴ These changes are being implemented incrementally up to April 2020. Given the timing of the Phase Two implementation and the second phase of field work, the evaluation findings in this report relate primarily to the Phase One (prototype) design features and implementation.

¹ Office of the Minister of Employment, 2018. 'Phased Implementation Plan for Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work (Dole for Apprenticeships).

² *The Treasury*. 'Building a Productive Nation - Budget 2019'. Available at:

<https://www.budget.govt.nz/budget/2019/wellbeing/productive-nation/skills-for-future.htm>.

³ Some of these changes are in the process of being implemented, and so their impact could not be definitively assessed in this evaluation.

⁴ <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/mana-in-mahi/cabinet-paper-phase-two-policy-settings-for-mana-in-mahi-strength-in-work.pdf>

Evaluation purpose and approach

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide MSD with information on the strengths and weaknesses of the design and implementation of the Mana in Mahi programme, and make recommendations for improvements to its design and implementation which will help to inform future programme adjustments.

This report is based on interviews with 41 individuals (15 people were interviewed for a second time) with Mana in Mahi, clients/young people, employers and MSD regional and national staff, and a review of programme documentation and monitoring data (for the period November 2018 - September 2019). The interviews for the second round were conducted in September and October 2019, meaning some employers and clients had participated in the programme for a maximum of just over one year. This second report builds on the findings described in the first report (May 2019) about the strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi and areas for improvement, while also identifying new insights to inform design and implementation improvement.

Key findings and recommendations

Programme reach and uptake

Monitoring data shows that at the end of September 2019 the number of employers with signed Mana in Mahi contracts had steadily increased and covered a wide range of industries located across most regions in New Zealand. The industry categories with the largest number of Mana in Mahi clients are 'Construction' and 'Agriculture, forestry and fishing'.

At the end of September 2019, monitoring data indicates 363 clients had been recruited to Mana in Mahi. Three-quarters of clients are male. The largest client ethnic group is Māori (48%).

For clients who had been enrolled for at least six months, 61% remained on the programme, while 20% had exited to an alternative pathway (not on a benefit) and 19% had returned to benefit.

Strengths and weaknesses of programme implementation for young people

Findings about Mana in Mahi prototype implementation for young people indicated that most young people heard about Mana in Mahi through Work and Income, despite MSD marketing and communication strategies which included multiple channels of communication.

Focusing future communications activity around informing frontline staff, such as Work Brokers, should therefore be a priority.

The key incentivising factor for young people to join the programme remains the possibility of entering stable and secure employment, with the prospect of future career progression. While the other components of the prototype are certainly helpful, most young people were not aware of them prior to joining. Nevertheless, we consider the cumulative weight of the combined incentive mechanisms is a strength of Mana in Mahi. These should they be communicated more succinctly to young people, as this may contribute to incentivising participation.

Young peoples' experiences of recruitment, pre-employment training, on-the-job training and career development, the incentive payments and employer pastoral care have generally been positive. For many young people, access to effective in-work support from their employer and MSD was critical to support them to learn job skills and obtain qualifications.

However, young people struggle with the demands of full-time work and study; the matching of client to employer remains a challenge; there have been mixed responses to MSD's suite of support for clients; and transport to and from work continues to be an issue for many clients.

Strengths and weaknesses of programme implementation for employers

A range of employers can participate in, and benefit from, Mana in Mahi. While the programme used a diverse range of approaches to reach employers, most heard about Mana in Mahi through Work and Income staff or Trade Me advertisements. Many employers are motivated to join the programme through an altruistic desire to help young people into employment. The wage subsidy and opportunity to employ young people who had received pre-employment training were also incentivising factors. For employers, appropriate matching of employer and young person continues to be crucial. Some of the interviewed employers (mainly small-size employers) said that the amount of paperwork required of them was a barrier to participating.

Pre-employment training has been largely successful, where it was implemented. However, while on-the-job training was happening, the content, quality, and duration of the training was inconsistent. Some employers may benefit from receiving guidance about providing pastoral care to their Mana in Mahi employees. In addition, expectations about the enrolment of employees into qualification pathways were not always well understood by employers.

Employers were supportive of the wage subsidy but raised issues related to the timing of the payment, and concerns about what happens if a subsidised employee leaves their workplace.

Barriers to sustained employer participation include Mana in Mahi's incompatibilities with industry-specific remuneration approaches, supply of appropriate candidates and adequate financial support for work-related costs.

Recommendations

The evaluation makes the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that marketing and communication strategies promote Mana in Mahi to as many industries as possible to attract a wide range of employers.
2. Ensure that communications pathways and key information is available and understood by regional staff and stakeholders.
3. Establish a Working Group for future codesign.
4. Ensure that wage subsidy and incentive payment information is clearly targeted, structured, and communicated.
5. Provide information to employers about working with youth from a range of cultural backgrounds.
6. Conduct debt recovery sensitively on a case-by-case basis
7. Streamline paperwork and compliance requirements for employers to facilitate and sustain employer engagement.
8. Ensure pre-employment training has flexible content which can be tailored to industry and clients.
9. Ensure recruitment is aligned to both employer needs and client interests.

10. Ensure that MSD In-Work Support is available at times which meet clients' needs.
11. Ensure that clients have information about, and access to, funding pathways for drivers' licences.
12. Encourage employers to support on-the-job training⁵ through pastoral care and other measures.
13. Establish and embed expectations regarding qualifications and career pathways in documentation.
14. Ensure pastoral care is flexible and fit for purpose.
15. Ensure clients have appropriate support for on-the-job-training.
16. Develop a mobile device application (app) to facilitate the training pathway component.

⁵ This refers to both informal employer-provided training and formal qualification-based training.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from the second round of data collection for the formative and process evaluation of the 'Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work' prototype ('Mana in Mahi'; 'the prototype'). The report builds off the insights gathered from *Allen + Clarke's* first Mana in Mahi evaluation report.⁶

1.1. Context for the evaluation

The main aim of the Mana in Mahi programme in Phase One was to provide young people with sustainable employment outcomes by facilitating entry into the workforce and an industry training qualification pathway. The prototype was launched in August 2018 with an initial pilot phase (Phase One). Key components of the prototype (that is, Phase One) included:

- a wage subsidy paid to the employer by MSD to offset some of the initial costs and risks associated with undertaking the programme;
- financial payments to clients to incentivise them to stay in work and recognise their achievements for long-term success;
- pre-employment and/or 'on-the-job training' for the clients; and
- pastoral support services from their employer and MSD to support and enable clients to achieve successful enrolment and participation in an industry qualification.

In July 2019 Mana in Mahi progressed to Phase Two of its implementation. The aim for Phase Two is to 'provide apprenticeships and an industry training pathway leading to sustainable employment for young people who are at-risk of long-term benefit receipt'. Emphasising the Government's intention of and commitment to supporting youth into sustainable and meaningful work, Phase Two includes the introduction of a more intensive menu of support services including pastoral care for young people as well as employers.⁷ Mana in Mahi will also now be made available for some employers who offer part-time contracts to young people who are unable to work full-time.⁸ Drawing on the insights gained from Phase One, Phase Two implements a series of modified policy settings for Mana in Mahi. Key modifications include changes in eligibility, support for clients, and support for employers.

Eligibility criteria

- From August 2019, the main eligibility criteria change was that anyone at-risk of prolonged reliance on a benefit, including youth who are not currently in receipt of a benefit, is eligible for Mana in Mahi. In practice, this provides more referral pathways to Mana in Mahi for youth,

⁶ *Allen + Clarke*, 2019. 'Evaluation of the Mana in Mahi Prototype: First evaluation report.'

⁷ This component is scheduled for full implementation in 2020.

⁸ *Cabinet Office*, 2019. 'Minute of Decision: Phase Two Policy Settings for Mana in Mahi -Strength in Work, p.1. Available at <http://msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/mana-in-mahi/swc-19-min-0091-minute.pdf>.

such as for those transitioning out of Oranga Tamariki care, or participants of He Poutama Rangatahi.^{9,10} This criterion also applies to those outside the initial target age group of 18-24.

- From August 2019, some employers offering part-time contracts became eligible for Mana in Mahi. This is designed to cater for people unable to commit to full-time work, such as those with health or disability issues, or single parents.¹¹

Support for clients

- Currently, incentive payments are made to support Mana in Mahi participants to stay in work. Payments are made at attendance milestones throughout the course of the programme, with three separate payments of \$1,000 at 91 days, 182 days and 365 days (total of \$3,000).¹² The incentive payments will now be organised into ‘early payments’, designed to provide financial support while clients transition into work (for vehicle maintenance and childcare, for example), and ‘later payments’, to incentivise “...participation in industry training in the later months of the programme.”¹³
- More comprehensive support services and pastoral care for clients are scheduled for 2020.¹⁴

Support for employers

- The wage subsidy for employers has decreased from \$9,750 to \$9,580 to align with future forecasts of the annual Jobseeker Support rate.¹⁵
- Employers can no longer access the Work Readiness payment of up to \$1,000, which previously facilitated the purchase of tools, provision of drivers’ licences, and so forth. The Transition to Work fund is now recommended in place of this, with the intent of providing this monetary support directly to the client, instead of via the employer.
- More comprehensive support services and pastoral care will be provided for employers.¹⁶ As of late November 2019, Te Heke Mai¹⁷ is available to employers across New Zealand including Mana in Mahi employers. In addition, mentoring support will be rolled out in April 2020. The primary focus will be clients, but where clients give consent or request it, mentoring service providers will also work with employers.

⁹ *Office of the Minister of Employment [OME]*, 2019. Cabinet paper: ‘Phase Two Policy Settings for Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work.’ Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee, pp. 1, 3-4. Available at <http://msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/mana-in-mahi/cabinet-paper-phase-two-policy-settings-for-maha-in-mahi-strength-in-work.pdf>.

¹⁰ For more information on He Poutama Rangatahi, see <https://www.growregions.govt.nz/regions/he-poutama-rangatahi/>.

¹¹ *OME*, 2019, p. 2.

¹² *Office of the Minister of Employment [OME]*, 2019. Cabinet paper: ‘Phase Two Policy Settings for Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work.’ Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee, p. 5. Available at <http://msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/information-releases/mana-in-mahi/cabinet-paper-phase-two-policy-settings-for-maha-in-mahi-strength-in-work.pdf>.

¹³ *OME*, 2019, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.2.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁷ Te Heke Mai provides In-Work Support / Pastoral Care from a third party, to employers throughout New Zealand.

1.2. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of this formative process evaluation is to:

- Provide MSD with information on the strengths and weaknesses of the design and implementation of the Mana in Mahi prototype; and
- provide recommendations for improvements to the design and implementation of Mana in Mahi which may inform a potential expansion of the programme.

1.3. Evaluation scope

As a formative evaluation, the focus of this report is on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of programme implementation and design, and the achievement of immediate outcomes from the perspective of young people/clients, employers, and MSD staff. The terms 'young people' and 'clients' have been used interchangeably within the report to refer to participants in the Mana in Mahi programme. The term 'on-the-job training' refers to a wide range of training, both informal employer provided training and formal qualification-based training. To this end, the evaluation prioritised qualitative data collection and focused on the experience of the individuals who were interviewed or who participated in focus groups. This qualitative focus was complemented by a document review, and analysis of quantitative monitoring data provided by MSD.

1.4. Evaluation questions

The evaluation of Mana in Mahi was organised around four key thematic areas:

- the strengths and weaknesses of design;
- the strengths and weaknesses of implementation;
- progress made towards the expected initial outcomes; and
- areas for learning and improvement.

Table 1 presents nine Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) that were developed under these four themes.

Table 1: Evaluation themes and KEQs for the Mana in Mahi evaluation

THEME	KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Mana in Mahi prototype design	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design to support young people into employment and industry training?2. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design for employers?
Mana in Mahi prototype implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. To what extent was the Mana in Mahi prototype implemented as intended?4. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi implementation to support young people into employment and industry training?

	5. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi implementation for employers?
Progress towards outcomes	6. To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for young people not in education, employment or training? 7. To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for employers?
Learning and improvement	8. What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi? 9. How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

2. METHODOLOGY

As in the first evaluation, we used a mixed-method approach to evaluate the Mana in Mahi prototype. This allowed, where possible, qualitative data to be triangulated with quantitative data and document sources. The methods used included:

- a review of additional documentation provided by MSD;
- key informant interviews;
- case study interviews; and
- quantitative analysis of MSD’s monitoring data.

Further details of these methods are outlined below.¹⁸

2.1. Document review

Building on the document review from the first evaluation round,¹⁹ our team reviewed an additional 10 documents (refer to Bibliography). These related to the changes in policy settings for Phase Two as described in Cabinet papers and Ministerial reports, as well as updated strategies for Mana in Mahi marketing and communication. The review provided our team with an understanding of the modifications to the prototype, as well as an overview of the updated context in which Mana in Mahi is situated.

2.2. Key informant interview

We conducted a context-setting interview with five key interviewees from MSD involved in the design, implementation, and overall governance of Mana in Mahi. The group interview of approximately one hour collected information pertaining to the KEQs in Mana in Mahi. The interview provided:

- reflections on modifications to the prototype;

¹⁸ As both evaluations used the same methodological approach, this section is largely duplicated from the first report.

¹⁹ This included 24 documents and approved Mana in Mahi Programme promotional material.

- an overview of the key learnings, challenges and successes that had been reported to, or experienced by, each key stakeholder through the design and implementation process thus far; and
- context about the key challenges and observations of Phase Two implementation ahead of our case study visits.

The interview was semi-structured and followed the Key Informant Interview Guide attached in Appendix A.

2.3. Case study interviews

For purposes of continuity, our team returned to the three case study sites we visited in the first evaluation round of interviews (Auckland, Taranaki and Wellington). We adopted a case study approach to collect the ‘on-the-ground’ experiences of Mana in Mahi’s implementation across a range of Mana in Mahi former and current clients, employers and regional MSD staff at each site.

In this second round of data collection, 29 interviews were conducted, using both group and individual formats, with a total of 41 people, 15 of whom had been interviewed during the first round of data collection. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, and the interview guides used are provided in Appendix A. Interviews lasted for an average of 45 minutes.

Evaluation findings are based on the first 14 months of Mana in Mahi’s implementation (August 2018 – October 2019). Phase Two’s roll-out²⁰ coincided with our second round of data collection over September and October 2019. As such, many of the Mana in Mahi policy changes had not yet been felt across the cohort of employers or young people we spoke with. Nevertheless, staff at the regional MSD offices in Auckland, Whanganui, and Wellington provided valuable insights and reflections of Phase Two, detailed at length in this report.

Table 2: Number of individuals interviewed

	Auckland	Taranaki	Wellington	TOTAL
Current clients <i>(interviewed in round 1)</i>	4	2	1	7
Current clients	3	3	4	10
Former clients <i>(interviewed in round 1)</i>	1 ²¹	0	0	1
Former clients	2	1	1	4
Employers <i>(interviewed in round 1)</i>	0	1	0	1

²⁰ Phase Two of Mana in Mahi will be implemented incrementally and will not be fully implemented until March/April 2020.

²¹ Interviewed in round 1 as a current client.

	Auckland	Taranaki	Wellington	TOTAL
Employers	4 ²²	0	1	5
Former employers²³ <i>(interviewed in round 1)</i>	0	0	2 ²⁴	2
Former employers	1	1	1	3
MSD regional staff <i>(interviewed in round 1)</i>	3	1	0	4
MSD regional staff	1	0	3	4
TOTAL				41

Excluding gender, demographic information was not collected during interviews.

2.4. Interviews with current Mana in Mahi clients

Current Mana in Mahi clients were engaged through group and individual interviews. Where possible, we organised the interviews around break-times or after work to cause minimal disruption to clients and employers, and always provided kai to help create a relaxed and comfortable environment. We also provided all clients with a koha in recognition of their contribution to the evaluation.

We took an informal, semi-structured approach to the interviews, following an interview guide to cover the key elements of the KEQs relating to client experiences, while also allowing the conversation to be guided by the clients. The interviews focused on client experiences of elements of Mana in Mahi, and how much of an incentive each element of the programme was to their joining it. We explored their experiences of Mana in Mahi including their recruitment journey, pre-employment and ‘on-the-job’ training, incentive payments, MSD and employer support, and career development.

2.5. Interviews with former Mana in Mahi clients

Engagements with former clients followed the approach taken for current clients – meeting them at a convenient time and location, providing them with a koha to thank them for their time, and following a semi-structured interview format. Alongside exploring their experiences of the programme, we also probed the reasons, barriers, and potential aggravating factors for their early exit from the programme.

²² Two participants from the same organisation were interviewed separately. The organisation was also a national one, so their information was relevant to all of the case study sites.

²³ Although it was not stipulated in the evaluation plan to interview former employers, the evaluation team discovered that several employers had recently left the programme and were willing to be interviewed about their experience.

²⁴ Both employers were interviewed in round 1 as current employers.

2.6. Interviews with Mana in Mahi employers

The employer interviews predominantly took place at the employer's work site and discussed which aspects of the programme were working (or not working) for themselves and their employees. We also explored what could be changed to make it easier for them to participate in the programme and to provide sustainable employment and training pathways for young people. Where possible, kai was provided during employer interviews to foster a more relaxed environment.

2.7. Interviews with MSD regional staff

MSD regional staff involved in Mana in Mahi's implementation were interviewed either over the telephone or in person at each site. Each region has operational autonomy in the delivery of MSD programmes, and it was particularly important for us to gather the perspectives of regional staff to discern the differences, challenges, and observations of the prototype across Wellington, Taranaki, and Auckland. The interviews covered procedural elements of Mana in Mahi, focussing on the support and processes provided by MSD to recruit and sustain programme participation, alongside gaining wider context surrounding the programme's design and implementation.

2.8. Analysis of quantitative data

Quantitative analysis was based on aggregated data tables and monthly summary Mana in Mahi reports provided by MSD. The monthly summary reports contained the following information:

- number of employers who have expressed interest in Mana in Mahi, applied to join, or have signed contracts (collection of this data ceased after June 2019);
- number of clients placed into a Mana in Mahi role compared to the forecast number of client placements;
- number of positions indicated by employer applications compared to forecast number of positions indicated based on employer applications; and
- number of positions contracted between MSD and employers compared to forecast number of positions contracted.

MSD also provided additional information, including:

- a breakdown of employers by region and size;
- a breakdown of client numbers by region and industry type;
- demographic characteristics and the benefit history of all clients who were placed in Mana in Mahi roles at the end of September 2019;
- demographic characteristics of clients who left Mana in Mahi early (including information about the current benefit status of these clients) as at the end of September 2019;
- information about the incentive payments received by clients who left Mana in Mahi early broken down by various time points; and
- detailed information about client attrition for two specific cohorts defined based on the date of programme entry.

The majority of the data received has been used to provide context to the qualitative findings in this report. Some basic statistical analysis has been used to explore whether there were any significant differences in the characteristics of the subset of clients who left Mana in Mahi and those who remained in the programme, as at the end of September 2019. Comparison was based on the calculation of standard chi-square tests²⁵ for each characteristic of interest.

2.9. Limitations

The following limitations of the evaluation have been identified.

- Qualitative interview findings about the strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi outline only the perspectives of those interviewed – it is not known whether these findings are generalisable to the entire Mana in Mahi employer and participant population.
- Data collection for this report coincided with the roll-out of aspects of Mana in Mahi Phase Two. The experiences of participants relating to Mana in Mahi Phase Two were less obvious among employers and clients we spoke with, as many of them had been recruited during Phase One and the Phase One settings still applied to them. Nevertheless, MSD regional staff provided valuable insights into the design and implementation of Phase Two.
- The evaluation did not include those employers and young people who were interested in or contacted about Mana in Mahi, but ultimately decided not to take part. The list of potential participants was restricted to employers and employees who had enrolled in Mana in Mahi. Information and contact details about those who enquired but did not participate were not available centrally.
- The interviews included only a small number of former Mana in Mahi client participants (N=5) due to challenges in contacting young people who had exited the programme. No former employers were interviewed during round two fieldwork. Allen and Clarke made multiple attempts to contact both groups by email, text and phone calls, but no response was received.
- Mana in Mahi evaluation participants, including employers, young people and MSD staff, are likely to have an interest in the programme's continuation. While their perspectives are valuable, and critical for the evaluation, they are not neutral. An unbiased perspective would be difficult to capture from stakeholder engagement. The evaluation engaged with five clients who had exited the programme, to provide the perspective of those not currently involved with Mana in Mahi.
- Quantitative findings must be interpreted with caution given the relatively small number of programme participants and the nature of the data provided by MSD (i.e., that was aggregated for privacy reasons).
- We were unable to obtain data regarding the proportion of clients who remained with the programme for at least three months who received the appropriate incentive payment. Instead, we received incentive payment data for subsets of clients who reached three months

²⁵ Chi-square tests compare the actual distribution of a characteristic of interest observed across multiple samples with the distribution of characteristics that would be observed if the samples had the same average distribution. Test results are expressed as p-values: p-values indicate the probability of observing differences in distribution at least as great as those observed if samples were drawn from identically distributed populations.

or six months with the programme and subsequently left the programme. This reduced our ability to analyse the provision and receipt of client incentive payments.

- Our coverage of some MSD regional stakeholders was limited. Work Brokers' perspectives are critical to any employment-related MSD-operated programme because they are the principal conduit between employers, the labour pool, and Work and Income. Regional offices were invited to identify three relevant officials for interview, but only one Work Broker was interviewed during data collection. A number of insights and recommendations in this report come from conversations with regional staff and the Work Broker. As Work Brokers' are the officials who experience and observe the impacts of implementation 'up close', we suggest that in any future evaluation work for Mana in Mahi (or indeed, any other employment-related MSD programme), Work Brokers be engaged as key stakeholders from the outset.


These limitations require the findings of this evaluation to be understood in its context as a small-scale study based primarily on qualitative evidence, supplemented by quantitative evidence.

3. KEY FINDINGS

This section details the key findings of the evaluation under the nine KEQs.

KEQ1: What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design to support young people into employment and industry training?

1.1 Effectiveness of communication and marketing strategies for young people



Most young people heard about Mana in Mahi through Work and Income, despite MSD marketing and communication strategies which included multiple channels of communication. Focusing future communications activity around informing frontline staff, such as Work Brokers, should therefore be a priority. The key incentivising factor for young people to join the programme remains the possibility of entering stable employment. While the other components of the prototype are certainly helpful, most young people were not aware of them prior to joining. Nevertheless, we consider the cumulative weight of the combined incentive mechanisms a strength of Mana in Mahi, and should they be communicated more succinctly to young people, this may contribute to incentivising participation.

Mana in Mahi has used a wide variety of communication and marketing strategies to attract young people. The most common way young people who participated in the evaluation heard of Mana in Mahi was through verbal communication from Work and Income personnel.

Communication strategies employed by MSD included engagement through Facebook, Instagram, Linked-in, TradeMe television and radio advertisements, a Google AdWords campaign, direct email and text messaging campaigns, targeted promotion to graduates of the Limited Service Volunteer programme (LSV), and holding expos showcasing products such as Mana in Mahi.^{26,27} However, most young people we spoke with had not been exposed to this marketing collateral,²⁸ and so it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of this investment. When it was established that young people had not seen this marketing collateral, we proceeded with other questions in the course of the interview. Nevertheless, we have provided some suggestions on language and tone below. What remains clear is that the key channel young people heard of Mana in Mahi was through their local Work and Income branch. We consider this the most effective option for recruitment, given few had seen Mana in Mahi advertised outside of this.

Phase Two's policy settings broadened the eligibility criteria for the prototype to include those not currently receiving a benefit but at risk of long-term benefit receipt.²⁹ National MSD staff spoke of the importance of marketing the Mana in Mahi programme to schools and pupils who were at risk of long-term benefit receipt to offer a career pathway and avoid falling into the

²⁶ Ministry of Social Development [MSD a], 2018. 'Mana in Mahi – Phase 1 Tactical Promotional Plan', p. 1.

²⁷ MSD b, 2019. 'Campaign plan: August – September 2019', p. 1.

²⁸ This refers to the suite of material developed to market the programme to its target audiences. In other instances of this report, this is truncated to 'collateral'.

²⁹ OME, 2019. p. 1.

NEET³⁰ category. This is a significant benefit for those schools with the Gateway Programme and Trades Academies, in that the programme offers a clear route to employment where none previously existed.

As the first evaluation report suggested, the marketing and communications campaign should be “representative of a wide variety of industries,”³¹ to include industries as diverse as forestry and hairdressing. While MSD is acting to address this, the problem persists that some potentially eligible clients (and employers) do not see themselves reflected in the marketing material. In addition to our initial recommendation, we suggest tailoring the marketing and communication strategies to expose Mana in Mahi to as many industries as possible, for instance, to digital arts, design, information technology, and furniture manufacture. This could be facilitated through collaboration with the various industry training organisations (ITOs),³² exemplified through the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation’s marketing video advertising Mana in Mahi.

In practice, connecting more specifically with young people means having images and advertisements representative of these industries, so that young people and employers see themselves reflected in the marketing collateral. Further, there may be value in including other words alongside the term “apprenticeship” in this collateral. Some employers in certain industries, while theoretically eligible for Mana in Mahi, were initially put off because of the stereotypical connotations the word carries, namely tied to trades such as building and automotive engineering. One of our recommendations is to establish a Working Group with representatives from industry; we suggest using this group to test any future marketing collateral and media investment.

1.2 Incentivising factors for young people

As identified in the first evaluation report, the main motivation for young people to join Mana in Mahi was the desire to enter stable employment. This continues to be the case. Across all the current and former clients, we spoke with, the desire to maintain employment and support themselves and their whānau, was paramount. The extent to which other elements of the prototype incentivised young peoples’ participation is detailed below.

- Many young people were not aware that they were eligible to receive **pre-employment or work readiness training** prior to their employment. It is thus difficult to gauge how effective this may have been at incentivising young people.
- The opportunity to gain **on-the-job training, career planning and development** was a motivating factor for young people beneath the principal impetus of finding a stable job.
- Most young people considered the **gaining of qualifications** very attractive.
- Overall, **the incentive payment** did not in and of itself incentivise young people but was a ‘side bonus’ or ‘nice to have’, post-joining. As two current clients noted, it was “great to get money but [we] just wanted a job”.

³⁰ Youth not in employment, education, or training.

³¹ *Allen + Clarke*, 2019, p. 29.

³² See <https://www.tec.govt.nz/teo/working-with-teos/itos/directory/>.

- Nearly all current clients we spoke with were comfortable approaching their employers for **in-work support** and **pastoral care**. Most, however, were unaware of this component of Mana in Mahi before they joined the programme, and therefore it is unlikely that this incentivised client participation.

Other incentivising factors for joining include the opportunity to be part of a team and share in an environment of camaraderie³³ and the ability to be self-sufficient and ‘forge their own path’. Due to the timing of our fieldwork coinciding with Phase Two launching, we were unable to speak with part-time clients as none had been recruited within the three regions at that time. However, MSD officials emphasised the flexibility part-time opportunities allow where, for example, single parents with young children may begin with part-time work to accommodate childcare obligations, and graduate into full-time employment and apprenticeship training as their children start primary school. We consider this a strength of the revised Phase Two policy settings, in comparison to Phase One.

Beyond the primary attraction of gaining employment and qualifications, our data suggests the work readiness payments and any support to purchase work-related equipment are important elements for young people. In terms of the incentive payments, we did not directly explore the counterfactual (whether young people’s interest would remain if the payments did not exist). Given most young people saw the payments as ‘nice to have’, however, we do not think the payments’ absence would impact on their commitment to stay in Mana in Mahi. However, it is important to keep in mind that many young people, committed to their employment, used the incentive payments to help purchase equipment or pay for courses they needed. This was a gap that would not otherwise have easily been filled. By no means are we suggesting the payments be removed, but it might be useful to prescribe that they are used for purchasing work-related equipment (or something similar). While many used the payments for furthering their employment, we were informed by employers (and some young people) that others had used theirs for recreational uses or for the purchase of technology items (such as televisions).

1.3 Barriers to participation

One of the key challenges Mana in Mahi has faced has been a lack of clear internal communication and marketing about the programme. Regional staff spoke of the importance of having clear communication about the programme, and iterative changes therein, from national office. This is also important given most young people heard about the Mana in Mahi programme through Work and Income staff. Where clear communication has been lacking (an experience shared among all three regional cohorts we spoke with), Work and Income frontline staff and Work Brokers have been unable to sufficiently promote the programme and its incentives to young people reflecting the general theme we have observed, where many components of the prototype could be incentivising, both to young people and employers, if they were sufficiently communicated both internally and externally. Clear internal communication is critical, especially as new policy settings or other changes are introduced to Mana in Mahi.

³³ This is particularly important in group-based high stress environments such as forestry, where ‘gang morale’ is extremely important for the safety and mental wellbeing of the crew.

KEQ2: What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design for employers?

Diverse marketing and communicating approaches are achieving some success with employers. Pre-employment training is an incentive to participation which has potential for further enhancement. Wage subsidies are also important incentives for employers. Effective communication regarding the programme and its changes, between national and regional stakeholders, is critical to attracting employers. However, differences between Mana in Mahi and sector-specific (i.e. forestry) remuneration approaches have emerged as a barrier to participation. Finally, despite some challenges, the prototype is considered suitable for a range of employer types.

2.1 Effectiveness of communication and marketing strategies for employers

A range of employer marketing approaches have been developed and implemented, including Trade Me advertisements, Google Ad words, information on Linked-In, as well as reach outs from Work and Income staff promoting the programme. Mana in Mahi's marketing collateral is now a feature of engagement for both informing and recruiting employers.

During the second round of fieldwork most of the employers interviewed reported hearing about Mana in Mahi from Work and Income staff by email, phone call, or in person. In addition, Trade Me advertisements were mentioned by several employers as effective in raising awareness about, and interest in, the programme.

One employer had been made aware of Mana in Mahi through an invitation to collaborate on the prototype's development. A small number of sub-contractor employers heard about the programme from their national organisation contracting partners, with others hearing of it through their employees. The programme has also been advertised through key groups such as the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), Chambers of Commerce, the Engineering, Printing, and Manufacturing Union, BusinessNZ, and mayoral taskforces. Marketing collateral which have also been developed through these groups were not mentioned by employers.

Some of the diverse approaches included in the Programme's Communications Strategy were mentioned by employers. A diverse approach to employer marketing is central to reaching a range of employers, and information should be up to date and audience specific. Further, maintaining flexibility in marketing channels is important to 'cast the net wide.'

2.2 Incentivising factors for employers

The degree to which each of Mana in Mahi's components incentivised employers is detailed below.

- Overall, **pre-employment training** continues to act as an incentive for employers. Many employers see the value of pre-employment training, with several considering the integration of qualification enrolment and coursework into training particularly valuable. This was important in terms of strengthening the general work readiness of employees, many seeing – and valuing – the opportunity to 'try before you buy'. In general, having work-ready young

people is particularly appealing. Greater incentivisation may be achieved by integrating qualification registration and progress as part of pre employment training where appropriate.

- **MSD support** continues to provide a degree of incentivisation for employer participation, together with wage subsidies. Support provided to join and stay in the programme, as well as facilitating the employment of equipped and skilled workers, is certainly attractive. Employers highlighted the importance of MSD support with paperwork and ensuring young people had what they needed to begin work.
- The extent to which **MSD support for young people** incentivises employer participation is variable. Some employers did not see this as desirable or motivating for participation, citing the risk of a young person being dependent on MSD, while for other employers, this was an incentive. Employers interested in MSD support stressed that support offered by MSD for young people must meet both the young person's need and organisational and employer characteristics and requirements in order to be attractive to employers. There may also be circumstances where direct MSD support is less relevant/attractive than support from other providers.
- While employers were largely unaware of the support application **Te Heke Mai**, should its provision of In-Work Support and pastoral care be communicated to employers, it may incentivise participation as an option to outsource **pastoral care**, particularly for smaller employers who are time poor and lack the resources and systems to provide this.
- Wage subsidies continue to provide a degree of incentivisation for employers.

Beyond Mana in Mahi's design components, employers identified the following as incentivising factors:

- **Altruism**, and the desire to "give a helping hand".
"[The] Government has made a commitment to us, so [we've made a] commitment to [the] community in return." (Employer)
- **Future proofing** one's business and developing **succession plans** was put forward as a motivation.

2.3 Barriers to employer participation

The following barriers to employer participation were identified:

- As per the first report, high levels of paperwork compliance were mentioned as barriers for employers, with some suggesting that the paperwork channel was problematic, proposing that handling some paperwork (such as invoices) online may alleviate this. The timing of paperwork was not mentioned.
- Several employers mentioned that stigma around working with the previously unemployed was a potential barrier.
- Mana in Mahi's remuneration model has proved to be a barrier for the forestry (specifically, silviculture) industry, which operates on a 'per-piece' rather than hourly framework. This is discussed further in sections 5.8 and 7.3.

2.4 Fit for organisational characteristics of employers

The evaluation has found that Mana in Mahi is generally suitable for a range of employers with different size, sector and geographical characteristics. However, larger employers seem better suited because of the human resourcing and administrative infrastructure already built into their systems. There remains a high level of compliance and administration requirements that smaller employers struggle to satisfy, and the suite of recommendations under KEQ9 are together designed to address these concerns.

KEQ3: To what extent was the Mana in Mahi prototype implemented as intended?

The extent to which pre-employment training is occurring as intended varies; on-the-job training is generally happening as intended; and not all clients have been enrolled into qualifications, nor had training pathways developed for them.

3.1 Extent to which pre-employment training is occurring as intended

The extent to which pre-employment training is occurring as intended varies, primarily due to its optional nature within the employer contract template.

Provision for pre-employment training – that is, bringing clients up to a baseline ‘work readiness’ standard – is contained in employer contracts with a maximum allocation of \$2,000 per client. This training must be done through an “acceptable Private Training Establishment.”³⁴ However, this is not a mandatory component of the contract, with many employers opting not to use this, instead seeing such ‘training’ as happening from the outset of clients’ employment. In one region, staff mentioned that there had been little uptake of the fund and emphasised the importance of Work Brokers’ knowledge of this provision, so employers knew what it entailed and the benefits it offered.

The term ‘pre-employment training’ confused some employers. It tends to suggest that such training must occur prior to commencement of employment, and so after their employee has commenced employment, they forgo the funding. MSD regional staff suggested renaming this to ‘Workplace Training Component’, to avoid confusion around the time-indicative phrase of ‘pre’-employment. Our data showed this to be the main barrier for employers to take up the training; it is unclear if there were other reasons for this.

It was also suggested that the timing of the training (or fund) be made flexible (or communicated as such), so that employers could access portions of this fund as and when they needed it. This would also lend itself to a name change (eg, Workplace Training Component).

Some regional staff noted limitations with the Transition to Work (TTW) fund, particularly as it appears to be more administratively burdensome for clients than the previous Work Readiness (WR) payment dispensed by the employer. In their view, TTW does not provide as much financial support as WR, and, overall, the WR fund was more effective in bringing clients up to a ‘work ready’ standard. It may be useful for MSD to explore this further with regional staff, to develop potential solutions to this. Recommendation 2 provides suggestions from employers, regional staff, and young people about what this training component should include.

³⁴ MSD c, 2019. ‘Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work Agreement’ [Employer contract]. Internal document, p. 2.

3.2 Extent to which on-the-job training and qualification pathway development and implementation is occurring as intended

Overall, on-the-job training is largely occurring as intended, with clients learning the skills and techniques of their trade from the outset of their employment. However, in some instances on-the-job training is not occurring as envisaged, for example the extent to which clients have been enrolled into qualifications varies. As described in section 4.4, some clients have neither been enrolled into a qualification nor had a professional development plan (that is, a training pathway) designed for them. This appears to be due to a lack of clear communication about MSD's expectation for employers regarding qualifications, and employers not always knowing the relevant NZQA qualification within their industry.

To address this, some regional staff suggested making more robust the contractual expectation of a qualification plan by the six-month mark. They suggested that this be accompanied with a clear pathway for employers to access their respective ITOs, and what they need to ask ITO representatives to ascertain which qualification (at NZQA Level 3 or above) is the appropriate one for their industry.

Alternatively, in another region, one Work Broker's approach was to identify a relevant qualification in advance, and then facilitate a meeting between the ITO and employer to check suitability. Rolling out this approach would need to be considered in the context of Work Brokers' other duties to ensure they are not overburdened.

Given the qualification-gaining component is a fundamental pillar of Mana in Mahi, we place emphasis on these observations and suggestions. This is reinforced by MSD regional data which demonstrates gaining a qualification and maintaining employment for a period of time significantly reduces the risk of past beneficiaries returning to receipt of a benefit.

3.3 Extent to which the incentive payment process is occurring as intended

As per the previous report, gaps in MSD's data relating to the incentive payment process have meant it is unclear whether incentive payments are occurring as intended. We received data relating to incentive payments for 79 clients who left the programme after at least three months participation. Of these clients, only 30 percent (95% CI: 20%-41%) had received the three-month incentive payment.³⁵ We were not able to explore these clients' perspectives relating to this, and if the incentive payments made a difference. (The five former clients interviewed had not received incentive payments) However, discussions with MSD officials indicate that incentive payment data may be of limited quality, reflecting both lags in the reporting of incentive payments and the limitations of the reporting process.

It may be of value for MSD to explore whether payments are occurring but are not being captured by the current data infrastructure. Other questions of interest may relate to the process by which incentive payments are being triggered/requested by employers. Of note, the vast majority of the clients we spoke to that remained employed under Mana in Mahi who were eligible to receive incentive payments had received these.

³⁵ Six-month incentive payment data for programme leavers provided by MSD could not be meaningfully analysed, as only 22 clients had left the programme after six months with the programme at the time of reporting.

3.4 Areas of and reasons for divergence from prototype

In summarising the above, the main areas of divergence from the Mana in Mahi prototype include the following three points:

- Not all young people have received pre-employment training. Strengthening their work readiness remains an important issue, but this has not always occurred as intended.
- Incentive payments do not appear to be consistently processed, either because they are not being triggered/requested, or because they are occurring but are not being captured within MSD's data infrastructure.
- Some young people have not yet been enrolled into an appropriate qualification.

KEQ4: What are the key strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi implementation to support young people into employment and industry training?

Young peoples' experiences of recruitment, pre-employment training, on-the-job training and career development, the incentive payments and employer pastoral care have generally been positive. However, clients struggle juggling work and study; the matching of client to employer remains a challenge; there have been mixed responses to MSD's suite of support for clients; and transport to and from work continues to be an issue for many clients.

4.1 Young people's journey into Mana in Mahi

There are a variety of different methods through which young people are recruited into Mana in Mahi. MSD officials noted three common pathways for recruitment, including situations where:

- a client has reached out to an employer of their own volition, and the employer was eager to hire the client. In this case, the Case Manager and Work Broker assessed the client's eligibility for Mana in Mahi and liaised with the employer to ensure they can provide a training pathway;
- a client applied for a position advertised through Work and Income; from here, they were passed onto the employer for interviewing; or
- an employer signalled to Work and Income that they have positions available; a Work Broker then searched for a suitable client.

Our findings generally align with this. Most young people heard of Mana in Mahi through Work and Income, and in the course of discussions between them and frontline staff, were offered the programme. This channelling has mainly been through Work and Income branches, but has also occurred through Limited Service Volunteers, Cadet MAX (a comparable youth employment programme), or other Work and Income-facilitated employment programmes (such as with Downer). We also heard of instances where young people, with very positive experiences of Mana in Mahi, actively encouraged their friends or whānau to apply for and "get on" the programme.

4.2 Young people's match with their employer

Many of the current client cohort we interviewed felt they were matched very well with their employer, with an equal number keen to pursue a long-term career in their select industries. However, MSD regional and national staff universally commented on the challenge of appropriately matching young people with employers, noting that 'we don't always get this right' and that it can be a 'hit and miss' scenario. For example, a significant mismatching of a client led to their rapid departure from the programme. Some regional staff noted that, from their experience, it is easier to start with the client, and then go about finding suitable employment for that person specifically (rather than the reverse). This should be considered during the future iterations of Mana in Mahi.

4.3 Young people’s experiences of pre-employment training

The nature and scope of pre-employment training varied considerably between industries, especially as the larger employers (such as Downer and Vivo) have dedicated pre-work courses, which smaller employers tend not to have. Not all young people received this training, with many unaware that this was a component of Mana in Mahi.

Those who did receive some form of pre-employment training spoke highly of it, feeling that it helped them prepare and transition into their new roles. One client described it as “awesome”, in providing her the confidence and technical knowledge to enter her profession. Others felt it was helpful to “upskill, [provide] better opportunities, and open doors” in current and future employment endeavours. These descriptions echo the perspectives of MSD officials and regional staff, in which the training clients receive for one job can be transferred elsewhere. Health and safety training in construction, for example, is mandatory across the industry, and could help increase the general work-readiness of clients wanting to work in other subsectors of the same or similar industries. This is further evidenced by a former client who praised her pre-employment training, as it gave her the foundations of working in hair and beauty, despite being unable to continue with her employer for other reasons. She remains keen to pursue this career, and with the basic foundations she now has, can do so with greater ease. In contrast, there were a small number of clients who reported feeling unable to apply the skills they learned in training to their employment.

4.4 Young people’s experiences of on-the-job training and career planning and development

Overall, client experiences of on-the-job training have been positive, primarily due to the collective desire to enter and maintain stable employment. Part of the on-the-job training includes working towards an industry-based qualification or apprenticeship, to progress the clients’ long-term career prospects. This often involves taking theoretical or practical classes and assignments. There was almost unanimous praise from clients, employers and regional staff alike about gaining qualifications, and young people tended to see this as a very valuable and positive component of Mana in Mahi. Many also felt they were able to progress their careers through their current employment. To fulfil this criterion, employers are responsible for enrolling their employees into a recognised qualification and organising a professional development plan for the employee that is oriented around goals agreed by both parties.

Partly due to the communication issues identified in section 3.2,³⁶ on-the-job training and career planning and development has not always occurred as intended, with some clients left unenrolled in a qualification and/or without a professional development plan. A close relationship between employers and Work and Income is needed to ensure the former are aware of expectations regarding relevant qualifications in their respective industries, and of Work and Income’s expectations about professional development plans and enrolling clients into a qualification.

³⁶ The specific issue identified was a lack of clear communication about MSD’s expectation for employers regarding qualifications, and employers not always knowing the relevant NZQA qualification within their industry.

4.5 Young people's experiences of incentive payments

This section refers to the incentive payment system under the Phase One policy settings, with instalments at three, six and twelve months. As noted in the first evaluation report,³⁷ the payments did not in and of themselves motivate young people to join Mana in Mahi. Clients' principal motivation continues to be finding stable and secure employment, with the incentive payments seen as an additional bonus to joining: "[they're] good, but not a huge deal" remarked one current client.

However, some clients felt unsure or suspicious of the payments, thinking they were loans to be repaid (this misunderstanding was identified in the first report). Clearer communication about this would help allay these concerns in future. By the same token, some regional staff suggested clarifying when the payments would arrive into clients' bank accounts, as they take some time to process. As these staff stipulated, this would provide clarity to the client and avoid any potential disappointment, as was the case for one client we spoke with.

Many young people we spoke with put their payments towards equipment or training costs for their employment such as tools, computers, enrolment fees through an ITO, or vehicles/vehicle maintenance (for transport to and from work). In contrast, some clients also used their payments for recreational purposes.

We heard of some instances (from a few employers and former clients) of clients staying in employment until the 90-day mark, when they received their first incentive payment, and then left their job. As discussed further in section 5.10, it may be advantageous to apply a criteria or scope for incentive payment disbursements or tie the payment system to employer expectations.

4.6 Young people's experiences of MSD support

Most current clients we interviewed were contacted by MSD's In-Work Support. Some clients appreciated Work and Income's effort to support them in their new role and felt assured there was a 'back up' system in place. For one client this support was invaluable, helping arrange payment for his Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as well as supporting him in the wake of his mother's passing. However, clients reported that MSD contact occurred mostly at inconvenient times, during working hours.

A minority of clients had no contact from MSD. Some of these clients were happy with a "hands off" approach which left them to concentrate on their employment. Others preferred in-person meetings (but recognised these were hard to organise). In one instance, a former client felt "let down" by Work and Income, after being told she would be supported into a new job following an experience of bullying by her employer. Upon her resignation, however, Work and Income stopped contacting her, and she now feels uncomfortable reaching out again.³⁸

Some regional staff emphasised the pastoral care and financial support offered by In-Work Support, but clients tended not to be aware of this. A regional staff member suggested having a real-time chat function on Work and Income's website as another avenue of support for young people.

³⁷ Allen + Clarke, 2019, p. 11.

³⁸ This concern has been escalated to MSD.

4.7 Young people's experiences of employer support and pastoral care

Through our discussions with young people, it is clear that the pastoral care and support provided by employers has been crucial in transitioning them into their new roles, with most clients comfortable talking with and approaching their employers for support inside and outside of work. This support is particularly important for Mana in Mahi employees, for, as one employer remarked, they tend to require significantly more help and pastoral care than other employees.

Hard work initially, culture and boundaries set [to] make the perfect young person. (Employer)

4.8 Young people's experiences of juggling work and study

Overall, young people struggle with the demands of study and full-time work, having to fit their study obligations outside of work hours. This tends to put them under considerable pressure, as many are unfamiliar with the demands of full-time work, let alone the additional demands of studying. Many clients requested more study support – through tutors or the like – to help them with this. Being overcome by this pressure was the purported reason one former client left the programme, with working Monday to Saturday and Sunday theory classes proving “too much” for him. In another case, two clients found the dual demands of work and study meant they had little free time to themselves, often having to work 15-hour labour-intensive days including travel to work.

Despite this, nearly all young people we spoke with were determined to make the necessary sacrifices to secure both their jobs and qualifications, including using days off to focus on study. Some employers have provided a measure of flexibility in this regard, allowing their employees to take time off as and when needed to continue their studies. Emphasising this dual demand on Mana in Mahi clients to employers may be useful. Other clients suggested it would be helpful to have clearer information provided to them at the outset regarding expectations around study and work, given many may not be familiar with either.

4.9 Barriers to remaining in Mana in Mahi

The most prominently identified barrier to participation, shared across current and former clients, was the distance between work and home. In one case, a current client travels nearly four hours each day to and from work, with some former clients citing distance issues like these as the principal reason for exiting the programme. Echoing the above, the demands of full-time work alongside study have also been barriers to participation, and some have requested more support to help them with study and understanding theory (such as through tutor support, or something similar).

4.10 Primary and secondary drivers of dropout rates

The primary driver for young people leaving the programme is a misalignment between their interests and capabilities, and their employment position. This is why the matching process between employer and employee must be done carefully and robustly. Secondary drivers for leaving include struggling with the work/study balance, whānau/’āiga obligations that pull them away from work and – more generally – not possessing a strong work ethic.

KEQ5: What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi implementation for employers?

Mana in Mahi programme employer numbers are steadily increasing. Matching of employer and client continues to be crucial. Where pre-employment training was implemented, it has been largely successful. While on-the-job training was happening, expectations were not always well understood by regional stakeholders or employers concerning the enrolment of employees into qualification pathways. Interviews suggested that some employers may have benefited from receiving guidance about providing pastoral care to their Mana in Mahi employees. Employers were, however, supportive of the wage subsidy and raised issues of timing, consistency and communication to improve effectiveness. A range of employers can participate in and benefit from Mana in Mahi, although some underlying challenges continue to exist. Barriers to sustained employer participation include Mana in Mahi's incompatibilities with industry-specific remuneration approaches, supply of appropriate candidates and adequate financial support for work-related costs.

5.1 Employer recruitment into Mana in Mahi

Employer recruitment data provided by MSD shows a steady increase in the number of employers who have applied to join the scheme, as well as those who have signed contracts onto the scheme.

G's story

G is the regional manager of a national organisation and has taken on three young people through Mana in Mahi. G mentions that though some employers believe there is a stigma in recruiting beneficiaries, all three clients are still with his organisation. G believes "the government has made a commitment to us, so we make commitment to the community in return". He said that it is nice to have the wage subsidy. It is an incentive to offset some of the costs and it makes the Mana in Mahi programme more attractive than some other programmes. However, he would have hired these people anyway regardless of the subsidy.

Figure 1 presents cumulative figures for these categories and for the total number of interested employers since launch.³⁹

³⁹ Application and contract data were not available for September 2019, and total 'interested employers' figures were not available after May 2019.

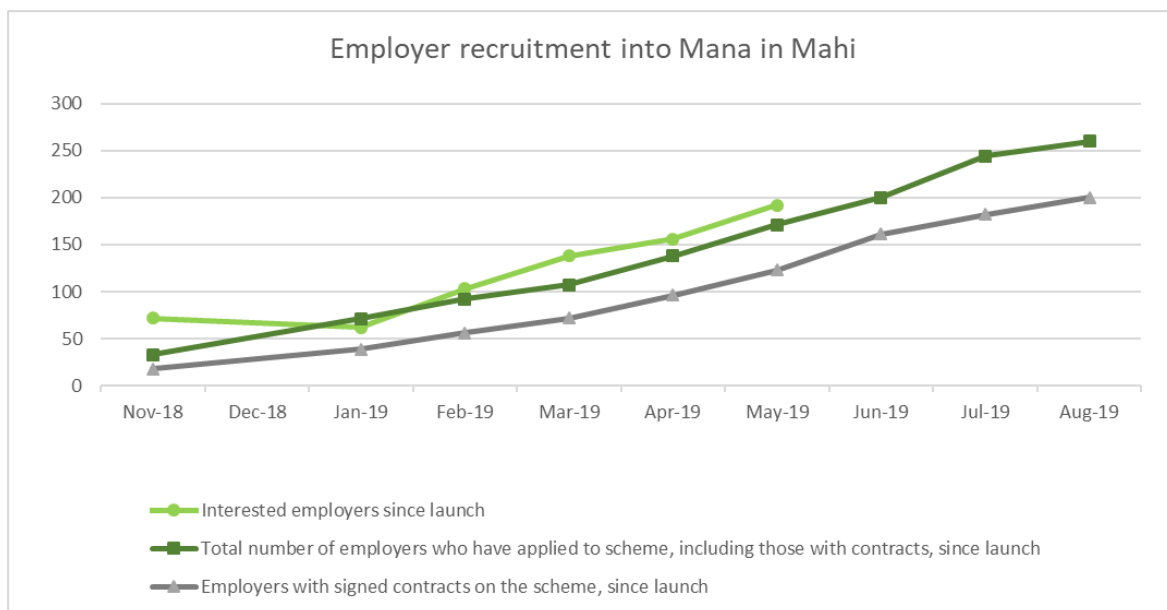


Figure 1: Employer recruitment into Mana in Mahi

Employers were either recruited as national or regional employers. National employers were recruited through the national MSD Industry Partnerships team, while regional employers were recruited through regional Work Brokers. As also described in the first evaluation report, regional staff again noted a lack of clarity in communications about Mana in Mahi, which meant some employers have not been fully informed of the breadth and scope of the programme.

“What Mana in Mahi is about, [such as the levels of] commitment etc., ... has been fuzzy. When we went [searching for] information [to help us], [it] was confusing, didn’t flow, [and] didn’t make sense.” (Regional staff member)

A national employer had trouble in dealing with multiple Work and Income offices who provided differing levels of support to join and participate in the programme.

For another national contractor employer, joining Mana in Mahi aligned well with their approach to employee recruitment and training. This employer also ran an innovative sub-recruitment process where it requested expressions of interest from amongst its own contractors to identify those best suited to employ under Mana in Mahi and receive tailored pre-employment training.

Employer self-referral into Mana in Mahi has also been effective, as have radio and television advertisements. However, use of the word ‘trade’ in advertisements such as these may need reconsideration, as it tends to suggest a specific set of industries (when Mana in Mahi is open to anyone fulfilling the criteria).

National stakeholders recognised that it was critical to give Work Brokers/Industry Partnerships officials sufficient and appropriate information to ensure they can communicate Mana in Mahi to clients.

Employer recruitment into Mana in Mahi was also recognised as taking place in a broader strategic context where MSD was transitioning from a benefit- to employment-focused. This was considered beneficial to enabling enhanced employer recruitment.

5.2 Employer/employee matching

The effective matching of employers with suitable clients continues to be critical for the success of the prototype. Where this was successful, employers identified the importance of robust screening of clients as an important consideration. Officials were aware of the challenge presented by matching the right employer to employee and mentioned this was an MSD-wide challenge. It is crucial to focus on the skills and capabilities of the client, during initial discussions with case managers, by having in-depth conversations with them about what they want to do, and what is valuable to them.

When this is not the case, however, employer expectations are not met, and clients tend to exit their employment. As one employer experienced, several of his Mana in Mahi employees left for these (among other) reasons. Another national employer, seeking clients for their subcontractors, found the matching process difficult and reflected on whether it was better to identify the client first, identify their skills and talents and locate or identify appropriate jobs and then search for employers. Within a unique context where 10 clients were required at once, jobs were fitted to clients, while on reflection the employer suggested that it would have been better to identify clients and then identify roles. Other employers noted their employees lacked basic employment readiness and technical knowledge, despite having completed their pre-employment training. As they identified:

“That initial screening is crucial – getting someone who is actually keen to work [and has a] commitment to work.” (Employer)

5.3 Employers’ experiences of pre-employment training and impact on work readiness

Overall, pre-employment training has been received positively by employers. While some did not offer this, it has been lauded as a useful component to bring clients up to a work-ready standard, and in some cases, beginning a qualification early. However, for some employers this was not the most relevant qualification and was difficult to progress at work due to the work type.

Access to pre-employment training has meant employers have had employees begin employment with health and safety training, or other ‘tickets’ such as *working in enclosed spaces* and *working at heights*, and many employers have commented on the efficiency of the training. An exception to this was one instance where a client’s pre-employment training was not relevant to their employment.

We have found, however, that the provision of pre-employment training is better suited to larger employers, who generally have the infrastructure to provide or access this training. In cases where this has not been offered to clients, employers (particularly small ones) have indicated that this kind of learning begins from the outset of their employment.

Further, some employers who did not offer this training nonetheless stressed the importance of instilling in clients a good work ethic and organisation-specific values (e.g., ‘What our company stands for’). This could be included in the suite of work-readiness training.

5.4 Employers’ experiences of qualification enrolment

Employer experiences of on-the-job training and enrolling young people into qualifications vary. Several employers have enrolled their employees into relevant qualifications, but many struggled to identify the relevant industry-specific qualification. This is generally due to a lack of clear information and communication or the existence of such a qualification.

5.5. MSD provision of guidance on pastoral care

Cabinet papers on Mana in Mahi highlighted the developing nature of pastoral care support, but many employers receive little guidance on this. According to officials, no formal pastoral care model and process has been implemented, contributing to the inconsistent provision of pastoral care, support and advice. Some regional staff offer guidance outside of a formal model through ‘catch ups’ between Work Brokers and employers.

One employer pointed to the onus on them to provide pastoral support and the level of care provided. Consistent with sentiment expressed previously, employers with previous HR experience drew on their own background to understand what type of pastoral support is required and provide this.

5.6 Employers’ experiences of MSD support for themselves and employees

In general, employers experienced varying levels of MSD support, which did not always meet their or their employees’ needs. Practical support, such as with compliance and paperwork, was sometimes offered, but in other instances employers were left to their own devices without support from MSD. Some employers received regular calls and assistance, whereas others struggled working with an MSD contact, or experienced frustration being passed between multiple contacts. Other employers had no contact at all with MSD. Te Heke Mai may offer another avenue for employer support here.

5.7 Employers’ experiences of wage subsidy

Employer experiences of the wage subsidy were generally positive. While employers overall were supportive, they often cited issues of timing, consistency and communication. Some employers felt that the subsidy should be paid closer to employees’ start date, while others expressed concerns about their ‘drop out’ employees and having to refund the subsidy if the employee leaves. As identified in KEQ9, MSD’s reputation and relationship management are important to keep in mind when undertaking debt collection, and this should be done on a careful case-by-case basis.

Ongoing, face-to-face and consistent communication was thought key to successful management and payment of the wage subsidy. Reflecting on discussions about the wage subsidy, one employer reported early communication was good when MSD required information, but this dropped away in the end when the employer sought clarity regarding subsidy payment.

5.8 Extent to which programme is appropriate for a range of employers

As it stands, the programme tends to be more suitable for larger employers. Larger employers have the administrative and financial infrastructure to absorb short-term financial dips (i.e., waiting for invoices to be paid), and offer services such as HR support, pastoral care, and pre-employment training. The model also suits subcontracting partners (small employers) to these large employers, which are not burdened with the level of compliance they otherwise would be. Further, we identified instances where larger employers were able to provide business mentoring to smaller employers.

There have been numerous positive examples of smaller employers’ involvement in Mana in Mahi, often supported by MSD regional staff. Some of the recommendations in KEQ9 have been designed to address this for specific industries.

Employers we spoke with were from varied industries, including construction, hospitality, forestry, silviculture, hair and beauty, engineering, traffic management, automotive and refrigeration. We consider, based on the evidence available to us, that the prototype is suitable for a variety of industries. However, we note that issues of communication, compliance, etc. are experienced across all industries.

Organisational size and structure also informed on-the-job training and work readiness. A large employer found that it was critical to offer training guidance with their subcontracting employers “to get in behind young ones”.

5.9 Barriers to remaining in programme for employers

Employers identified the following five barriers to staying in the programme:

- Industry-specific remuneration approaches are not accommodated through Mana in Mahi, specifically when select industries (such as forestry and horticulture) do not operate an hourly remuneration system (see section 7.3).
- MSD is not always able to provide either suitable candidates, or the volume of candidates, required by employers.
- Some employers have experienced a divide between their Mana in Mahi and non-Mana in Mahi employees, which has tended to create rifts in their workforce.
- Flexi-wage remains an attractive alternative programme for employers, with less of an administrative burden. Moreover, Work Brokers are more familiar with this programme than Mana in Mahi.
- The high level of paperwork and compliance required by MSD.

KEQ6: To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for young people not in education, employment or training?

Enrolment numbers are expected to exceed initial expectations, but attrition rates are concerning. Further, support and incentivisation of clients to continue employment and begin their training pathway varies, and most clients have completed foundational qualifications, but in general, Mana in Mahi candidates are far less work-ready than others.

6.1 Enrolment and attrition rates

Enrolment rates for Mana in Mahi are expected to meet initial expectations. Cumulative enrolment figures and MSD enrolment forecast figures for the period November 2018 – September 2019 are presented in Figure 2 below and demonstrate steady progress.

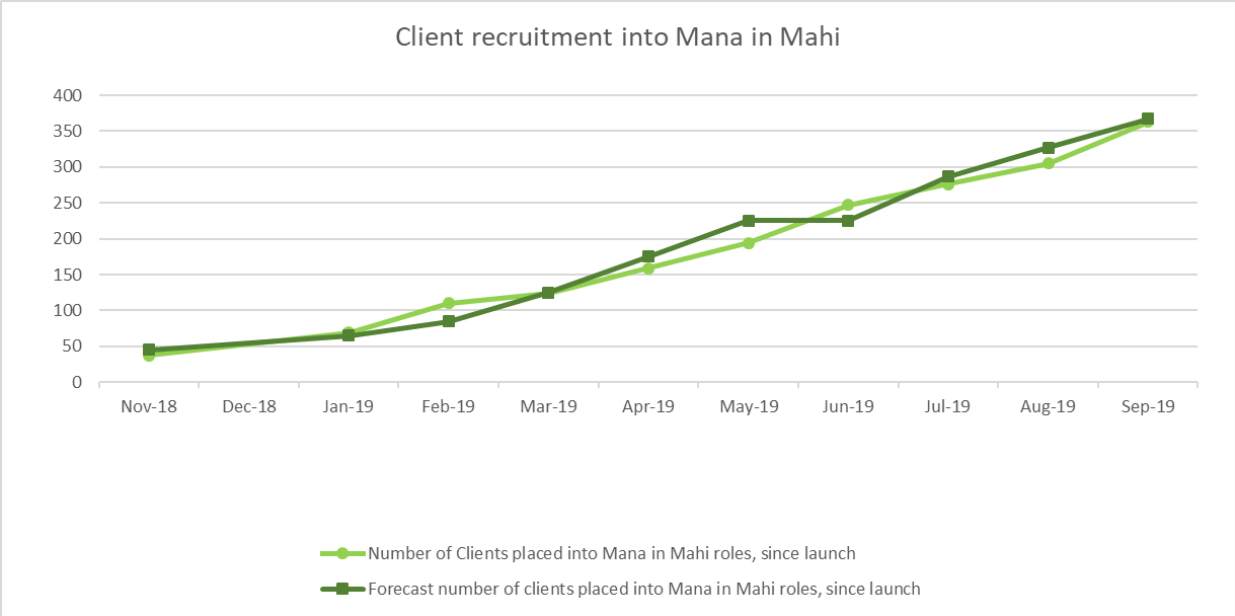


Figure 2: Client recruitment into Mana in Mahi

MSD provided aggregated data for all clients placed into Mani Mahi roles as at the end of September 2019. Figures are presented in percentage format to ensure comparability in terms of data drawn from different sources with slightly different numerators.

Table 2 Mana in Mahi client characteristics as at end of September 2019

Gender		Industry	
Male	75.5%	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	26.7%
Female	24.5%	Manufacturing	7.26%
Ethnicity		Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1.1%
Māori	47.6%	Construction	32.2%
Pākehā	29.3%	Wholesale trade	1.4%
Pasifika	6.4%	Retail trade	6.6%
Other	7.8%	Accommodation and food services	3.6%
Not stated	8.9%	Transport, postal and warehousing	1.7%
Region		Information media and telecommunications	1.4%
National	21.2%	Rental, hiring and real estate services	1.1%
Northland	7.9%	Professional, scientific and technical services	0.8%
Auckland	6.0%	Public administration and safety	0.8%
BOP	0.7%	Education and training	1.1%
Waikato	11.2%	Health care and social assistance	0.8%
East Coast	10.0%	Arts and recreation services	0.3%
Taranaki-KC-Whanganui	12.7%	Other services	12.1%
Central	7.4%	Industry not stated	1.1%

Region (cont)		Time on a benefit	
Wellington	5.3%	<3 months:	8.9%
Nelson	5.5%	3 to 12 months:	26.2%
Canterbury	4.3%	1 to 2 years:	14.5%
Southern	7.9%	2-4 years:	16.7%
		4 years plus:	10.3%
		Unspecified	23.4%

Table 2 shows that the majority of Mana in Mahi clients are male and that the largest ethnic group represented is Māori. The largest industry categories are construction and agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Turning to programme attrition rates, current figures as at the end of September 2019 show that 124 of 359 of Mana in Mahi clients (35%) left the programme early (95% CI: 30% - 39%). In our first report, we found that 31 of 124 of Mana in Mahi clients (25%) had left the programme early (95% CI: 17% - 33%). Comparison of the two attrition rates using a standard chi-square test suggests that this difference is statistically significant at the five percent level ($p = 0.059$), however we would require further data points to be confident that there is any meaningful trend.

The anecdotal insights we have from our qualitative data show that misalignment between client interests and employment was a major factor contributing to attrition. Other reasons include struggling to balance work and study commitments, as well as some clients struggling with pre-existing mental health issues.

MSD provided us with an additional series of datasets which allow us to gain greater insight into outcomes for clients as they progress through the programme. Figure 3 below tracks the progress of 157 clients who started the programme before 1 April 2019. This date was chosen to provide at least six months of “potential programme time” for all clients in the dataset.

Figure 3: Outcomes for Mana in Mahi clients who joined the programme before 1 April 2019

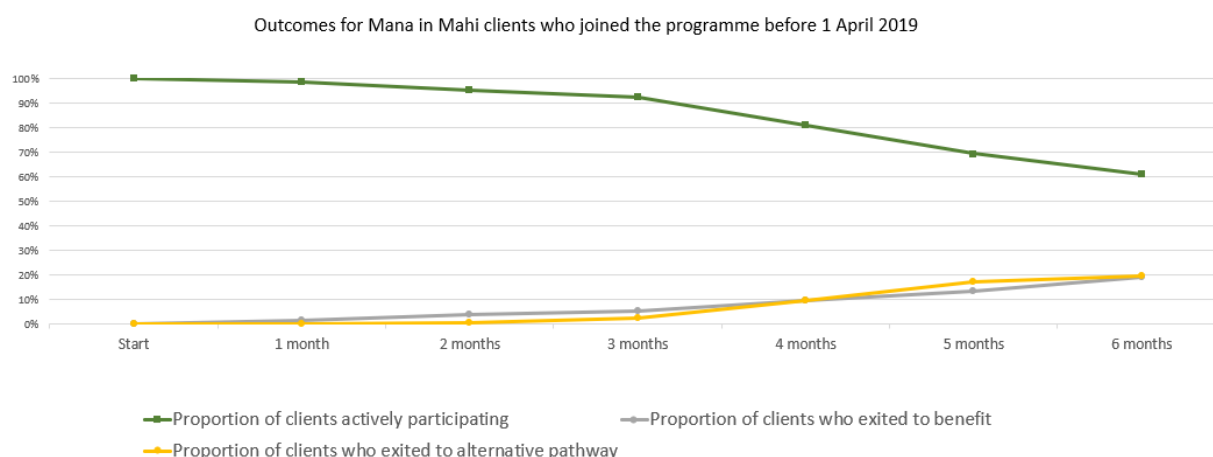


Figure 3 shows a steady drop in active participation over time since programme entry from 100% to 61% at 6 months after entry. Of the 39% of clients who left the programme early just under 50% exited the programme to a benefit.

It would be premature to speculate about the ultimate proportion of clients from this group that will complete the programme. Analysis of this dataset did not demonstrate a meaningful difference in the proportion of clients still actively participating at 6 months by ethnicity (Māori vs. non-Māori), or age (under 20 vs. over 20), but showed a slightly higher retention rate at 6 months for women than men (70% vs. 58%).

During our interviews, officials provided Flexi-wage attrition rates to provide context to the ‘drop-out rate’ experienced by Mana in Mahi. However, we ultimately concluded that such comparisons would be inappropriate as attrition rates for Mana in Mahi do not compare “programme leavers” with “programme completers”, but rather with “programme remainers”. This reflects the fact that few, if any, clients have been with the programme long enough to complete it. Officials also emphasised that Mana in Mahi is still in its early trial period, and that the suite of support services being implemented in Phase Two is designed to help address the attrition rate.

In order to explore whether any particular groups appear to be more likely to leave Mana in Mahi early, we repeated the comparison of “leaver” and “remainer” characteristics presented in our Phase One report. In that report, we did not find any patterns of interest other than a higher proportion of women leaving the programme early ($p = 0.07$). Table 3 presents our updated findings.

Table 3: Characteristics of Mana in Mahi clients (as at 30 Sept 2019)

		Remained in programme	Left programme	Chi-square test
Gender	Male	175 (64.58%)	96 (35.42%)	p = 0.54
	Female	60 (68.18%)	28 (31.82%)	
Ethnicity⁴⁰	Māori	108 (63.16%)	63 (36.84%)	p = 0.04*
	Pākehā	77 (73.33%)	28 (26.67%)	
	Pasifika	11 (47.83%)	12 (52.17%)	
	Other	23 (82.14%)	5 (17.86%)	
	Not stated	16 (50 %)	16 (50 %)	
Time on benefit⁴¹	<3 months:	19 (59.38%)	13 (40.63%)	
	3 to 12 months:	69 (73.4%)	25 (26.6%)	
	1 to 2 years:	28 (53.85%)	24 (46.15%)	

⁴⁰ Note that comparison of leaving rates by ethnicity excludes “other” and “not stated”.

⁴¹ Note that comparison of leaving rates by time on benefit excludes “unspecified”.

	2-4 years:	33 (55%)	27 (45%)	
	4 years plus:	24 (64.86%)	13 (35.14%)	
	Unspecified	62 (73.81%)	22 (26.19%)	p = 0.06
Total		235 (65.46%)	124 (34.54%)	

Key: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 3 shows a statistically significant difference in attrition rates by ethnicity ($p = 0.04$) and a difference in attrition rates by time on benefit that is close to statistical significance ($p = 0.06$). However, there does not appear to be any difference in outcomes by gender. Exploration of the difference in attrition rates by ethnicity shows that Pākehā clients are more likely to remain with the programme (73%) than Māori clients (63%) and Pasifika clients (48%). There was no strong trend in outcomes by benefit history.

These findings must be viewed with caution given the aggregated nature of the data provided by MSD, which means that results cannot be adjusted to account for other client characteristics (e.g., gender, time on benefit). As the programme expands and client numbers increase, future evaluations may be able to explore these questions in greater depth if suitable non-aggregated data are available.

A few factors, drawn from our research, help to contextualise these attrition rates.

- Employers repeatedly noted that Mana in Mahi candidates require significantly more support than conventional employees. As we have noted, many clients struggle moving from a benefit to the demands of full-time work and study, and we have observed inconsistent levels of support to help young people with this transition. Mana in Mahi clients, previously on a benefit, are generally less work ready, and have not always had the opportunity to develop a productive work ethic.
- Appropriate matching of clients with a suitable employer/industry continues to be an issue, with ‘mismatching’ contributing to clients dropping out.

6.2 Support and incentives for clients to continue employment and begin their training pathway

The extent to which clients are supported and incentivised to continue their employment and enter their training pathway varies. Many young people have been supported into their qualification by their employer (for example, by providing time off to study), with many praising this support. Levels of MSD support to facilitate this vary, but there have been a number of positive experiences where Work and Income has facilitated the acquisition of equipment or other financial support for clients. Together, these elements have contributed to numerous clients wanting to progress into a career in their industry, either for the foreseeable or long-term future. We have also heard examples of employers, with a clear grasp of the precise requirements for gaining industry-specific qualifications, who have tailored their employment of clients to this end. Generally, the allure of gaining a qualification and on-going employment are key incentives that maintain client participation.

The most recently available monthly status report for Mana in Mahi (at September 2019) indicates that by 182 days with the programme, 99 percent of clients had an agreed training pathway.

However, our interviews confirmed that not all clients with an agreed training pathway were enrolled into a Level 3 or above qualification or apprenticeship within six months of starting the programme.

The reasons for some clients being unenrolled is likely due to a mixture of:

- differing awareness and understanding among employers of suitable and appropriate qualifications;
- the absence of a provider or qualification suitable for specific industries, such as silviculture in the Taranaki region; and
- a lack of contractual robustness regarding the qualification expectations for employers.

These considerations have been distilled and incorporated into the recommendations in KEQ9. We have been informed by MSD officials that that newly implemented reporting requirements will capture the following measures:

- whether training has been agreed;
- whether enrolment in the training has happened; and
- whether the qualification has been gained.

6.3 Foundation qualifications and work readiness

Most clients have been enrolled in, are progressing towards, or have completed foundation qualifications. Distinct from the formal training pathway towards apprenticeships, these qualifications refer to prerequisite certificates (or similar) that enable clients to work on the site of their employment, such as Health and Safety, Confined Spaces Courses, other 'tickets', and so forth. By equipping clients with these basic qualifications, they are being provided with transferable skills that can be applied to numerous other related industries. Thus, should they exit the programme, they are already at a more work-ready starting point.

However, echoing section 6.1, Mana in Mahi clients tend to be less work-ready upon commencement of their employment than conventional employees. More targeted effort is required to support their transition into full-time work and study – it being a relative 'shock to the system' moving from a benefit.

KEQ7: To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for employers?

The Mana in Mahi programme's ethos and some design components provide rationale for employers to join and stay in the programme. However, insufficient information is a barrier to recruitment. Pre-employment training has generally increased clients' work readiness, but there is a need to consider other issues like time management. A barrier for employers in specific industries concerns the incompatibility of industry-specific remuneration approaches versus the contracted hourly wage expectation in the Mana in Mahi contract.

7.1 Reasons for employer enrolment numbers

The Mana in Mahi programme's ethos, together with the prospects for a trained and qualified workforce, continue to provide a compelling rationale for employers to join and remain in the programme. Further, employers and regional staff alike noted the importance of 'future proofing' businesses and providing succession planning to address this. Officials considered that relationships between Work Brokers, the Industry Partnerships team, and employers should continue even if their employee departs. Employers tend to remain committed to the ethos of the programme and are open to employing through Work and Income in certain circumstances.

However, poor communication and a lack of clear programme information has sometimes resulted in employer non-enrolment. While there are clear and compelling reasons for employers to join the programme, employer recruitment drops away when programme information lacks clarity.

7.2 Employee work readiness as a result of training

Pre-employment training contributed to the work readiness of clients in a number of cases, especially where Health and Safety, trades tickets, and qualification introductions were taught. Employers also considered other factors that, for them, demonstrated clients were work-ready, such as levels of fitness and effective time management. Clients without pre-employment training need to be considered more closely to assess whether they have general work readiness skills that could be met through on-the-job training.

KEQ8: What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi?

The second round of data collection identified very similar strengths and weaknesses from the first round, outlined in our first evaluation report.⁴² This section will expand upon those, as well as outlining some additional strengths and weaknesses identified by the evaluation.

8.1 Overall strengths and weaknesses of design for young people

Overall, young people were positive about and encouraged by the design of the Mana in Mahi programme, with several clients reporting that there were no weaknesses in its concept.

Entering stable employment and gaining qualifications

Young people were particularly incentivised by their ability to enter stable employment and, for those who were aware of it, to gain an industry recognised qualification. One Mana in Mahi client reported that “[a qualification] was something I’ve wanted for a while”.

Pre-employment and on-the-job training

For most young people, the pre-employment and on-the-job training was a strength of design as, if they were aware of it, the training was an incentive for them. This was especially evident when they received or at least began working toward qualifications during the pre-employment course. One Mana in Mahi client described the one-week pre-employment course they took part in as the “best week of my life”. They explained that they had never achieved so much in one week, and that it had given them confidence in their abilities going into employment.

However, as discussed below, the training component of Mana in Mahi would benefit from more flexibility to suit individual, organisational, and industry needs. It would also benefit from improved clarity on the expectations of the training component.

Financial support

A few clients also referenced the financial support of the programme as a strength of design, referencing the obvious financial benefits of being in gainful employment, alongside the additional financial support they receive in the form of incentive payments and provision of training and gear.

While young people commented positively about incentive payments when asked about their impact, employers and MSD staff identified some weaknesses with their design. Added to this, gaps in MSD’s data relating to the incentive payment process have meant it is unclear whether incentive payments are occurring as intended. Employers and MSD staff suggested that the impact of incentive payments could be increased if directed at costs that would assist the client with their work, such as transport and accommodation costs. A few stakeholders also felt that all the contacts should transition to the model where MSD pays clients directly to avoid some of the reported issues of having the employer pay.

MSD now pays incentive payments directly to participants for IP and Regional contracts. Note that we have not amended existing contracts where employers pay incentive payments to clients. Less than 10% of active clients have their incentive payments paid by the employer.

⁴² Allen + Clarke, 2019, pp. 26, 27.

Lastly, we consider the Phase Two changes in widening eligibility, as well as the variety and shift in scope of the marketing and communications strategies, a strength of the programme both for clients and employers.

8.2 Overall strengths and weaknesses of design for employers

We consider the following four points to be strengths of Mana in Mahi's design for employers.

- The **philanthropic intent** of the programme, allowing employers to 'give back' to the community and help young people to succeed. One employer specifically referenced wanting to help young Māori and Pasifika succeed in his industry and felt that the programme was well tailored to achieving this.

"We like to help other people, younger people especially"; "We give them a chance, they just need to be willing to learn"; "[Mana in Mahi] is more than a job, it's a career we're offering." (Employers)

Further, it was clear from regional staff that they felt this was a good programme to help young people succeed. One specifically referenced that this end goal motivated their Work Brokers to suggest Mana in Mahi.

- Financial support, which has insulated employers against risk, and enabled them to participate in the programme. The wage subsidy gave them flexibility with providing training and importantly, one employer stated it allowed them the "capacity to care".
- Pre-employment training particularly identified by construction employers as extremely useful and cost-effective in getting employees "site-ready". Most employers also liked the concept of some flexibility in using pre-employment and on-the-job training, but as regional staff explained, they need better clarity on how to utilise this flexibility.
- For smaller employers, a key strength offered to clients was the ability for career growth in terms of succession into management or even ownership of a small business, and thus job security for the remainder of their career. In some instances, smaller employers were thought to be more able to provide more personalised pastoral care from within the organisation. However, it must be noted that this can also occur with the contracts that are held with Downer's subcontractors, as several of them are small businesses.

Conversely, there were some design weaknesses:

- The high levels of paperwork and compliance required of employers by MSD. While timing was not specified, online channels were identified as easier by some employers.

8.3 Overall strengths and weaknesses of implementation for young people

Matching of client to suitable employment

The alignment between client interests and appropriate employment is crucial. There have been successes, but there have also been many examples of clients leaving employment because their interests did not match the employment offered to them.

Inconsistency of In-Work support

Throughout the evaluation, it became apparent that In-Work support was not a large feature of the overall client experience of the Mana in Mahi programme. It was inconsistent and appeared to depend on individual Work Brokers or Case Managers, or whether the employer was able and/or

willing to take on this role themselves. Overall, it did not seem that young people felt they were lacking in support, as employers tended to step into the role of providing pastoral care. However, in most cases this was as they would do for other employers, and therefore may not be the “wrap-around support services” desired for the Mana in Mahi concept.⁴³

Other Government employment programmes

A weakness identified by MSD stakeholders was that programmes offered by other agencies’ (for example the Ministry for Pacific Peoples’ Pacific Employment Support Service) and MSD’s other programmes (for example Flexi-Wage) can be more appealing to employers and clients than Mana in Mahi. A MSD stakeholder noted that these other programmes are considered less complex, particularly with regards to the programme design, and the amount of paperwork involved.

To combat this perception, Mana in Mahi marketing needs to ensure key information is more targeted and clearer to ensure both Work Brokers and Industry Partnerships can sufficiently promote it with an understanding of the intent of the programme and how it works.

Juggling work and study

One weakness identified was that there was some difficulty for clients juggling their work and study commitments. Support for this could be incorporated in the wrap-around support referenced above that is being developed as part of Phase Two. This support could be both in terms of assisting young people to manage this, but also informing employers of the demands on their employees.

Employer preparedness and suitability

An overall weakness that came through in the evaluation was that some clients had issues with their employer being ill-equipped for Mana in Mahi. Specifically, this related to their employer not having enough work hours available for them, with one client stating in this case that it was “easier to be on WINZ” as once in employment, they were only paid for the hours they worked.

Another example of an employer being ill-equipped was more serious, with the client feeling the employer was not screened and prepared properly and did not feel they were genuine in their intent to train them. It is hoped that the wrap-around support that is being developed as part of Phase Two will help mitigate such issues.

Pathways to success

It is evident overall in clients’ experiences that they feel the programme is helping them to succeed. One client stated they felt “bummed out” prior to joining the programme and that the motivation and support from their employer and the staff at Work and Income has helped them achieve the success they have in their job now.⁴⁴

⁴³ OME, 2019, p.7.

⁴⁴ This client has been part of the programme for five months. They gained a leadership role within a few months in their organisation, with both themselves and their employer recognising their rapid success.

8.4 Overall strengths and weaknesses of implementation for employers

Recruitment, screening, and finding suitable matches

The recruitment process, encompassing pre-screening and matching, is seen across the board as crucial to allowing Mana in Mahi to work smoothly. One employer felt if employer-employee matching was right, everything else would sort itself out.

There were strengths identified in this recruitment process as several employers and young people felt this went well for them (i.e., employers were happy with their employees and young people enjoyed their role or industry). There were a number of examples of quality employer-employee relationships, and of clients feeling they had been placed in a suitable role and industry.

However, employers and MSD staff referenced that improvements could be made in the recruitment space, specifically with regards to matching an employer and young person well. A caveat was also noted that at times there could be an unforeseeable circumstance (e.g., personality clashes, which caused a breakdown in Mana in Mahi contracts). A few MSD stakeholders explained they had been told of frustration from employers when they were given candidates who were clearly not eligible, well suited, or interested in the role. Employers felt that MSD did not screen properly for what employers asked for, citing transport issues, lack of driver licence, poor mental/physical health, and failing drug tests as examples. They explained it is important that either this screening and matching is done correctly and includes quality conversations, or that there is transparency around these issues and support is put in place to ensure the issues are addressed or managed.

Quality conversations and effective screening have driven successful matches between employers and clients; however, sourcing the job and then retrofitting the client has sometimes been a weakness.

Pre-employment training

Where pre-employment training was used, this was largely a strength for both employers and young people with role specific and sector specific skills gained. In one instance a qualification was also started. As mentioned, employers had a less consistent view on the implementation of training than young people. While some employers – usually those who had clients trained by Downer’s week-long course – felt the pre-employment course was at least satisfactory; a few felt it was too generic and needed industry-specific tailoring to include a focus on life skills and work ethic expectations.

Employer on-the-job training and pastoral care

On-the-job training was less well understood and implemented, and several employers struggled to deliver training due to a lack of understanding about the expectations. There was also minimal guidance in place regarding pastoral care; however, it is understood from MSD that this will be implemented during Phase Two in 2020.

MSD support for employers was mixed

Employers’ experience of MSD support for themselves was mixed. A weakness noted by several employers was that working with different MSD Work Brokers in this process is an inefficient use of time, as they have to start from scratch when a new person takes over their case. In some cases, it became apparent that several employers had not spoken to Work and Income since the beginning or had never had contact if they were a Downer subcontractor. As will be addressed below, streamlining and standardising this process, and having consistency in the contact with

MSD, will be helpful to understand and address employer and young people needs as they progress in their Mana in Mahi journey.

Wage subsidy

Employers found the wage subsidy to be a strength with refinements to be considered around timing, consistency and communication. It was thought that a range of businesses could access the wage subsidy and participation in the Mana in Mahi Programme more broadly.

8.5 Other general strengths of Mana in Mahi

Sustainable employment

A key strength of Mana in Mahi referred to either explicitly or implicitly by a number of stakeholders is the focus of Mana in Mahi on providing sustainable employment for young people.

In the Phase Two Cabinet paper, this is described as the primary aim in terms of providing apprenticeships and an industry training pathway, leading to sustainable employment for young people...[to] support participants to gain the skills and experience needed to become competitive in the labour market, develop a meaningful career, and achieve sustainable employment.⁴⁵

MSD officials explained that Mana in Mahi was a commitment by both parties to the bigger picture of supporting young people and the industries involved in the programme. For the young person, MSD regional officials explained that once a young person gets training and/or a qualification, MSD data suggests that they are unlikely to go back on a benefit. Similarly, employers understand that if they invest in a willing employee, it will pay back in productivity and profitability for their business.

Officials also felt that the high media attention, which was generally positive, the fact that the brand was growing internally and externally, and the backing at high levels for Mana in Mahi were key strengths. One official referenced that similar services in the market are time-capped, but Mana in Mahi has received a large budget increase. One MSD regional stakeholder also referenced a “sea change” they felt was occurring within the Ministry to focus on employment, and that Mana and Mahi exemplified this important shift, and should be harnessed as such for communications. Our research has shown that in supporting the sustainability of employment for young people, the following areas should be considered:

- ensure transport support is available for those that live far from their place of work;
- provide support for clients as they work through the technical and theoretical aspects of their assessments; and
- provide financial support when clients are committing to purchasing capital items for their employment (such as chainsaws).

8.6 Other weaknesses of Mana in Mahi

Lack of consultation

A weakness referenced by some employers and several MSD regional staff was a lack of programme consultation with employers and MSD regional staff. It is important for any

⁴⁵ OME, 2019, p. 1.

programme to have an inclusive consultation and information gathering process from frontline people to ensure it will work in its implementation.

Although the following comments regarding internal systems are slightly out of scope for this evaluation, they are important to note due to their impact on the programme.

Lack of clear communication

A key weakness identified by MSD regional stakeholders was a lack of internal communications from national office. One regional office referenced that some people from the MSD national office came to visit earlier in 2019 to discuss Mana in Mahi and staff found this very valuable. Those who are implementing the programme need to be kept in the loop, and at present this is not occurring as well as it could be. The result of this is that MSD staff are leaning toward using simpler programmes that they are more familiar with. As one MSD regional staff member explained, it is important to improve communication about the Mana in Mahi programme rather than simplifying it, as that would jeopardise the integrity of the programme.

The speed of the programme's implementation has also resulted in varying levels of knowledge and understanding within and between the regions. Staff at one region explained that while they appreciated the need for flexibility in the early stages of the programme, there now needs to be some consistency and clarity in messaging. Staff at another region said there is usually a training package for new programmes, but this did not happen with Mana in Mahi: thus, there was not a "blueprint" for them to work from.

Systems, reporting, and compliance

Several MSD stakeholders also raised concerns with MSD's systems (for example online invoicing systems) and reporting. This has implications for all stakeholders. Several examples illustrate room for improvement. A key example is the lack of online systems (e.g., for invoicing, training plans and contracts), with one region explaining they have to chase employers up to pay them.

It is important to note that if there is too much "red tape" as one regional staff member put it, it disadvantages small businesses who do not have the necessary infrastructure to work within these systems. This is understandable as Mana in Mahi was originally designed to be implemented through the Industry Partnerships team and large employers;⁴⁶ however, this issue needs to be addressed as the scope of the programme has since shifted.

Further, the weaknesses identified in the systems (such as the absence of online training plans) make it more difficult for MSD staff, both at the national and regional level. At the national level, the retrofitting of Mana in Mahi into existing systems has made accurate reporting and forecasting challenging at times. At the regional level, the challenges in the systems, alongside the lack of clarity about Mana in Mahi, increase workload which takes away from time they could be spending on building relationships, finding new opportunities and looking after their client.

⁴⁶ OME, 2018. 'Phased Implementation Plan for Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work (Dole for Apprenticeships).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

A series of recommendations, drawn from this evaluation, are provided below.

KEQ9: How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

Recommendation 1: Ensure that marketing and communication strategies promote Mana in Mahi to as many industries as possible to attract a wide range of employers

This should include, for instance, digital arts, design, information technology and furniture manufacture. It could be facilitated through collaboration with the various ITOs, to ensure adequate fit within each industry. In addition, “feel good” stories showcasing positive client experiences could be developed across diverse industries to advertise, increase awareness of Mana in Mahi in the employer pool, and facilitate increased buy-in over time. This should also allow young people (and employers) see themselves reflected in the marketing and communications collateral, and to motivate eligible young people to inquire further or apply.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that communications pathways and key information is available and understood by MSD regional staff and stakeholders

Clear and consistent communication is central to the success of the Mana in Mahi Programme. MSD regional stakeholders must understand the context and process through which change will occur, as well as the changes themselves, to ‘sell’ the programme to employers and clients. Communications mechanisms could include guidelines and tools such as online chat options to allow real time communication when there is an immediate information need.

Recommendation 3: Establish a Working Group for future codesign

A Working Group could be established with a selection of employers and regional MSD staff, including Work Brokers. MSD’s national office could collaborate with these key stakeholders to inform changes to programme design. This group would help ensure any changes are informed by these key programme users and should incorporate the perspectives of priority industries.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that wage subsidy and incentive payment information is clearly targeted, structured and communicated

For employers, a clear definition is needed to describe the type of positions that are available for the wage subsidy. While MSD’s Cabinet paper emphasised wage subsidies for new positions, not all the employers who participated in this study created new positions for participants. Clients require clear communication about eligibility criteria, process for, and timing of, incentive payments and the nature of this payment (i.e., that it is not a loan).

Recommendation 5: Provide information to employers about working with youth from a range of cultural backgrounds

In particular, it is important to familiarise employers about Māori and Pasifika cultures (who comprise the majority of Mana in Mahi clients), and the affects this can have on employment (such as the prioritisation of parent and elder care).

Recommendation 6: Conduct debt recovery sensitively on a case-by-case basis

In situations where a young person leaves their Mana in Mahi employment early, it is important that MSD takes a case-by-case approach to recovering any debt related to the wage subsidy. This needs to be done carefully to maintain relationships between employers and MSD; some employers reported feeling alienated due to the zealous nature of debt collection.

Recommendation 7: Streamline paperwork and compliance requirements for employers to facilitate and sustain employer engagement

Making employer compliance simpler will facilitate employer engagement. For example, providing online mechanisms for employers to upload their invoices (instead of relying solely on the paper-based systems) will be advantageous.

Recommendation 8: Ensure pre-employment training has flexible content which can be tailored to industry and clients

As part of the suite of pre-employment and work readiness training, clients could receive workshops or classes around time management; basic work ethic and employer expectations; mental health and wellbeing; and communication skills (e.g., expectations of person-to-person communication at the worksite). Where relevant, this could also include numeracy, literacy and driver's licencing support.

Pre-employment training could also be renamed "Workplace Training Component" to clarify that this training can occur concurrently with employment. It could also be valuable to cluster clients from different employers – broadly within the same industry – to receive the same singular pre-employment training course. It could also be worthwhile to consider integrating qualification registration and progress into the pre-employment training where possible.

Recommendation 9: Ensure that recruitment is aligned to employer needs and client interests

More emphasis needs to be placed on identifying employers' needs, to identify young people with the specific skills or abilities employers are seeking. This is particularly important in forestry, where a high level of fitness is mandatory. Client interests should also be aligned and matched to appropriate employment, identifying the clients' interests, and then locate suitable employment (it is unclear if this is the standard approach).

Recommendation 10: Ensure that MSD In-Work Support is available at times which meet clients' needs

It is important that MSD In-Work Support is available when convenient for clients. Having this support available to clients when they need it is important to new employees staying in work.

Recommendation 11: Ensure that clients have information about, and access to, funding pathways for drivers' licences

During initial engagements between Work and Income and clients, provide direction for clients to access other MSD funding to help get their driving licences, if not available through pre-employment training. Provide support or subsidy for client transport, especially in larger cities like Auckland.

Recommendation 12: Encourage employers to support on-the-job training through pastoral care and other measures

Employers need support from their MSD/Work and Income key contact to ensure they provide effective on-the-job training. This support could also include awareness-raising regarding employees' dual workloads of employment and study. This is particularly important as many clients are unfamiliar with this workload expectation, coming as a 'shock to the system' for many of them. This would encourage employers to provide suitable support, in their pastoral care, or

timetabling in 'study time' for their employees and supporting clients to request additional academic support such as tutors.

Recommendation 13: Establish and embed expectations regarding qualifications and career pathways in documentation

Employer's contractual obligations could be made more robust by including more detailed expectations regarding the development of a qualification plan by the six-month mark. Support for employers to meet their obligations should include establishing pathways for employers to connect to their ITO, and discern what qualification their employees can be enrolled in. Employer support should also involve working closely with employees to help them provide career planning and professional development goals to their employees.

Recommendation 14: Ensure pastoral care is flexible and fit for purpose

Underpinned by clear expectations from MSD, employers should be encouraged to take the initiative with pastoral care on a case-by-case basis to meet client's varying needs. This may mean, where legally possible, that Work and Income alerts employers to particular issues affecting the employee, to enable a more tailored pastoral care experience.

Recommendation 15: Ensure clients have appropriate support for on-the-job-training

Support for client's success in on-the-job training could also include external support such as a tutor who can periodically visit the client to go through their theoretical work. Related to this, it could be useful to inform clients of the expectations around study and work, to help prepare them for this.

Recommendation 16: Develop a mobile device application (App) to facilitate the training pathway component

This would allow for both employer and employees to have their participation and progress tracked. This would also provide an alert when incentive payments are due.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: MSD STAKEHOLDERS DISCUSSION GUIDE



Name, role, organisation of interviewee:

Date, time, location & type of interview:

Evaluation team members:

Intro and consent process

Check that Info Sheet has been received. If not, provide two copies – leaving one with interviewee.

Verbally go through information sheet and consent form. Any questions?

Seek informed consent.

Ensure you establish their agreement or otherwise for making an audio recording.

Acknowledge that not everyone will have an answer to every question as roles are related to different components and stages of the programme.

Context:

Please introduce yourself and tell us about your role as it relates to Mana in Mahi.

We know that there have been some changes in the Programme recently, can you outline what they are?

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design and implementation to support young people into Employment and industry training?

To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for young people not in education, employment or training?

To what extent was the Mana in Mahi prototype implemented as intended?

Recruitment for YP

What strategies did you develop to market and communicate market Mana in Mahi to young people? Have there been any additional strategies since we last spoke? Have you had any feedback on how it's working?

Have any new incentives been developed to encourage young people to join Mana in Mahi?

Have enrolment numbers for young people [in your region/nationally] met your expectations? Why/why not? What is keeping people in the programme? Have you noticed any changes in the dropout rates?

Can you explain the recruitment process from start to finish for young people? I.e. how much input/autonomy do young people have? [prompt: expressions of interest, interview process].

How well matched do you think young people and employers have been?

Key components of Mana in Mahi for YP

Pre-employment and on-the-job training

Please tell me about the pre-employment training that young people receive as part of Mana in Mahi.

How is the (pre-employment) training been delivered? By whom? How effective do you think it has been?

Is this (pre-employment) training happening as MSD intended? Why/why not?

Please tell me your understanding of on the job training.

Is this (on-the-job) training happening as MSD intended? Why/why not?

How effective do you think it (on-the-job training) has been? Based on feedback you've had, how well is this working for young people? How well is it working for employers?

Training pathways

Please tell me about how Mana in Mahi provides career planning and development opportunities for young people. What's working well? What's not working so well?

Thinking about these career planning and development opportunities, can you please explain the process for setting up training pathways with employers and employees? i.e. identifying and enrolling clients in NZQA-recognised training qualifications.

Is this occurring as intended?

What are the industry qualification enrolments like? Have you heard about any barriers to uptake? Can young people access any literacy and numeracy support?

Incentive payments

Please tell me about the incentive payments for young people. What is the rationale for incentive payments? What criteria do young people need to meet to receive these?

Do you have any information about the number of young people who've received payments so far? What's working well? What's not working so well?

Support for YP

Please tell me about the in-work support young people receive from their employers [e.g. pastoral care].

Does MSD provide any guidelines or assistance to employers on what and how to provide this (pastoral support)? What's working well? What's not working so well?

Please tell me about the in-work support young people receive from MSD. What kind of support services does MSD offer? What's working well? What's not working so well?

What other support/guidance does MSD provide to young people? Is this standardised or on a need basis?

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design and implementation for employers?

To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for employers?

To what extent was the Mana in Mahi prototype implemented as intended?

Recruitment for employers

Can you explain the recruitment process from start to finish for employers? I.e. how much input/autonomy do employers have? [prompt: expressions of interest, interview process].

What strategies have been developed to market and communicate market Mana in Mahi to employers? Have there been any additional strategies since we last spoke? Have you had any feedback on how it's working?

Have enrolment numbers of employers [in your region/nationally] met your expectations? Is recruitment occurring as MSD intended in terms of industries represented? Why/why not?

What recruitment processes appear to be most effective?

Key components of Mana and Mahi for employers

Please tell me about the wage subsidy payments for employers. What's working well? What's not working so well?

How is training - both pre-employment and on-the-job - given to young people, intended to impact on employees' work readiness?

Based on feedback you've had, how well is this (pre-employment and on-the-job training) working for employers [i.e. are they saying that young people are work-ready as a result of the training]?

What is keeping employers in the programme? Have you noticed any changes in the dropout rates?

Since the Programme expansion you mentioned earlier, have there been any new incentives developed to join the Mana in Mahi for employers?

In what ways is Mana in Mahi designed to accommodate a range of different employers, including different size, industry, location? Is there a particular "type" of employer that seems to be incentivised to join Mana in Mahi?

What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi?

How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

What do you see as the overall strengths of the Mana in Mahi Programme? What do you see as the overall weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi Programme? [prompt: design strengths and weaknesses, implementation strengths and weaknesses?]

What changes could be made to Mana in Mahi to make it more effective?

Conclusion

Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the Mana in Mahi Programme that we have not already covered today?

Interview closure

Thank you for your time.

Next steps for the evaluation.

Provide business card and remind interviewee that contact details are also on the Info Sheet.

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: CURRENT PROGRAMME CLIENTS DISCUSSION GUIDE



Name, role, organisation of interviewee:

Date, time, location & type of interview:

Evaluation team members:

Intro and consent process

Check that Info Sheet has been received. If not, provide two copies – leaving one with interviewee.

Verbally go through information sheet and consent form. Any questions?

Seek informed consent.

Ensure you establish their agreement or otherwise for making an audio recording.

Context:

Please tell us a bit about yourself. [Prompt: any previous jobs? Things you like to do?]

[For those who we interviewed in the first round]: Have you heard about any changes to Mana in Mahi since we last spoke, if so what were they?

[For those who we interviewed in the first round]: Can you tell me about the organisation that you work for? [Prompt, what does the organisation do? How many people work there?]

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design and implementation to support young people into employment and industry training?

To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for young people not in education, employment or training?

Recruitment

We'd like to know a bit more about how you got your job. How did you first hear about your job?

Can you tell me about the process of applying for the job? [Prompt: did they ask you about qualifications, what were they? What did you do at school? Did they ask you about your interests? Were you given more than one job option? Did they ask you what hours you could work and whether you had a transportation plan to get to work?]

[New participants only] What made you want to apply for your job? [Prompt: did the care and support that your employer could give you, make you want to join MiM]

Key components of Mana in Mahi

Pre-employment and on-the-job training

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get pre-employment training? If so, how important was this in deciding whether or not to take the job?

[New participants only] Please tell me about the pre-employment training before you started work. [Prompt: Who ran the training, was it your employer or someone else? What did areas did you get training in? How long was the training?] What did you like about the training? What did you not like?

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get on-the-job training? If so, how important was this in deciding whether or not to take the job?

[New participants only] Please tell me about the on - the job training you had after you started work. [Prompt: What did areas did you get training in? How long was the training] What did you like about that training? What did you not like?

Incentive payments

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get an incentive payment? If so, how important was this in deciding whether or not to take the job?

Please tell me about the incentive payment that you can get after 3, 6, and 12 months at work. Have you received this payment yet? How important was that payment to you in deciding whether you joined the programme?

Pastoral care/support

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get in work support from your employer and MSD? If so, how important was this in deciding whether to take the job?

Please tell me about the in work support you received from MSD after you started work. [Prompt: What did areas did you get support in? Did anyone talk to you about a Tuakana/Teina buddy system] What did you like about this support? What did you not like?

Please tell me about the in work support you received from your employer after you started work. [Prompt: What did areas did you get support in? Did anyone talk to you about a Tuakana/Teina buddy system] What did you like about this support? What did you not like?

Training pathways

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get career planning and development opportunities? If so, how important was this in deciding whether to take the job? [Prompt: before you started, did anyone ask if there was a specific qualification you wanted to do? Did anyone explain how you could work and study at the same time? What did they say?]

Please tell me about the career planning and development opportunities you received after you started work. What did you like about those opportunities? What did you not like? [prompts: training or career plan, training qualifications].

[If not covered] Have you started training towards a qualification? What qualification are you doing and why?

What have you liked about doing this qualification? Have you found anything difficult? What happens if you need help with your study?

What has been your experience combining training with work? What would be helpful in supporting you to juggle your training and work?

How well do you feel you are matched to your role? Is it in an industry you see yourself having a career in?

Sustaining participation

Thinking about when you joined Mana in Mahi. What were you told about Mana in Mahi? Was there anything that made it easier for you to join Mana in Mahi? Was there anything that made it hard for you to join Mana in Mahi?

What would have been helpful for you to feel better prepared for Mana in Mahi?

Is there any additional support you would have found helpful? Why?

Overall, how are you finding the job? How long do you think you'll stay in the role? What would help you to stay in your job?

What else will be helpful for you to progress in your work and in your training?

What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi?

How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

What do you see as the best things about Mana in Mahi's programme set up [strengths]?

What are the not so good things about Mana in Mahi [weaknesses]?

What changes could be made to Mana in Mahi to make it more effective?

Conclusion

Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the Mana in Mahi Programme that we have not already covered today?

Interview closure

Thank you for your time.

Next steps for the evaluation.

Provide business card and remind interviewee that contact details are also on the Info Sheet.

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: FORMER PROGRAMME CLIENTS DISCUSSION GUIDE



Name, role, organisation of interviewee:

Date, time, location & type of interview:

Evaluation team members:

Intro and consent process

Check that Info Sheet has been received. If not, provide two copies – leaving one with interviewee.

Verbally go through information sheet and consent form. Any questions?

Seek informed consent.

Ensure you establish their agreement or otherwise for making an audio recording.

Context:

Please tell us a bit about yourself. [Prompt: any previous jobs? Things you like to do?]

[For those who we interviewed in the first round]: Can you tell me about the organisation that you worked for? [Prompt, what does the organisation do? How many people work there?]

When did you leave your job/Mana in Mahi? Why was that? Was there anything that could have been done differently to make you stay in the job for longer?

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design and implementation to support young people into employment and industry training?

To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for young people not in education, employment or training?

Recruitment

We'd like to know a bit more about how you got your job. How did you first hear about your job?

Can you tell me about the process of applying for the job? [Prompt: did they ask you about qualifications, what were they? What did you do at school? Did they ask you about your interests? Were you given more than one job option? Did they ask you what hours you could work and whether you had a transportation plan to get to work?]

[New participants only] What made you want to apply for your job? [Prompt: did the care and support that your employer could give you, make you want to join MiM]

Key components of Mana in Mahi

Pre-employment and on-the-job training

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get pre-employment training? If so, how important was this in deciding whether or not to take the job?

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get on-the-job training? If so, how important was this in deciding whether or not to take the job?

[New participants only] Please tell me about the on - the job training you had after you started work. [Prompt: What did areas did you get training in? How long was the training] What did you like about that training? What did you not like?

Incentive payments

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get an incentive payment? If so, how important was this in deciding whether or not to take the job?

Please tell me about the incentive payment that you can get after 3, 6, and 12 months at work. Did you receive any incentive payments? How important was that payment to you in deciding whether you joined the programme?

Pastoral care/support

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get in work support from your employer and MSD? If so, how important was this in deciding whether to take the job?

Please tell me about the in work support you received from MSD after you started work. [Prompt: What did areas did you get support in? Did anyone talk to you about a Tuakana/Teina buddy system] What did you like about this support? What did you not like?

Please tell me about the in work support you received from your employer after you started work. [Prompt: What did areas did you get support in? Did anyone talk to you about a Tuakana/Teina buddy system] What did you like about this support? What did you not like?

Training pathways

Before you started your job, did you know that you would get career planning and development opportunities? If so, how important was this in deciding whether to take the job? [Prompt: before you started, did anyone ask if there was a specific qualification you wanted to do? Did anyone explain how you could work and study at the same time? What did they say?]

Please tell me about the career planning and development opportunities you received after you started work. What did you like about those opportunities? What did you not like? [prompts: training or career plan, training qualifications].

[If not covered] Did you start training towards a qualification? What qualification were you doing and why?

What did you like about doing this qualification? Have you found anything difficult? What happened if you needed help with your qualification?

What was your experience combining training with work? What would have been helpful in supporting you to juggle your training and work?

How well do you feel you are matched to your role? Is it in an industry you see yourself having a career in?

Sustaining participation

Thinking about when you joined Mana in Mahi. What were you told about Mana in Mahi? Was there anything that made it easier for you to join Mana in Mahi? Was there anything that made it hard for you to join Mana in Mahi?

What would have been helpful for you to feel better prepared for Mana in Mahi?

Is there any additional support you would have found helpful and that may have kept you in the programme? Why?

What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi?

What do you see as the best things about Mana in Mahi's programme set up [strengths]?

What are the not so good things about Mana in Mahi [weaknesses]?

What changes could be made to Mana in Mahi to make it more effective?

Conclusion

Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the Mana in Mahi Programme that we have not already covered today?

Interview closure

Thank you for your time.

Next steps for the evaluation.

Provide business card and remind interviewee that contact details are also on the Info Sheet.

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: EMPLOYERS DISCUSSION GUIDE



ALLEN+CLARKE
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Name, role, organisation of interviewee:

Date, time, location & type of interview:

Evaluation team members:

Intro and consent process

Check that Info Sheet has been received. If not, provide two copies – leaving one with interviewee.

Verbally go through information sheet and consent form. Any questions?

Seek informed consent.

Ensure you establish their agreement or otherwise for making an audio recording.

Context:

Please introduce yourself and tell us about your role as it relates to Mana in Mahi.

[For those who we interviewed in the first round]: What changes in the Mana in Mahi programme have you experienced since we last spoke?

Please tell me a little bit about your organisation [prompts: what does your business do, how many employees do you have, what kind of roles do they have?]

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi design and implementation for employers?

To what extent is Mana in Mahi achieving its expected immediate outcomes for employers?

Recruitment

How did you hear about Mana in Mahi? How effective do you think Mana in Mahi's marketing and communications is at attracting employers?

Please tell me about how you [employer] were recruited into Mana in Mahi. What worked well with the recruitment process? What didn't work so well?

How did the employee recruitment process work once you were in the programme? I.e. Did you conduct the interviews? How many applications did you receive? Were you able to select applicants?

Can you tell me how your Mana in Mahi employee was identified? I.e. did you find them, did they find you, or did MSD find them for you?

If MSD matched you and your employee, how successfully do you feel your business was matched with an employee(s) that met your needs? Did you provide any information to MSD about the type of employees you were seeking?

How well suited do you feel the Mana and Mahi programme is to your business and its characteristics? I.e. How well does Mana in Mahi work for businesses in the [hairdressing/building/etc] industry? How well does it work for [small/medium/large] businesses like yours? How does it work for businesses in [location]?

Overall, how could the recruitment and matching process be improved?

Key components of Mana in Mahi

2.4. Please tell me about what made you join the Mana in Mahi Programme as an employer?

Pre-employment and on-the-job training

[If not discussed above] How much of a drawcard was the pre-employment training that employees receive?

Thinking about this pre-employment training, I'd like to hear more about Mana in Mahi employee's work readiness. What was your expectation of the level of training the young people would receive by the time they got to you? Was that expectation met? How effective do you think the pre-employment training was?

Please tell me about what on-the job training you provide your Mana in Mahi employees. Is this different to what you provide other employees?

Wage subsidy

Turning our focus back to incentives to joining Mana in Mahi, how much of a drawcard was the wage subsidy for you to join Mana in Mahi?

Can you tell me about how you receive these wage subsidy payments? What's working well? What's not working so well?

Pastoral care/support

How much of a drawcard was the support provided by MSD to you?

And what about the support MSD provided to your employees?

Please tell me more about the support that MSD provided to you. What were your expectations of this support? Is this support occurring as you expected? Why/why not? How effective do you think it has been?

How appropriate has MSD's support been for your organisation? [Probe - in terms of your organisation's size, sector etc]

In what ways did MSD work with and support you to provide jobs with a training pathway?

Does MSD work with you and support you to provide pastoral care to your Mana in Mahi employee(s)? If yes, in what ways?

What additional support to yourself (employer) from MSD would you have found helpful? Why?

Please tell me more about the support provided by MSD to your employees. What were your expectations of this support? Is this support occurring as you expected? Why/why not? How effective do you think it has been?

What additional support (to your employee from MSD) would you have found helpful? Why?

Please tell me about what support [i.e. pastoral care] *you* provide your Mana in Mahi employees. Does this complement the support MSD provides? Is it different to what you provide other employees?

Training pathways

Thinking about providing jobs with a training pathway discussed above, what support do you provide in terms of career planning and development opportunities for your employee? How many, if any, of your employees are enrolled a NZQA-recognised training qualification?

Can you explain what a future career path might look like for you employee if they do well?

Sustaining participation

[For those who we interviewed in the first round] What were the main incentives for you to continue with the programme?

Did you have any worries or hesitations about joining [new employers] or staying in [remaining employers] Mana in Mahi? What were these? How much of a barrier were they?

What would have been helpful for you to feel better prepared for Mana in Mahi?

What do you think would have been helpful for your employee to feel better prepared for Mana in Mahi?

Overall, how well is Mana in Mahi working for you so far? Why do you say that?

What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi?

What do you see as the overall strengths of the Mana in Mahi Programme? What do you see as the overall weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi Programme? [prompt: design strengths and weaknesses, implementation strengths and weaknesses?]

What changes could be made to Mana in Mahi to make it more effective?

Conclusion

Do you have any other thoughts or comments about the Mana in Mahi Programme that we have not already covered today?

Interview closure

Thank you for your time.

Next steps for the evaluation.

Provide business card and remind interviewee that contact details are also on the Info Sheet.