

FORMATIVE AND PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROTOTYPE

First evaluation report

31 MAY 2019



ALLEN+CLARKE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents initial findings from the formative process evaluation of the 'Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work' programme (Mana in Mahi) prototype, implemented by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The aim of Mana in Mahi was to create sustainable employment outcomes for young people, with a secondary objective of addressing the national skills shortage. MSD launched the prototype of the programme in August 2018 with the intention of learning from the initial phase to inform the design and wider roll-out of a second phase.

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 prototype, and provide recommendations for improvements to the design and implementation which will help to inform the future expansion of the programme. This is a preliminary report based on qualitative interviews with 43 Mana in Mahi participants (clients, employers and MSD staff), and a review of programme documentation and monitoring data (up to 31 March 2019). It focuses on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the prototype implementation and design, and the achievement of immediate outcomes. Most interviews were conducted in April and March 2019. Therefore, the maximum amount of time clients and employers had been participating was approximately seven months. A second report on the prototype implementation will be completed in November 2019.

Based on data from the 25 young people who we interviewed, the main strength of the design of Mana in Mahi is the opportunity for them to enter into stable employment, with the prospect of future career progression. These young people also considered that the chance to gain a qualification and pre-employment training are strengths. MSD may wish to consider offering pre-employment training as a standard feature of Mana in Mahi, because of the benefits it had to those in the current client cohort who received it. The incentive payments were also a strength, but we suggest firstly increasing client awareness of the payment, and then improving clients' understanding of the payment purpose, as there was some confusion amongst clients about this.

Employers we interviewed thought that the support and pastoral care for young people was one of the key strengths of implementation, as well as the on-the-job training delivered as part of young people's employment. However, most clients received little to no career planning support from MSD or their employers during their employment. This has been exacerbated by employers' gaps in knowledge about available qualifications and career pathways. We suggest increasing and clarifying communications and expectations to employers, and providing Work Brokers and employers with information on training pathways and qualifications pertinent to key industries.

For employers, key strengths of design and implementation were the provision of work- and site-ready young people, who could be trained into long term sustainable careers. MSD's financial assistance to employers was seen as valuable in offsetting the risk in bringing on board young people with little or no work experience, but was not a critical incentive for employers. From the employer's perspective, the main weakness in design was the onerous level of administration required for joining and participating in the programme. This makes Mana in Mahi less attractive to employers compared with other MSD products, such as Flexi Wage. We recommend streamlining this process for employers.

Further, the inconsistency in matching employers with appropriate employees has been a weakness for employers during implementation, with many noting the misalignment between employee career interests, and needs of the employer's organisation. Alignment of clients to appropriate employment is critical, and time and care needs to be taken during this process to

ensure this is happening. Similarly, Work and Income staff need to have a firm grasp of the young person's interests, motivations, and abilities, especially for numeracy and literacy. Further, the conditions of employment (such as hours, transport) and commitment of time need to be clearly communicated to both the client and employer from the outset.

Lastly, the marketing material for young people should emphasise the opportunity to both enter into secure employment and gain a qualification along the way. This should be one of the key messages communicated by Work and Income personnel when they are 'selling' the Mana in Mahi product to young people. Marketing collateral should also be tailored to Māori, Pasifika, and female clients, and be representative of a wide variety of industries (as diverse as construction and hair dressing).

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from the first round of data collection for the formative and process evaluation of the 'Mana in Mahi - Strength in Work' prototype. The report includes:

1. background and context for the programme and evaluation;
2. a summary of evaluation activities;
3. findings organised under nine Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs); and
4. the next steps for the evaluation.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Mana in Mahi was launched in response to the Government's commitment to support young people into sustainable and meaningful work. The objective of the programme is to create sustainable employment outcomes for the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) young people, primarily aged 18-24 years who have been in receipt of a benefit for at least three months. The programme also aims to contribute towards addressing the national skills shortage.

Mana in Mahi clients are likely to have high needs and complex circumstances. Accordingly, they will require intensive support and services to achieve successful outcomes and will participate in the programme for 12 months¹.

The prototype of the programme, launched in August 2018, leveraged off elements of the existing Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Skills for Industry model and was further developed through engagement with young people and employers².

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

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 from their employer and MSD to support and enable clients to achieve successful enrolment and participation in an industry qualification

The findings outlined in this report are based upon the first eight months of implementation of the Mana in Mahi prototype (August 2018 – April 2019). The programme is being implemented with a phased approach, to allow the learnings from Phase One to inform the roll out of a second phase. The fieldwork for Auckland and Taranaki took place in March 2019 and in April 2019 for Wellington, seven to eight months after the launch of the prototype. The figure below, supplied by MSD, shows the timing of this evaluation in the wider context of the Mana in Mahi programme implementation.

¹ MSD, 2018d. 'Mana in Mahi Consultancy Services Order.' Internal document.

² Office of the Minister of Employment, 2018. 'Phased Implementation Plan for Mana in Mahi – Strength in Work (Dole for Apprenticeships).

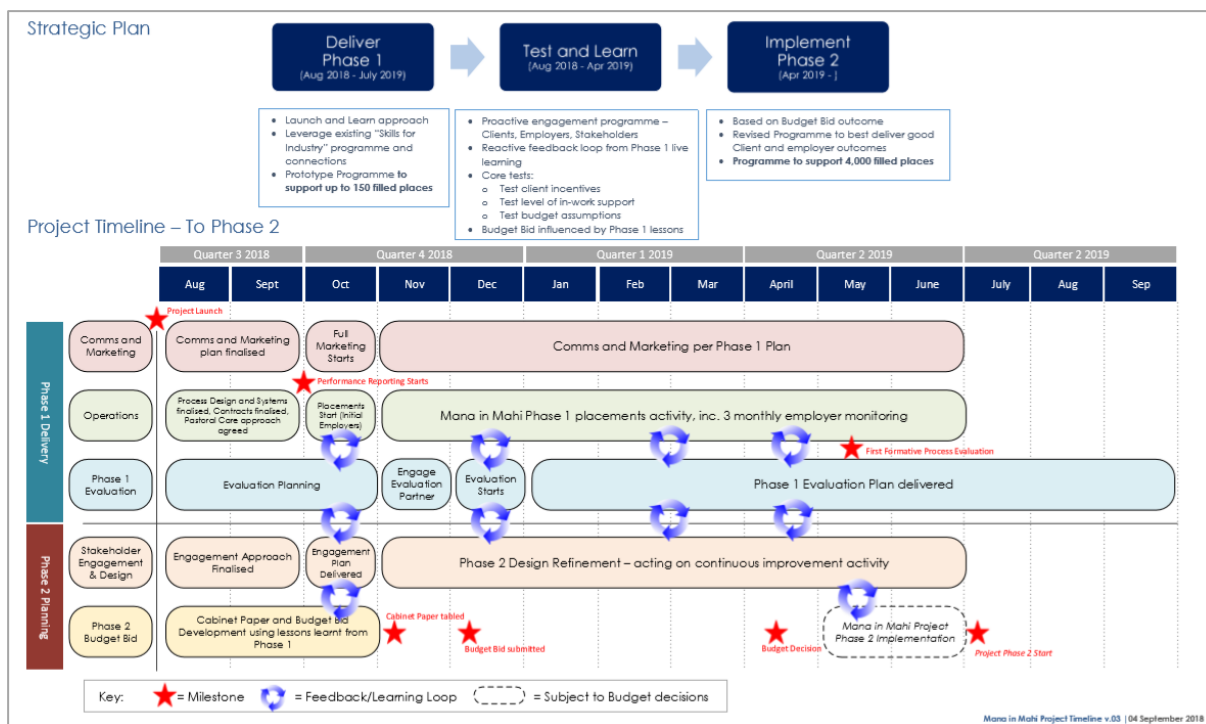


Figure 1: Mana in Mahi project timeline supplied by MSD

2.1. Evaluation purpose

The purpose of this formative process evaluation is to:

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

2.2. 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, employers, and MSD staff. To this end, the evaluation prioritised qualitative data collection and privileged the experience of the individuals who were interviewed or who participated in focus groups. This qualitative focus was complemented by a document review and by analysis of quantitative monitoring data provided by MSD.

2.3. Evaluation questions

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

1. the strengths and weaknesses of its design;
2. the strengths and weaknesses of its implementation;
3. progress towards the expected immediate outcomes; and
4. areas for learning and improvement.

Table 1 presents the nine KEQs that were developed under these themes.

Table 1: Evaluation themes and KEQs for the evaluation

Theme	KEQs
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of Mana in Mahi? 9. How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

3. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

We used a mixed-method approach to evaluate the Mana in Mahi prototype to allow, where possible, qualitative data to be triangulated with quantitative data and document sources. The methods used were:

1. a review of documentation provided by MSD;
2. key informant interviews;
3. case study interviews; and
4. quantitative analysis of MSD's monitoring data.

Further details of these methods are outlined in sections 3.1 – 3.4.

3.1. Document review

A document review was carried out to provide context to the development of the Mana in Mahi prototype. MSD provided the evaluation team with 24 documents alongside approved Mana in Mahi communications materials. The documents included those directly related to the development of the Mana in Mahi prototype, such as advice provided to Ministers and Cabinet material; operational documents such as a Project Control Book and internal process guides; promotional material provided to clients and employers and a contextual report on the cost-effectiveness of MSD employment assistance programmes.

The review allowed the evaluation team to gain insights into the background and development of the Mana in Mahi programme and MSD's approach to its implementation.

3.2. Key informant interviews

The evaluation team conducted context-setting interviews with eleven key informants from MSD involved in the design, implementation and overall governance of Mana in Mahi. The interviews collected information pertaining to the KEQs related to the key informant's involvement in Mana in Mahi. The key informant interviews provided:

- an overview of the contextual background to the programme;
- 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; and
- context to the key challenges that occurred during the implementation of Phase One ahead of, and during, our case study visits.

The interviews each lasted approximately one hour and were conducted face-to-face in individual and small group formats at the MSD National Office. They were semi-structured and followed the Key Informant Interview guides attached as Appendix A: Interview Guides.

3.3. Case study interviews

The evaluation team carried out three site-based case studies in Auckland, Taranaki and Wellington to collect data on the 'on-the-ground' experience of Mana in Mahi's implementation. Each case study involved two members of the evaluation team interviewing current and former

Mana in Mahi clients, employers with Mana in Mahi employees, and MSD regional staff in each site area. Twenty-seven face-to-face interviews were conducted in total, in both group and individual formats, with a total of 43 individuals interviewed. The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and the interview guides used are attached as Appendix A: Interview Guides.

Table 2: Number of individuals interviewed

	Auckland	Taranaki	Wellington	Total
Current clients	5	10	6	21
Former clients	3	0	1	4
Employers³	3	4	5	12
MSD regional staff	3	3	2	8
TOTAL				43

3.3.1. Interviews with current Mana in Mahi clients

We engaged current Mana in Mahi clients through group and individual interviews. Where possible, we organised the interviews around break-times, or after work to cause minimal disruption to the clients and their employer, and always provided kai to 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 experiences for clients, while also allowing the conversation to be guided by the clients where appropriate.

The interviews focused on the clients’ experience 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 recruitment journey into Mana in Mahi, their experience of pre-employment and ‘on-the-job’ training, of incentive payments, MSD and employer support, and career development.

3.3.2. Interviews with former Mana in Mahi clients

We followed similar engagement with former clients as we had taken with the 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 experience of the programme as we had with current clients, we also explored the reasons, barriers, and potential aggravating factors for their early exit from the programme.

³ At both the Wellington and Taranaki case visits, one of the interviews had two representatives from one employer organisation

3.3.3. 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 are 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.

3.3.4. Interviews with MSD regional staff

We interviewed MSD regional staff involved in programme implementation at each site. This was important due to operational autonomy within each MSD region. The interviews covered procedural elements of Mana in Mahi. They focussed 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.

3.4. Analysis of quantitative data

Quantitative analysis was based on data provided by MSD. Data included monthly summary reports containing the following information:

1. number of employers who have expressed interested in Mana in Mahi, applied to join, or have signed contracts;
2. number of clients placed into a Mana in Mahi role, compared to the forecast number of client placements;
3. number of positions indicated by employer applications, versus forecast number of positions indicated based on employer applications; and
4. number of positions contracted between the Ministry and employers, compared to forecast number of positions contracted.

MSD also provided additional information including:

1. a breakdown of employers by region, size and industry type;
2. client demographic characteristics; and
3. demographic characteristics of clients who left Mana in Mahi.

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. Comparison was based on the calculation of standard chi-square tests⁴ for each characteristic of interest.

⁴ 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 those observed if samples were drawn from identically distributed populations..

3.5. Limitations

The limitations of the evaluation include:

- The findings from the qualitative interviews on the strengths and weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi prototype provide data only on the perspectives of those interviewed – the findings are not generalisable to the entire Mana in Mahi employer and participant population.
- The evaluation did not interview employers and young people who were interested in or contacted about the programme, but ultimately decided not to take part.
- The interviews included only a small number of former Mana in Mahi client participants (N=4), due to challenges in contacting the young people those who had exited the programme.
- Mana in Mahi participants, including employers and young people, as well as MSD staff, are likely to have an interest in the programme's continuation. Whilst their perspective is valuable, and critical for the evaluation, it is not neutral. An unbiased perspective will be difficult to capture from the stakeholder engagement almost by definition. As described above, the evaluation engaged with four clients who had exited the programme, to ensure there was engagement with parties other than those who have an interest in the continuation of Mana in Mahi.

These limitations require the findings of this evaluation to be understood in its context as a small-scale qualitative study.

4. KEY FINDINGS

This section details the key findings of the evaluation under the nine KEQs. Each KEQ is divided into subcategories below.

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

The main motivating factor for young people to join Mana in Mahi was to access secure employment. The Mana in Mahi design feature of offering a career pathway, not just a job, was also an important incentive to support young people into employment and training.

1.1 Effectiveness of communication and marketing strategies for young people

Overall, communication strategies targeting young people were effective. Direct and indirect approaches were used to communicate to young people. Direct reach outs were made by Work and Income staff through text messages, phone calls and emails to clients, as well as clients being told verbally about the programme during on-site visits to a local Work and Income branch. Indirect approaches included a social media marketing campaign, as well as hearing of the programme through word of mouth; as was the case with clients from the Wellington and Auckland Limited Services Volunteer programmes. In general, the combination of strategies has made the marketing process effective. However, we consider informing clients through text messaging, phone calls, and during on-site visits, the most effective channels for targeting youth.

The documents supplied to the evaluation team demonstrated an attempt at consistency of messaging. However, it became clear in the interviews with MSD officials that the tight timeframes between design and delivery meant the communications and marketing strategy was rushed for MSD and was continually evolving as the programme was being rolled out. This was exacerbated by initial confusion and miscommunication about the nature of the project amongst MSD national staff and onto their regional counterparts. The lack of clarity was acknowledged in the issue register provided to us by MSD. Collaboration between the design and communications teams was important, which would strengthen effectiveness for the roll out of Phase Two.

1.2 Pre-employment training as an incentive for participation for young people

Due to variations in the contracting model between regions, not all clients received pre-employment training. For clients in regions that did offer this training, the evaluation found that, while helpful, it was not necessarily an incentive for participation into the programme, as most were incentivised by the prospect of entering into secure employment. It was also noted that issues such as numeracy and literacy were not addressed in these pre-employment programmes and may need to be included for certain clients who struggle in these areas.

1.3 On-the-job training as an incentive for participation for young people

Overall, it was unclear if on-the-job training was an incentive for participation. However, all clients our team spoke with saw the importance of this practical aspect of their employment (for example, in learning how to operate a chainsaw, or cut hair) in furthering their career, and in gaining their qualifications.

1.4 Three, six, and twelve-month payments as an incentive for participation for young people

Overall, the evaluation found that the incentive payments were seen by some clients as “nice to have”, but these clients did not see them as the principal motivator for their involvement in the programme (which was to secure full time employment). There was mixed awareness and understanding of the nature of the payments, with some clients not aware of their existence, with others confused about the obligations they entailed (for example, if they were loans to be repaid).

1.5 MSD in-work support as an incentive for participation for young people

Overall, clients reported limited prior knowledge of the MSD in-work support. As such, the evaluation was unable to determine if this incentivised young people’s participation in the programme.

1.6 Employer support and pastoral care as an incentive for participation for young people

Employer support and pastoral care for clients was highly valued and received very well by clients, but it is unclear if this is an incentive to join the programme. Further, although not explicitly explored, there was little evidence of the Tukana/Teina model of a “buddy” system discussed in the Mana in Mahi design documentation. This made it difficult to determine if this level of support would incentivise young people into the programme. Both of these points will be explored further during the second cycle of data collection.

1.7 Career planning and development opportunities as incentive for participation for young people

The ability to gain a qualification, in furthering career prospects, was a significant incentive for young people to joining the programme. As one client mentioned,

“...without [a qualification,] you’re not going to get anywhere!” – Client

Gaining a qualification was considered a central pathway to career progression, with many clients noting they were keen to springboard off this for their future work. The deeper aspect that MSD national staff noted was the importance of clients being able to ‘gain back their mana’, a theme that often emerged through interviews with clients. One client commented that they felt they were given “a sense of purpose” through this, with another saying that they felt supported to move into leadership roles in the future.

Clients who were not aware of the qualification component of Mana in Mahi suggested that, had they known of this, it would have been more incentivising to join the programme. For them, this was because it offered a way to gain not just a job, but a career:

“I think this would have made it more appealing and made me work harder if I knew I was really working toward something, rather than just working.” – Client

1.8 Other incentives to participation for young people

Many clients spoke of how employment itself was a significant incentive to joining the programme. As one client explained, being on the programme is:

“...better than the benefit, that’s for sure!” – Client

Most wanted to be busy and productive, and earning a living. One client mentioned that he was embarrassed to be unemployed, and now has more respect for himself as he has continued in the programme. In this way, he felt his mana had been returned to him.

1.9 Barriers to participation for young people

The main barrier to participation that most young people identified was transport to and from their respective places of employment. Common problems included not having a restricted driver's licence; the financial cost of bringing vehicles up to warrant of fitness standard; and arduous public transport in bigger cities like Auckland.

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

Mana in Mahi design features that appeal to employers include the pre-employment training and wage subsidy. The most effective marketing strategy to employers is to promote the programme through relationships between employers and MSD staff. The perceived paperwork burden is a disincentive for some employers to join the programme.

2.1 Effectiveness of communication and marketing strategies for employers

Most of the employers we interviewed had heard about the Mana in Mahi programme from Work and Income by email, phone call, or in person. Others had responded to an advert placed on Trade Me. One employer had been made aware of Mana in Mahi through an invitation to collaborate on the programme's prototype development. A small number of employers heard about the programme from their contracting partners.

National and regional stakeholders highlighted the range of marketing strategies used, and that these have been successful in gaining 254 expressions of interest and 71 applications from employers over the first seven months of implementation. Approximately 45 new expressions of interest are occurring per month, with 34% leading to an application to join Mana in Mahi.

Both MSD staff and most of the employers interviewed stated that the most effective for attracting employers to the programme is to develop and leverage relationships between MSD national (Industry Partnerships) and regional staff and employers. In particular, Mana in Mahi marketing has been successful where there is a pre-existing relationship between MSD and the employer.

MSD staff at the national and regional levels noted there was some inconsistency in the messages provided to employers by the different regional offices (for example, some employers were not aware that MSD would provide ongoing support to their employees as part of the Mana in Mahi package). It is important that front-line MSD staff, including Work Brokers and Work and Income case managers, have accurate knowledge of the programme and its features.

MSD regional and national stakeholders and employers also suggested that there is value in tailoring Mana in Mahi marketing to a range of organisational characteristics such as size and industry. One employer noted that the marketing material (particularly the images) appeared to suggest only industries like forestry and construction came under Mana in Mahi, and not her industry of hairdressing. Future marketing strategies should target the variety of potential industries that could be involved in Mana in Mahi, with some specific tailoring for Māori, Pasifika, and women.

2.2 Pre-employment training as an incentive for employer participation

Where offered and available, pre-employment training was an incentive for employers. Some employer contracts included this training, while others did not. Employers who knew about the training and had it available for their industry were incentivised and could identify the value of this training in ensuring their Mana in Mahi employees were work ready.

2.3 MSD support for employers as an incentive for employer participation

Several employers highlighted that MSD support, particularly with paperwork, equipment costs and upskilling staff through pre-employment training, was a significant factor in their participation, while others would have participated regardless of MSD support.

2.4 MSD support for young people as an incentive for employer participation

Most employers we interviewed did not view MSD's support for young people within Mana in Mahi as a significant incentive to join the programme. One employer expressed a preference that employees distance themselves from MSD as they moved from relying on government benefits to being employed. Another employer who was not aware of this support thought it had the potential to be an incentive as one way of contributing to a reliable employee.

2.5 Wage subsidy as an incentive for employer participation

For most of the employers we interviewed (who had all employed a young person through Mana in Mahi), the wage subsidy was a useful contributor but not the main motivator in employing young people. One employer was not aware of the subsidy until after they had employed people under Mana in Mahi, while for another employer, this subsidy was the reason they employed a young person. Specifically, it was a useful contributor to equipment costs and to offset decreased productivity while a young person was training on-the-job.

*"It's quite an important part of the programme. It just takes a little bit of fear away, gives you an incentive to be part of it and you're being assisted along the way as well" –
Employer on the wage subsidy*

Feedback from some employers, as well as some MSD national and regional staff, suggested that the amount of paperwork required to access the Mana in Mahi wage subsidy was a disincentive, in relation to other MSD products such as Flexi Wage.

2.6 Other incentives to employer participation in Mana in Mahi

Employers mentioned some other incentives which were important in their decision to join Mana in Mahi. Doing good was an important motivator for many employers. One employer described their interest in being part of a new initiative to address youth unemployment, and another employer mentioned the importance of this initiative in helping their industry long term. Some MSD regional staff also mentioned employers with a social conscience were motivated to join Mana in Mahi, employ young people for the long term, and see them do well.

*"We needed to find people, so it served a dual purpose for us. One, we were recruiting people and bringing them into roles in hospitality and two, we were doing some good."
– Employer*

The opportunity to formalise training was another incentive mentioned by an employer. Employers expressed wanting to be more formal in the training that they provide their employees (including on the job and qualifications), and Mana in Mahi was described as the vehicle to do so.

2.7 Barriers to joining Mana in Mahi for employers

Employers expressed a small number of hesitations about joining Mana in Mahi. Several employers expressed concern about the level of paperwork involved in joining the programme,

including the application and contracting process, as well as ongoing reporting requirements once the young person has started work.

Some employers also referred to the risk of taking on a young person who is not in work, may not have worked before, and may have contextual factors (such as health concerns) impacting their ability to work.

2.8 Fit for organisational characteristics of employers

Larger employers we spoke with reported that existing structures, such as HR functions and training programmes made it easy for them to provide the employee support required under Mana in Mahi.

By contrast, smaller organisations incurred a proportionally larger burden in investing time to comply with the administrative requirements of the programme and greater risk in investing time and resources if an employee did not work out. While this is common risk for small employers taking on employees, the employers we spoke to viewed Mana in Mahi employees as more likely to be untested in the workplace and therefore a greater risk to them than a typical new employee. For many smaller employers, a higher level of support from MSD/Work and Income staff to themselves and their employee/s was important to mitigate these risks.

The programme appears to work best for employers in industries which have a clearly-established training and qualifications pathway, such as construction. It does not fit as well with industries that do not have a clearly-defined career development pathway, such as the road freight industry, which does not offer a formal apprenticeship scheme. Similarly, the programme appears to be most successful for employers located in regions where employees can access relevant external training; ITOs which offer industry qualifications relevant to Mana in Mahi participants' roles were not available in all case study regions.

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

The Mana in Mahi prototype was largely implemented as intended, with minor variations in the provision of pre-employment training, administration of incentive payments, types of employers recruited, and the provision of MSD in-work support.

Overall, the evaluation found that the Mana in Mahi prototype has been mainly implemented as intended, with MSD staff stating that they had:

“...kept quite true to the blueprint.”

– MSD regional staff member

Several minor variations were identified, as described below.

As MSD was aware, larger organisations, such as Downer, provided pre-employment training for employees of subcontracted organisations. Smaller employers (who contracted directly with MSD) did not have comparable training programmes, in which cases employees’ training started upon commencement of employment. We found that most employers and clients who received pre-employment training found it to be useful in preparing them for employment. We therefore suggest it would be beneficial to standardise this into the programme’s design.

Initial contracts for Mana in Mahi employers, organised through MSD’s Industry Partnerships, differed from those organised through regional MSD offices. One of the key differences between the two concerned distribution of incentive payments. For the four contracts managed by Industry Partnerships, the employee incentive payment was provided to the employer to distribute to employees/clients. Employer contracts facilitated and managed through regional MSD offices included incentive payments made directly to clients through the in-work support payments team at MSD. In the former, tax deductions applied, meaning the actual amount received by the client was \$1,000, less tax. Distributing it through MSD avoids this, and thus clients receive the full payment.

The Industry Partnerships Team initially identified four large employers (and their subcontractors) to take part in and test elements of Mana in Mahi. Regional employers were recruited to Mana in Mahi by MSD regional offices. MSD national and regional staff felt the autonomy given to regional MSD offices to find other small and medium businesses to participate in the programme was a positive change.

Lastly, client support through MSD’s In-Work Support service was inconsistently provided to young people that we interviewed for the evaluation. For example, as will be described in section 4.8, some clients received regular calls from MSD In-Work Support, while others did not.

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

The implementation and delivery of pre-employment training (for those that received it), on-the-job training, the incentive payment and pastoral care have offered effective support for young people in their Mana in Mahi employment.

Programme implementation could be enhanced by ensuring that employers are aware of training pathways that are available in their industries and regions.

4.1 Young people’s journey into Mana in Mahi

In general, clients did not provide detailed information about their journey into employment. In the next cycle of data collection, we will explore client experiences of recruitment into Mana in Mahi, and the process of gaining employment.

4.2 Young people’s enrolment and retention rates

MSD monitoring data provides some insight into the demographic characteristics of the 124 young people who had enrolled in Mana in Mahi as at 31 March 2019, including the characteristics of those young people who left the programme early for any reason.

Table 3 below compares some key characteristics of the young people who remained in the programme with the characteristics of those who left. Accompanying chi-square test results show that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups. We will repeat these analyses in our second report, which will include larger samples and provide greater statistical power.

There may be an exception to this general pattern. There was a higher proportion of women who left the programme early: 38% of women left the programme early compared to only 21% of men, a difference that was almost statistically significant at the p<0.05 level. We will focus on the experience of female Mana in Mahi clients in the second round of data gathering to explore whether experiences of young women differ from those of young men.

Table 3: Characteristics of Mana in Mahi clients (as at 31 March 2019)

		Remained in programme	Left programme	Chi-square test
Gender	Male	75 (78.95%)	20 (21.05%)	p = 0.07
	Female	18 (62.07%)	11 (37.93%)	
Ethnicity	Māori	51 (76.12%)	16 (23.88%)	
	Pākehā	20 (80%)	5 (20%)	
	Pasifika	8 (72.73%)	3 (27.27%)	

	Other	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	
	Not stated	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	p = 0.45
Time on benefit	<3 months:	35 (81.4%)	8 (18.6%)	
	3 to 12 months:	18 (75%)	6 (25%)	
	1 to 2 years:	14 (77.78%)	4 (22.22%)	
	2-4 years:	16 (61.54%)	10 (38.46%)	
	4 years plus:	10 (76.92%)	3 (23.08%)	p = 0.47
Employer size	Large (50+)	46 (74.19%)	16 (25.81%)	
	Medium (20-49)	16 (69.57%)	7 (30.43%)	
	Small (1-19)	31 (79.49%)	8 (20.51%)	p = 0.67
Total		75 (78.95%)	20 (21.05%)	

Key * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

4.3 Young people's understanding of Mana in Mahi

Clients' understanding of the programme was varied. Most of the young people we interviewed were vaguely aware they were participating in Mana in Mahi, but for some, there was confusion about the distinction between the programme and their actual employment. Occasionally, clients conflated the two, without realising the discrete nature of each. One client did, however, understand the programme's goal of helping young people to get off the benefit and into work.

4.4 Young people's understanding of the organisation they are employed by

All clients interviewed had a clear understanding of their respective employer organisations. All described in detail the nature of their work, with some clients aware of the career pathways to further their employment in that specific occupation.

4.5 Young people's experience of pre-employment training

Not all clients received pre-employment training, as some employers did not have pre-employment training available. Overall, those that did receive it reported very positive experiences, with one client noting that it:

"...was the cool part about it - it sets you up for later." - Client

Another client, in the hair and beauty industry, found the training "helped [her] a lot", to the extent where she:

"...had a fair idea of what to do in a salon." - Client

Another reported it was a good place to make friends. In general, clients spoke highly of the training, and felt it prepared them well by providing the prerequisite technical knowledge for their occupation and gave them confidence as they moved into their new employment. Overall, pre-employment training has been a strength of the programme's implementation. MSD might consider offering this as a standard component of the Mana in Mahi product to all employers.

4.6 Young people's experience of on the job training

Clients generally reported positive experiences of their on-the-job training, and the evaluation has found this to be a strength of implementation. Overall, the clients we interviewed were eager and willing to learn the craft of their trade, and generally felt supported and comfortable through their on-the-job learning.

4.7 Young people's experience of three, six, and twelve-month incentive payments

Client experiences and responses to the incentive payments were varied. However, clients were overall very grateful for the payments, which often helped to alleviate short term expense-related issues. As one client noted, the payments were

"...good because it comes unexpectedly and helps out a lot." – Client

There are varied views within MSD of the incentive payments. One MSD official believed the payment system – from MSD to the client – should be reconsidered, to mitigate the risk of precipitating dependence upon MSD. Rather, it was felt that the intent should be to facilitate the bond between employer and employee, thus gradually untethering the client from MSD and the beneficiary system. However, other MSD officials did not support employer distribution of the payments, feeling that it would create a power imbalance between the clients and the employee.

4.8 Young people's experience of MSD's In-Work Support

Clients reported mixed experiences of the MSD In-Work Support. Some stated they had received calls from the phone service each month, while others reported no contact at all. We explored the possibility of triangulating this finding with operational data from MSD. However, at the time of writing, it was not possible to distinguish between attempted contacts and successful contacts, meaning that this potential data source would not have been particularly informative.

A number of clients were keen to engage with the support, but found it challenging to make contact. Some did not have cell phones, making the service difficult to access. While MSD has clarified that clients previously receiving a benefit are eligible for a cell phone, the financial barrier of topping it up remains. One client, who tried to access the phone service, felt it was a "waiting game" with very delayed responses. However, the evaluation team understands that the MSD contact support centre was experiencing technical issues at the time of interviewing this client.

Overall, many of the clients we interviewed viewed the lack of proactive support as a weakness of the programme. They considered that it could be strengthened by providing more regular, systematic contact that offered guidance on a range of issues, such as time and stress management.

4.9 Young people's experience of employer support and pastoral care

Employer support and pastoral care to clients has been one of the main strengths during implementation of the programme for the young people we interviewed. One MSD official noted that the intention here was to facilitate the building of 'natural support' in the workplace for employees.

Clients spoke highly of employer support, which, for instance, included providing transport to and from the employment site; support with mental health; coaching; and pastoral care more generally. One client noted they felt comfortable to talk with their employer, who was “always friendly”, about any issue. Similarly, another client felt that his employer overall:

“...wants me to succeed.” – Client

However, the degree of support and pastoral care was inconsistent across employers, with no clear pattern immediately discernible according to the size of employer or industry type. In the second round of data collection, the evaluation team will explore what information was provided to employers around their pastoral care expectations, as this is outlined as an important process in the internal client matching process. At this interim stage of the evaluation, however, we understand that employers received a 60-page coaching guidance document, but that this may not have been the most effective way of providing guidance. This will be clarified in the next round of fieldwork.

4.10 Young people’s experience of career planning and development opportunities

Most former and current clients we interviewed reported receiving little to no career planning support, but were eager to have this option available during their employment. One group of clients did, however, have career plans developed, due to a particularly motivated employer. Nevertheless, a lack of employer knowledge and experience of training pathways, coupled with the inaccessibility of training in some areas (as mentioned earlier), limited clients’ career progression planning in this regard. Overall, MSD officials felt that this component of Mana in Mahi requires more refining and development, and we also consider this an area that should be strengthened for Phase Two of the programme.

4.11 Young people’s experience of gaining new qualifications

Most of the clients we interviewed were enrolled in formal qualifications outside of their day-to-day employment, with their on-the-job tasks aligned to this training. As noted, however, not all employers were able to identify suitable qualifications and/or institutes to provide this training.

The main challenge several clients identified was the need to have more study support, such as a tutor to go through the theoretical aspects of their training with them. The evaluation has, however, noted that this is a systemic issue rather than a weakness of Mana in Mahi. Previously, mobile tutors from Industry Training Organisations would conduct site visits to provide such study support, but this function has either been reduced or removed entirely. It has been suggested that MSD liaise with the Tertiary Education Commission to explore how study support for programme clients might be achieved in this regard.

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

Providing young people who are work and site ready, to be trained into a long-term sustainable career, has been the main strength for employers. MSD’s financial support through the wage subsidy helped offset the cost of employing a young person who may have little previous work experience.

The level of paperwork involved in participating in the programme has been the main weakness for employers. To a lesser extent, the training and qualification pathway of Mana in Mahi was a weakness where employers were unfamiliar with these pathways.

5.1 Employer recruitment into Mana in Mahi

MSD data shows that 312 employers had registered interest by 31 March 2019. Figure 2 presents a summary of employer recruitment into Mana in Mahi as at the end of each month.

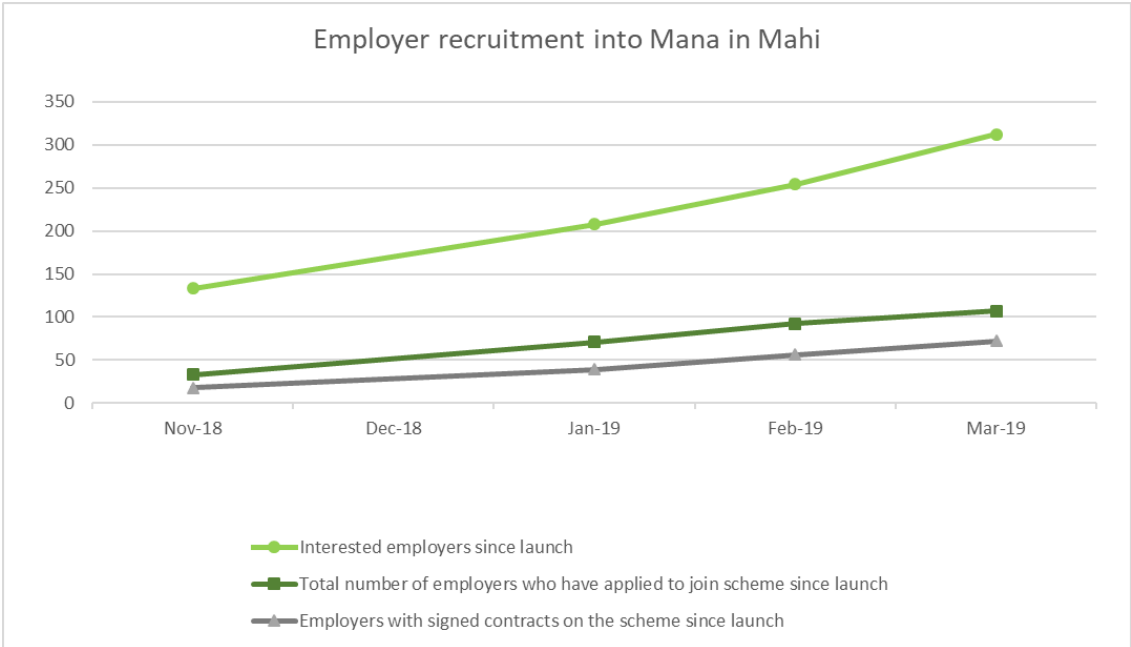


Figure 2: Employer recruitment into Mana in Mahi

Employers have been recruited to Mana in Mahi in a range of ways. This includes involvement from programme design, recruitment through MSD Industry Partnerships personnel, and through Work and Income Work Brokers. Larger organisations like Downer also recruited smaller employers into Mana in Mahi via subcontracting.

Employer feedback shows that while some employers were recruited through pre-existing relationships with MSD, other employers had not dealt with them previously. One MSD official felt strongly about the importance of fostering and using previous relationships:

“This is something that we don’t do well enough. We don’t pick the obvious winners. Why go and reinvent something when you’ve got a tried and true employer that does well anyway, but with a few additional incentives could do even better?” – MSD official

MSD staff also praised the package design of Mana in Mahi, which was easily understandable to employers and beneficial when ‘selling’ the programme.

There were some regional differences in recruitment practices. For example, in one region a Work Broker also supported an employer to complete most of the programme paperwork required, while this was not referred to in other centres.

Regional staff reported that it can be challenging finding suitably motivated employers with the time, energy and motivation to participate in Mana in Mahi. Difficulties could also be compounded by the small number of suitable employers offering jobs with training pathways. Speaking specifically about apprenticeships, one MSD staff member explained that:

“Probably 95% of the vacancies that we had when Mana in Mahi rolled out did not involve apprenticeships.” – MSD staff member

5.2 Employers’ experience of pre-employment training

For employers who had access to pre-employment training, this was central in ensuring employees were work-ready. Many employers whose employees received pre-employment training in trade industries reported that they came to work on the first day “site ready” with some knowledge of health and safety, personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as site safety.

However, for one employer who had employees complete pre-employment training, the short length of this training and employee’s work readiness was a concern. This employer suggested that extra support was still required for young people unfamiliar with these environments.

The smaller employers we interviewed for this evaluation (who contracted directly with MSD) did not have pre-employment training programmes, and employees’ training started upon commencement of employment. These employers were less likely to report that their Mana in Mahi employees were work ready, and noted that some required substantial support in developing work skills. As was suggested in section 4.5, MSD could consider offering pre-employment training as a standard component of Mana in Mahi to all employers.

5.3 Employers’ experience of MSD’s employer support

Most employers had not sought or received MSD support following their initial engagement through joining the programme. Overall, they were satisfied with this approach.

A small number of employers did express a desire for regular catch ups with MSD and one employer suggested that these catchups could include the provision of further information about matters such as employee disciplinary processes. They would have liked some face-to-face contact with MSD – both for the employers and the employees, and to combat the “pack and dispatch” mentality that can occur in some sectors.

“Having that face-to-face contact is really cool and it’s really important.” – Employer

Where several employers had the expectation of monthly site visits as part of the contract monitoring process, this was not occurring. One employer stated that MSD was attempting to meet up with their employee, but the time suggested was in work hours and therefore not “at a time suitable for both the employer and employee” as the process guide suggests.

5.4 Employers' experience of wage subsidy

In most cases, the wage subsidy has been implemented as envisaged with set regular payments to employers. Most employers reported positive experiences of this, as it helped to offset costs of providing extra support to their Mana in Mahi employees. The exception to this is one employer who did not receive a subsidy payment for three months. This was eventually resolved by another MSD Work Broker, however the pressure the situation placed on both employer and young person contributed to an employment relationship breakdown.

5.5 Other points related to implementation of Mana in Mahi for employers

Some employers noted that there were other contextual factors which sometimes made Mana in Mahi employees difficult to engage and/or retain in employment. This included employees' personal circumstances such as their home life and mental health. These complex needs of the Mana in Mahi clients were acknowledged in the design of the programme, with support for the employee a core part of programme design.

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

Where young people are matched to employment that aligns with their interests and personal circumstances they tend to remain in the programme and to have commenced qualifications. Most of the former clients interviewed had left due to not being matched to appropriate employment.

6.1 Extent to which young people were matched to appropriate employment

MSD officials, employers and young people agreed that matching clients to appropriate employment is critical to the success of the programme. In most cases, the clients we interviewed that had remained with the programme stated that they were matched with appropriate employment, and many spoke of enjoying their work. In one instance, the client asked to be matched to employment with family members, and this request was met. For a collection of other clients, their interests matched with their employment.

One client had struggled with finding employment, having been on the benefit and unemployed for five years. He regretted the 'bad decisions' he had made earlier in life, and was struggling to make ends meet. He was committed to turning his life around, and wanted to find a job in what he enjoyed doing – being outdoors or gardening. When he spoke with Work and Income, they found him employment in this area. For him, "...this job...[is a] blessing".

However, most of the former clients stated that a mismatch with their employment had been the reason for leaving the programme. For example, a young person recalled that they and a number of their Mana in Mahi co-workers had left a job due to the incompatibility between its hours and their childcare commitments, which may explain the higher proportion of young women who left the programme. One young person admitted to not being interested in the employment area but believed she could use the skills learned in her personal life. Several young people also reported being matched to jobs which were located in areas some distance from their home, and that they did not have access to reliable transport. Others were placed in a role that did not match their skills or interests, and in these cases, it appeared to be because their case manager had not asked what their interests were.

In the second round of data collection, our team will explore the matching process in more depth, by focussing on the level of emphasis placed on client interests, the range of employment options provided to clients (if more than one), and practical issues such as hours of work and transportation. This will also examine the employer interviewing process and the number of applications employers received for their respective job openings.

6.2 Extent to which young people are enrolled in foundation qualifications

Most clients reported being enrolled in a qualification, although none had yet completed. Repeating an earlier point, most clients were happy to be enrolled in their respective qualifications and saw the value of this for their future career prospects. Similarly, most reported they were being supported into training, and many were eager to continue and achieve more qualifications beyond their initial one.

MSD data on client enrolment in qualifications was not available at the time of reporting. Based on discussions with MSD staff, we understand that they have recently introduced system changes to support data capture for "the training pathway". We anticipate obtaining this data during the second period of data collection and using it to explore the findings noted above.

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

It is important to ensure that employers are well matched to employees, but this is not happening consistently. Employers are eager to support young people to establish long term careers, but are constrained in some industries by the lack of qualifications available. Most employers are providing pastoral care, although this is not necessarily different to that which they provide to other employees. Employers considered the level of support provided by MSD to be appropriate to their needs.

7.1 Extent to which employers are matched to appropriate employees

The evaluation found mixed levels of success in matching employers to appropriate employees, specifically the alignment between employee career interest and organisational need. Approximately two thirds of employers stated that they had been well matched to employees. One employer commented specifically that their employee had requested the company specifically and was a good fit for the role.

The other employers spoken to stated that employees were not always the best fit for organisational need. MSD regional staff also highlighted challenges in ensuring the right employer was matched with the right client. For example, one employer was matched to an employee who was clearly interested in an apprenticeship in another industry. This young person was interviewed and employed despite this, based on their strong interview. However, the employer acknowledged that they could lose this person if an apprenticeship was offered in another firm.

MSD national staff highlighted the risk of setting both business and client up to fail when the employer–employee match is inappropriate.

One employer was given several employees to interview and it was clear that a couple were not suited to the role as they had undertaken pre-apprenticeships in different trades. The clients knew that the employment was not in the area they were interested in but were motivated by a desire to secure employment. While the employer felt it was good experience for the clients to do interviews – and also referenced that they would have benefited from some support in developing their CVs – they knew the clients were not passionate about their trade.

An MSD national office staff member noted that employers did not always fully understand their obligations to their Mana in Mahi employee, and potential impacts on their organisation of employing a young person with higher needs. More detailed communication about the true costs and responsibilities of employing a young person may have been advantageous to improve employer understanding and expectations.

7.2 Extent to which employers are incentivised to provide places with industry training pathways

Employers confirmed that they were eager to provide and support employees into a future career path.

“We want to make their employment opportunities grow.” - Employer

However, both employers and MSD regional staff identified some challenges in developing and supporting career paths. Specifically, the lack of formal qualifications available in some industries was a barrier to the creation of career pathways.

“There are no formal qualifications in this industry. This is a limitation because people become “jack of all trades” but don’t have something formal to reflect that and give security and flexibility in their future employment.” - Employer

Employers’ awareness and knowledge of training pathways and qualifications and the availability of appropriate training programmes within regions impacts on the provision of places with industry training pathways.

Other employers were both familiar with, and committed to, training pathways. Two employers provided particularly detailed descriptions of training pathways. One employer outlined the provision of a generic training base before employees specialise, and the possibility of cross-crediting to contribute to another qualification. Another employer explained how the qualification could lead to transition both across and up within the organisation. A third employer also emphasised the flexibility and security which training qualifications could provide.

The importance of clients being self-motivated to continue and complete training was a point made by one employer. While this employer definitely sees a career for two of their employees and outlined the qualifications they were on track to achieve, for another employee, they explained that their lack of progression is “[their] choice, not ours” because they are indifferent to the role they are in.

7.3 Extent to which employers are incentivised to provide pastoral care for employees

Beyond the guidebook given to employers, it is not clear that MSD offered guidance on how to provide pastoral care. Most employers were providing pastoral care, commonly by having regular catch-ups with their employees to discuss their general wellbeing. Many of those who described their pastoral care practices mentioned that this was no different to the support provided to other employees. It is therefore likely that this support would have been provided even if employees had not been Mana in Mahi clients.

“[I] stay in touch with the guys and make sure they’re happy at work, and beyond work...I think everyone is comfortable that my door is open” - Employer

Several employers were able to draw on previous pastoral care experience in previous work in human resources, social work and counselling to work with their Mana in Mahi employees. Another employer emphasised the long-term benefit both for the business and the industry to support young people to develop in these roles.

7.4 Employers consider that MSD support matched organisational characteristics

MSD provided little support to large organisations beyond the recruitment phase, which was appropriate as these entities typically had the relevant infrastructure to train and support young people. However, as noted previously, small organisations typically take on a higher level of risk in employing a young person, and would have benefited from greater support.

More generally, the relationship between MSD staff and employers was highlighted as essential to ensuring that MSD staff understood employers’ business needs are were about to match tem to an appropriate employee.

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

The Mana in Mahi evaluation framework⁵ conceptualises ‘design’ features as policy levers that incentivise employers and young people to participate in Mana in Mahi. ‘Implementation’ refers to the delivery of the prototype features in practice. The following discussion of strengths and weaknesses aligns with these definitions.

8.1 Overall strengths and weaknesses of design for young people

The overall strength of the design of Mana in Mahi for the young people we interviewed is the opportunity for them to enter into stable employment, with the prospect of future career progression. This has been the most significant incentivising factor for young people. We consider that the chance for secure employment should be emphasised in the marketing materials for the programme, as well as be one of the key messages communicated by Work and Income personnel when they are ‘selling’ the Mana in Mahi product to young people.

Mana in Mahi’s qualification component was also identified as a strength by most of those interviewed, in opening up a firm career pathway. However, employer awareness, and development of qualifications pathways across a range of industries is an area that could be strengthened.

Similarly, for those that received it, pre-employment training was considered to be a very useful foundation for work. Some have noted that numeracy and literacy skills should be included in this training.

Incentive payments were also a strength of design, noting however that these are ‘nice to haves’. Several young people interviewed also described using their incentive payments to pay for work tools not funded anywhere else, and connected this to progressing on their career pathway.

In general, the evaluation has found no obvious weaknesses in programme design for young people. However, we suggest increasing clarity around the intended use of incentive payments, and the MSD in-work support clients can access during their employment.

8.2 Overall strengths and weaknesses of design for employers

The evaluation found that Mana in Mahi’s design strengths for employers are the provision of work- and site-ready young people who could be trained into long-term sustainable careers. Though not a key incentive, the evaluation suggests that employers valued MSD’s financial support to offset their risk in employing a young person with little or no work experience.

Mana in Mahi’s complementarity with other MSD products was a strength, and its easily-understandable package design was beneficial in attracting employers to the programme. One MSD regional staff member went so far as to say Mana in Mahi was:

“...the best product in 33 years I’ve seen launched” – MSD regional staff member

The evaluation found that the programme’s main design weakness for those employers we interviewed was the onerous level of administrative work involved in joining and participating in the programme. This was a particular burden for small employers. This has made Mana in Mahi difficult to compete with other MSD products, with regional officials noting that:

⁵ Allen + Clarke 2019, *Data Collection Framework for the Mana in Mahi Evaluation*.

“[The programme] is much more complicated than Flexiwage, which is seen as a more attractive product” – MSD regional staff member

8.3 Overall strengths and weaknesses of implementation for young people

Employer support and pastoral care has been one of the greatest strengths of implementation for young people. In general, this is because of the altruistic nature of employers involved in the programme, coupled with employers’ desire to train and keep good employees in their workforce. Other strengths of implementation include the pre-employment training (for those that received it), with many feeling it prepared them well for entry into employment; and on-the-job training that gave them valuable practical job skills.

In general, one of the weaknesses of implementation has been little to no career planning support for clients, particularly due to employers’ gaps of knowledge around this. It is critical that employers and Work Brokers are provided with information on training pathways and qualifications. Further, the lack of MSD in-work support to clients is a weakness of implementation.

8.4 Overall strengths and weaknesses of implementation for employers

For employers, the programme’s primary strength in implementation has been the provision of pre-employment trained young people who are ready to work. Secondly, some employers also found the wage subsidy useful as young people came up to speed.

The inconsistency in matching employers with an appropriate employee was a weakness of the programme, with about one third the employers spoken to raising concerns about a mismatch between the employee’s career interests and the needs of their organisation. To a lesser extent, the training and qualification pathway of Mana in Mahi was a weakness where employers were unfamiliar with these pathways.

8.5 Other general weaknesses of Mana in Mahi

Several interviewees referred to the limited age group focus of Mana in Mahi. Only some employers and young people were aware that while young people aged 18 – 24 were a focus, it was possible to recruit young people outside these ages also. All groups spoke of people just outside those age groups who would be suitable clients for the Mana in Mahi Programme. We suggest amending the marketing and communications strategy to clarify this.

KEQ9: How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

Conclusions from the first round of qualitative and quantitative data collection and a review of documents suggest that the following areas could be enhanced.

9.1 Alignment of client to appropriate employment

Care and time need to be taken with matching clients and employment, to dovetail in with, for example, the client's childcare obligations and access to transport. In addition, Work and Income staff need to have a firm grasp of the young person's interests, motivations, and abilities, especially for numeracy and literacy. One employer noted that managers are becoming fatigued by these programmes and they can find the labour elsewhere - so the candidates coming through need to be suitable.

9.2 Streamlining the application process for employers

Overall, the application process for employers needs to be streamlined and made easier. As it stands, there is a significant amount of paperwork employers need to administer, making the process cumbersome. As one employer mentioned, they tolerated the high level of paperwork only because they were desperate for employees. If this were not the case, this employer would not have signed up to Mana in Mahi.

9.3 Communication of Mana in Mahi requirements

There is also a need to communicate the commitment required (time, cost, pastoral care, training) to both employer and the client in a clear and consistent way. This is to ensure that both parties are aware of what is being undertaken. Similarly, Work Brokers need to be aware that young people outside of the 18-24 age cohort are eligible for Mana in Mahi.

9.4 Marketing strategies

The marketing material for young people should emphasise the opportunity to both enter into secure employment and gain a qualification along the way. This should be one of the key messages communicated by Work and Income personnel when they are promoting the Mana in Mahi product to young people. Marketing collateral should also be tailored to Māori, Pasifika, and female clients, and be representative of a wide variety of industries (as diverse as construction and hair dressing).

9.5 Provision of pre-employment training

In general, pre-employment training was considered to be a very useful foundation for work, in helping young people forge their own career path. MSD could consider standardising this feature for the design of Phase Two. Some have noted that numeracy and literacy skills should be included in this training.

9.6 Support for client career pathways

Employers need to be provided with information on training pathways and qualifications related to their industries, in order to effectively support their employees to achieve formal qualifications. Employers also need to have clear understandings of the career support component of Mana in Mahi.

9.7 Clarify the incentive payment

We suggest clarifying and increasing the communications around what the client incentive payment can and should be used for. MSD staff noted that it could be used for a range of purposes, such as purchasing equipment, clothing, or facilitating transport-related costs. Adopting the name 'incentive payment' does not reflect its intended flexibility of use, and a different name for the payment could be considered. MSD could also consider a staggered payment schedule, to allow clients to pay for essential equipment prior to commencing employment, with the rest a 'bonus payment' for remaining in work.

9.8 General improvements

Other potential improvements include: addressing transport challenges experienced by youth, which may mean helping them get their driver's licence; ensuring MSD/Work and Income staff are able to work with clients and employers at hours convenient to them (such as outside of the working day); and ensuring that wage subsidies are implemented as intended (as smaller employers are not able to absorb delays in payment).

More generally, we have noted that strong relationships between MSD regional staff and employers have greatly contributed to successful outcomes, which should be kept in mind for Phase Two.

5. NEXT STEPS FOR THE EVALUATION

Following this report, the evaluation team will conduct the second round of data collection in September, before submitting the final report to MSD in November 2019. The November report will focus on training and education opportunities and the types of improvements that could be made to the programme. It will include qualitative information from stakeholder engagement and analysis of quantitative monitoring data.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview guide: Key informant interviews

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: MSD NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS



Interviewee:

Interviewers:

Location:

Date:

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

For the record, what is your role at the Ministry of Social Development?

What are your responsibilities relative to the Mana in Mahi Programme?

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

1. What incentives are there for young people to join the Mana in Mahi?
2. Please tell me about Mana in Mahi's communication and marketing strategies targeting young people. What's working well? What's not working so well?
3. Please tell me about the pre-employment training that young people receive as part of Mana in Mahi. What's working well? What's not working so well?

4. Please tell me about the on-the-job training that young people receive as part of Mana in Mahi. What's working well? What's not working so well?
5. 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? How much uptake has there been so far? What's working well? What's not working so well?
6. 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? What's working well? What's not working so well?
7. 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?
8. What do you see as the main strengths of the Mana in Mahi Programme's design to support young people into employment and industry training? What do you see as the main weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi Programme's design to support young people into employment and industry training?

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

9. What incentives are there for employers to join the Mana in Mahi? Can you provide any examples where it has been particularly effective?
10. 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?
11. Please tell me about Mana in Mahi's communication and marketing strategies targeting employers. What's working well? What's not working so well?
12. How is the Mana in Mahi pre-employment training intended to impact on employees' work readiness? What's working well and what's not?
13. Please tell me about the wage subsidy payments for employers. What's working well? What's not working so well?
14. What do you see as the main strengths of the Mana in Mahi Programme's design for employers? What do you see as the main weaknesses of the Mana in Mahi Programme's design for employers?

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

15. Please tell me about how MSD clients (young people) were recruited in to Mana in Mahi. Is recruitment occurring as MSD intended (probe: enrolment numbers)? Why/why not? What recruitment processes appear to be most effective?
16. Please tell me about how employers were recruited in to Mana in Mahi. Is recruitment occurring as MSD intended (probe: numbers of employers who have joined programme, industries represented)? Why/why not? What recruitment processes appear to be most?
17. Please tell me about the delivery of pre-employment training. Is this training happening as MSD intended? Why/why not? How is the training been delivered? By whom? How effective do you think it has been? Based on feedback you've had, how well is this working for employers? (i.e. are they saying that young people are work ready as a result of the training?)
18. Please tell me about the delivery of on-the-job training. Is this training happening as MSD intended? Why/why not? How effective do you think it has been? Based on feedback you've had, how well is this working for young people? How well is it working for employers?

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.

Interview guide: MSD regional stakeholders

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: MSD REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS



ALLEN+CLARKE
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Interviewee:

Interviewers:

Location:

Date:

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

For the record, what is your role at the Ministry of Social Development?

What are your responsibilities relative to the Mana in Mahi Programme?

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

We would like to start by asking some questions about incentives for young people and employers to join Mana in Mahi.

3.1 Please tell me about Mana in Mahi's communication and marketing strategies targeting young people. What's working well? What's not working so well?

Thinking about all the factors that motivate young people to join Mana in Mahi, based on your experience how much of an incentive are the following factors:

3.2 The pre-employment training that young people receive before they start work (*note: this is not a feature of Mana in Mahi in all regions so may not be relevant*)

3.3 The on-the-job training that young people receive from their employers

3.4 The three, six and 12-month incentive payments

- 3.5 The support the young people receive from MSD (e.g. the telephone help line)
- 3.6 the in-work support young people receive from their employers (e.g. pastoral care)
- 3.7 the career planning and development opportunities for young people.
- 3.8 Are there any other incentives or drawcards for young people to join Mana in Mahi?
- 3.9 What do you see as the main barriers to young people joining Mana in Mahi?
- 3.10 What do you see as the main strengths of Mana in Mahi's design to incentivise young people into employment and industry training?
- 3.11 What do you see as the main weaknesses of Mana in Mahi's design to incentivise young people into employment and industry training?

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

2.1 Please tell me about Mana in Mahi's communication and marketing strategies targeting employers. What's working well? What's not working so well?

Thinking about all the factors that motivate employers to join Mana in Mahi, based on your experience how much of an incentive are the following:

2.2 pre-employment training for the young people that they employ

2.3 the support MSD offers to employers

2.4 the support that MSD offers to young people

2.5 the wage subsidy for employers

2.6 Are there any other incentives for employers to join Mana in Mahi?

2.7 What do you see as the main barriers for employers to join Mana in Mahi?

2.8 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?

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

- 4.1 Please tell me about how MSD clients (young people) were recruited in to Mana in Mahi. Is recruitment occurring as MSD intended (probe: enrolment numbers)? Why/why not? What recruitment processes appear to be most effective?
- 4.4 *If offer pre-employment training in this region:* Please tell me about the delivery of pre-employment training. Is this training happening as MSD intended? Why/why not? How is the training been delivered? By whom? Based on feedback you've had, how well is this working for young people?
- 4.5 Please tell me about the on-the-job training that young people receive as part of Mana in Mahi. What's working well? What's not working so well?
- 4.6 Please tell me about the three, six and 12-month incentive payments for young people. What is the rationale for incentive payments? What criteria do young people need to meet to receive these? How much uptake has there been so far? What's working well? What's not working so well?
- 4.7 Please tell me about the support that MSD/Work and Income provides young people (e.g. the telephone support line?). How much uptake of the support has there been? Does MSD proactively contact the young people, or is it up to them to contact MSD if they need support?
- 4.8 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? What's working well? What's not working so well?
- 4.9 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?

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

- 5.1 Please tell me about how employers were recruited in to Mana in Mahi. Is recruitment occurring as MSD intended (probe: expected number of employers signing up)? Why/why not? What recruitment processes appear to be most effective?
- 5.2 What are employers telling you about Mana in Mahi employees' work readiness? *If have pre-employment training in this region:* Based on feedback you've had, how well is the pre-employment training working for employers? (i.e. are they saying that young people are work ready as a result of the training?)
- 5.3 Please tell me about the support MSD provides employers. What's working well and what's not?
- 5.5 Please tell me about the wage subsidy for employers. What's working well and what's not?

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

3.1 Based on your knowledge of the design of Mana and Mahi, and how the programme has been delivered, to what extent to has the programme been implemented as intended?

3.2 *If delivery has differed from design:* What were the reasons for any changes or differences?

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

7.2 Please tell me about the type of jobs that employers are offering. Are they aligned with labour market demand? Do they offer industry training pathways for employees?

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

8.1 Overall, what do you see as the main strengths of Mana in Mahi?

8.2 What do you see as the main weaknesses of Mana in Mahi?

KEQ9: How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

9.1 If you had a chance to make changes to Mana in Mahi, what would you change? Why?

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.

Interview guide: Mana in Mahi employers

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: EMPLOYERS



ALLEN+CLARKE
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

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

To start I would like to ask you some questions about your organisation and your involvement with Mana in Mahi.

Please tell me a little bit about your organisation. (Prompt: what does your business do, how many employees do you have, what kind of roles do they have).

How many Mana in Mahi clients did you originally employ?

How many Mana in Mahi clients remain employed?

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

We are interested in how you found out about Mana in Mahi and what motivated you to employ young people under the Mana in Mahi programme.

2.9 How did you hear about Mana in Mahi? What were you told about Mana in Mahi and what it offered you as an employer? Did you see any of the promotional material?

2.10 Thinking about what motivated you to employ young people through Mana in Mahi. Were you offered pre-employment training for the young people that you employed? If yes, how much of an incentive was the pre-employment training?

2.11 How much of an incentive was the support offered by MSD to you?

2.12 How much of an incentive was the support offered by MSD to the young people you employed?

2.13 How much of an incentive was the employee wage subsidy for your business?

- 2.14 Were there any other incentives for you to join Mana in Mahi? How important were these in your decision?
- 2.15 Did you have any worries or hesitations about joining Mana in Mahi? What were these? How much of a barrier were they?
- 2.16 Overall, how well do you think Mana in Mahi works 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]? Why do you say that?

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

I would now like to ask you about your experiences since starting Mana in Mahi

- 5.4 Please tell me about the process of signing up to Mana in Mahi. (Prompt: did they see the advertising and approached MSD, approach MSD without knowing about Mana in Mahi, have an existing relationship with MSD?). What worked well with the sign-up process? What didn't work so well?
- 7.1 Can you tell me how your business was matched to Mana in Mahi employees? (Prompt: what information did you provide to MSD about the type of employees you were seeking?) How successfully were you matched with an employee that met your needs?
- 7.2 Tell me about the jobs you offered Mana in Mahi employees. What would a future career path be for these employees if they do well? (Prompt: what industry training pathways are available?) In what ways did MSD work with and support you to provide jobs?
- 5.5 Please tell me about Mana in Mahi employees work-readiness. *If their employees had pre-employment training:* What was your expectation regarding the pre-employment training these employees had by the time they got to you? Was that expectation met? What's working well about pre-employment training? What's not working so well?
- 4.4 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? If yes, in what way?
- 4.7 Please tell me about what support (pastoral care) you provide your Mana in Mahi employees. Is this different to what you provide other employees?
- 7.3 Does MSD work with you and support you to provide pastoral care? In what ways?
- 5.6 Please tell me about any support MSD provides you as part of Mana in Mahi. What were your expectations of this support? Is this support occurring as you expected? What's working well with MSD's support for employers? What's not working so well?
- 7.4 Can you tell me how appropriate MSD's support has been for your organisation? (Prompt: in terms of your organisation's size, sector etc)

5.7 Please tell me about the support MSD provides to your Mana in Mahi employees. What were your expectations of this support? Is this support occurring as you expected? Why/why not? What's working well with MSD's support for employees? What's not working so well?

5.8 Please tell me about the wage subsidy payments you receive. What's working well? What's not working so well?

5.9 Was there any other support or assistance that MSD could have provided, that would have been helpful to help you employ young people through Mana in Mahi?

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

8.3 Overall, how well is Mana in Mahi working for you so far? Why do you say that? What do you see as the main strengths of Mana in Mahi?

8.4 What do you see as the main weaknesses of Mana in Mahi?

KEQ9: How could Mana in Mahi be improved?

9.1 If you had a chance to make changes to Mana in Mahi, what would you change? Why?

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.

Interview guide: Mana in Mahi clients

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: CURRENT PROGRAMME CLIENTS



ALLEN+CLARKE
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

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 little bit about yourself. (Prompt: did you grow up here in xx, what do you like to do for fun).

When did start your current job?

Please tell us a little about your job. (Prompt: how long have you been in the role, what does it involve).

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

We would like to start by talking about how you heard about your current job and the sorts of things that led you to take the job.

1.1 How did you hear about your current job? Did you know that the job you started is part of a programme called Mana in Mahi?

1.2 Did you do training before you started the job? Thinking about the things that made you want to take the job, how important was the training before you started the job?

1.3 How important was the on-the-job training that you would get when you started your job?

1.4 How important was the additional payments that you can get after 3, 6, and 12 months at work?

1.5 How important was the support that you would get from MSD (like the telephone helpline)?

1.6 How important was the support that you would get from your employer?

1.7 How important was the chance to get formal qualifications?

1.8 Was there anything else that made you want to take your current job? How important was this?

1.9 Did you have any worries or hesitations about taking the job? What were these? How much of a barrier to joining were they?

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

4.2 Please tell me about how you were recruited to your job. How did you find the recruitment process?

4.3 What were you told about Mana in Mahi? (Prompt for understanding of training pathway component).

4.4 Tell me about the organisation that you work for. (Prompt: what does the organisation do? How many people work there?).

4.5 *If received pre-employment training:* Tell me about the training you got before you started your job. (Prompt: what did areas did you get training in? How long was the training?). How well did it prepare you for the job? What was good about the training? What wasn't so good?

4.6 Tell me about the on-the-job training you got once you started work. (Prompt: who led the training (boss or co-worker, someone from outside). How long was your training? Does the training keep going or did it stop?). What was good about the training? What wasn't so good?

4.7 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? What is good about the incentive payments? What's not so good? (Prompt: views about the timing of the payments).

4.8 Tell me about the support you get from MSD/Work and Income. (Prompt: have you called the telephone support line? How helpful was it?). What is good about the support from MSD? What's not so good?

4.9 Tell me about the support you get from your boss. In what ways does he/she support you? (Prompt: explore in-work support and pastoral care). What is good about the support from your boss? What's not so good? Is there any additional support you would have found helpful? Why?

4.10 Tell me about any help you have had to plan your career. What is good about the career planning help? What's not so good?

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

6.1 Can you tell me how your interests were matched to the job you're in. (Prompt: were you asked about what you did at school? What kind of worked you liked e.g. work outside versus work inside?)

6.2 Can you tell me if you have started, are currently doing, or have completed any qualifications through your work? What is the qualification? How are you finding this?

6.3 Can you tell me if you've started thinking about doing more training or qualifications in the future. What kind of training/qualification? 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?

Is there anything else that would be helpful for you to progress in your work and in your training?

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.

Interview guide: Former Mana in Mahi clients

EVALUATION OF THE MANA IN MAHI PROGRAMME: FORMER PROGRAMME CLIENTS



ALLEN+CLARKE
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

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 little bit about yourself. (Prompt: did you grow up here in xx, what do you like to do for fun).

When did you start your job at [Mana in Mahi employer]?

When did you leave your job at [Mana in Mahi employer]?

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

We would like to start by talking about how you heard about your job at [Mana in Mahi employer] and the sorts of things that led you to take the job.

- 1.1 How did you hear about the job? Did you know that the job you started is part of a programme called Mana in Mahi?
- 1.2 Did you do training before you started the job? Thinking about the things that made you want to take the job, how important was the training before you started the job?
- 1.3 How important was the on-the-job training that you would get when you started your job?
- 1.4 How important was the additional payments that you can get after 3, 6, and 12 months at work?
- 1.5 How important was the support that you would get from MSD (like the telephone helpline)?
- 1.6 How important was the support that you would get from your employer?
- 1.7 How important was the chance to get formal qualifications?

1.8 Was there anything else that made you want to take the job at [Mana in Mahi employer]? How important was this?

1.9 Did you have any worries or hesitations about taking the job? What were these? How much of a barrier to taking the job were they?

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

6.4 Please tell me about how you were recruited to your job. How did you find the recruitment process?

6.5 What were you told about Mana in Mahi? (Prompt for understanding of training pathway component).

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?

Interviewer note: only ask the following questions which are relevant to the interviewee's length of time with the programme.

4.4 *If had pre-employment training:* Tell me about the training you got before you started your job. (Prompt: what did areas did you get training in? How long was the training?). How well did it prepare you for the job? What was good about the training? What wasn't so good?

4.5 Tell me about the on-the-job training you got once you started work? (Prompt: who led the training (boss or co-worker, someone from outside). How long was your training? Did the training keep going or did it stop?). What was good about the training? What wasn't so good?

4.6 Please tell me about the incentive payment that you can get after 3, 6, and 12 months at work. Did you receive any of these payments? What was good about the incentive payments? What wasn't so good? (Prompt: views about the timing of the payments).

4.7 Tell me about the support you got from MSD/Work and Income? (Prompt: did you call the telephone support line? How helpful was it?). What was good about the support from MSD? What wasn't so good?

4.8 Tell me about the support you got from your boss. In what ways did he/she support you? (Prompt: explore in-work support and pastoral care). What was good about the support from your boss? What wasn't so good? Is there any additional support you would have found helpful? Why? Would this have helped you to stay in your job?

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

8.1 Can you tell me how your interests were matched to the job at [Mana in Mahi employer].
(Prompt: were you asked about what you did at school? What kind of worked you liked e.g. work outside versus work inside?)

8.2 Did you start or did you complete any qualifications through your job at [Mana in Mahi employer]? What was the qualification? How did you find it?

8.3 Can you tell me if you've started thinking about doing more training or qualifications in the future. What kind of training/qualification?

Is there anything else that would be helpful for you to progress in your work and in your training?

What are you up to now? (Prompt: in a different job or training?). How much did the skills that you learnt through Mana in Mahi help in your new job/training?

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