

How we engage with a connector tikanga



Purpose

This tikanga provides guidance on how we initiate, build, and maintain a relationship with a connector. A connector is a person, organisation or agency that assists us to identify and connect with tamariki in care, their whānau and caregivers. A community provider or monitored agency can be a connector.

Our mahi with a connector

- Identify and engage with the connector
- Explore how we work with and support the connector
- Work with the connector to successfully undertake a monitoring visit.

Working with a community connector

Identify potential connectors

To identify a potential connector, follow the *Who we engage with tikanga*.

Once a community provider has been identified by the team and agreed to participate in the visit, we can determine if they are able to connect us with tamariki and rangatahi, caregivers and/or whānau. This conversation could happen at the first meeting or at a subsequent one, depending on our current relationship with them.

The Monitoring Manager is responsible for overseeing the connector relationship. They work with their monitoring team to determine who is best placed to develop and maintain these relationships and determine what type of recompense is required.

Engage with a potential connector

Before we reach out to any potential connector, we decide who is best placed to make initial contact. This may be the Monitoring Manager for the visit. However, if someone in the team already has an existing relationship, they may be better placed to make the initial contact.

The information we provide potential connectors

During our initial conversations with a potential connector, we provide them with key information about our work to help them decide if they are willing and able to connect us with tamariki, whānau and/or caregivers.

Our key messages are:

- what the function of the Independent Children's Monitor is and what we monitor
- why we want to speak with tamariki, whānau and caregivers to hear their experiences of the care system
- information about the way we engage with tamariki, whānau and caregivers, including our commitment to our *Ethics code* and our *Child protection policy*.
- the role and responsibilities of a connector and the different ways we can support each other to engage with tamariki, whānau and caregivers. See below for more information on this
- that we provide *information sheets* and *consent forms* to tamariki, whānau and caregivers prior to the engagement to ensure informed consent. These explain who we are, what we do, the type of information we collect, and how we keep that information confidential, anonymised, and safe. A tamariki friendly animation video about what we do can be found on our website. The video is in both te reo Māori and English
- that we have at least two staff facilitating each hui with tamariki. This includes a notetaker. Our *Code of Ethics* guides how we engage with others. The connector may want to support us during these hui – we should also consider the role of the connector if they choose to help facilitate discussions, for example, to support tamariki with disabilities
- that we engage with tamariki, whānau and caregivers in individual or group hui. Hui can take place in homes or at a location that people feel comfortable with
- that we share back our findings either directly to tamariki, whānau and caregivers or via the connector
- that we provide vouchers for all tamariki, whānau and caregivers we talk with. During all our hui we offer kai. More information can be found in our *How we acknowledge others tikanga*
- dates for our visit so the connector knows when we will be visiting their community. It is important to give as specific dates as possible
- the questions we ask tamariki, whānau and caregivers. These questions are called our prompts.

We are clear about what being a connector entails so potential connectors can make an informed choice about whether they are able to support us. Being a connector includes:

- informing participants about our work and asking them whether they would like to engage with us
- arranging for them to engage with us and ensuring they consent which includes getting them to sign the consent forms ahead of the monitoring visit (however, we still obtain informed consent before and during our engagements)
- providing us with information about the participants such as their age, ethnicity, English as a second language or any accessibility issues that may impact on their ability to engage. This information helps us to plan how best to engage with the participants
- finding an appropriate venue for the hui with participants, for example wheelchair access, based on the information gathered about the people we are meeting. This may be at the premises of the connector, but not always and advice will be taken on the most appropriate venue option
- working with participants to organise a date and time for the hui and the most appropriate way for them to get to and from the hui
- supporting with the facilitation of the hui
- providing pre and post care support to participants if needed. This is because connectors will be best placed to provide direct support for participants or help them access the appropriate support they may need
- facilitating the sharing back of our findings with participants.

Documents to provide potential connectors to support their decision making

We provide the following resources to potential connectors during initial conversations. If we meet virtually, we can email them the following documents from our Ngā Kete as links to our website:

- Information sheets for tamariki, whānau and/or caregivers – these are available in te reo Māori and English
- Consent forms for tamariki, whānau and/or caregivers – these are available in te reo Māori and English
- Who we are and what we do booklet
- Connector pack booklet – this is available in both te reo Māori and English
- Links to our tamariki friendly animation video about what we do can be found on our website. The video is in both te reo Māori and English
- our prompts
- A link to our Ethics code, Child Protection Policy and Caring for data and information handbook which can be found on our website.

Work with the connector to determine how we will support each other

If after our initial conversations they are open to continue discussions about working alongside us as a connector, we discuss the specifics of what this could look like. When a potential connector agrees to support us and has determined the type of support they can provide, we are then able to discuss the type of support we can provide to the connector.

Support for the connector

There are two forms of support we may provide to a connector. We can provide vouchers, or we can enter into a *Letter of Grant*.

The table below sets out a summary of the support we may provide to a connector:

Forms of Support We May Provide to Connectors	
Support	Description
Vouchers for a connector	An acknowledgement of time and effort in undertaking the connector role. This acknowledgement can take two forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - vouchers - type and value of voucher to be discussed with the connector and manager
Letter of grant	An agreement to a one-off grant paid up front for a connector who supports us to engage with participants usually in a single monitoring location. The connector is responsible for managing participant vouchers, kai, transport, venue, pre and post care support. This is built into the grant value.

A guide on appropriate support for a connector

We have developed a guide to support decisions about the form of support we provide to a connector. The guide can be used once we have determined from the connector:

- the number of people they can support us to engage with
- whether they can support us to engage with tamariki in care, their whānau and/or caregivers in single or multiple monitoring locations
- whether they will be supporting with transport, organising a venue, and providing kai
- whether they will be providing pre and post support to those who engage with us
- whether they want to be involved in the development and facilitation of the engagements.

Once we have worked with the connector to determine how they can support us, we can then determine the type of connector relationship to enter into using the guide.

If it is determined that vouchers are required for the connector, this needs to be approved by the manager. If it is determined that a Letter of Grant is appropriate, approval from the Chief Monitor is required.

There are a range of tools that have been developed to support with the Letter of Grant process. Links to these tools can be found below in the Rauemi section.

Reporting requirements

There are reporting requirements for a Letter of Grant, which the connector must be made aware of. Connectors are required to complete a grant report that describes the activity we partnered with them to deliver. Staff also provide participants with a feedback survey about how they felt about their engagement with us as part of this reporting. You can find links to these in the Rauemi section below.

Roles and responsibilities of the Monitor

The roles and responsibilities of the Monitor in relation to establishing, implementing and maintaining connector relationships are set out below.

Role	Responsibility
Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signs the Letter of Grant
Chief Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approves Letter of Grant
Monitoring managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify potential connectors - where appropriate, lead initial conversations with a connector, and maintain these relationships - approve vouchers for a connector. If it is determined that a letter of grant is required, seek approval from the Chief Monitor - hand over the connector relationship to the monitoring team to arrange logistics for a monitoring visit.
Principal advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - manage procurement process including the development, implementation, and reporting requirements of a Letter of Grant, or contract for services, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o receipt of the grant report from the connector o grant report sent to administration team to file in restricted Objective folder and entered in the contract register
Members of the monitoring team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify potential connectors - where appropriate, lead initial conversations with a connector, and maintain these relationships

	- work with the connector to plan the engagements.
Administration staff	- arrange catering, travel, and venue bookings.

Work with the connector to successfully undertake a monitoring visit

Once we have confirmed our working relationship with a connector, we are well placed to start scheduling and planning engagements with tamariki, whānau and/or caregivers. Members of the monitoring teams are responsible for managing the logistics of a monitoring visit in consultation with the manager and the connector. Administration staff are responsible for booking travel, venues, catering and ordering vouchers.

Working with a monitored agency as a connector

When a connector is a monitored agency, this is considered a monitoring requirement. This means we do not provide a monitored agency vouchers or a Letter of grant. People that are connected to us through a monitored agency still receive the vouchers in the same way as those we are connected to by a community provider. If we are working with a monitored agency as a connector, we provide them with the same information as connectors in the community and we need to confirm with them their role, the same as those in the community, for example who will provide transport and who will provide the pre and post support.

Each monitored agency has an agreed point of contact for us to communicate with when we begin connector conversations with them. It is the responsibility of the Monitoring Manager to communicate with this person and agree on a course of action for the visit. This can be delegated to a team member.

When a monitored agency acts as a connector, we are responsible for providing vouchers to participants. Remember, that if Barnardos or Open Home Foundation do not have any tamariki in their custody in the area we are visiting, they may still have tamariki under their shared care services that we could connect with (or their caregivers or whānau) and this is discussed with them as an option.