

Discussion paper: one year of insights

Specialist Takatāpui & Rainbow ACC sensitive claims support

[Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura](#) was awarded an ACC sensitive claims contract in December 2024. This allows us to offer confidential, mana-enhancing support and recovery services with no surcharge for Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors of sexual harm and therapeutic support for partners and whānau, where diverse Takatāpui and Rainbow identities are treated as the taonga they are, and sexual harm is understood within specific community contexts. Our service has two central pou.



1) Kiritaki wellbeing: provide a caring and consistent pathway to ACC sensitive claims support for diverse Takatāpui and Rainbow kiritaki and their whānau.

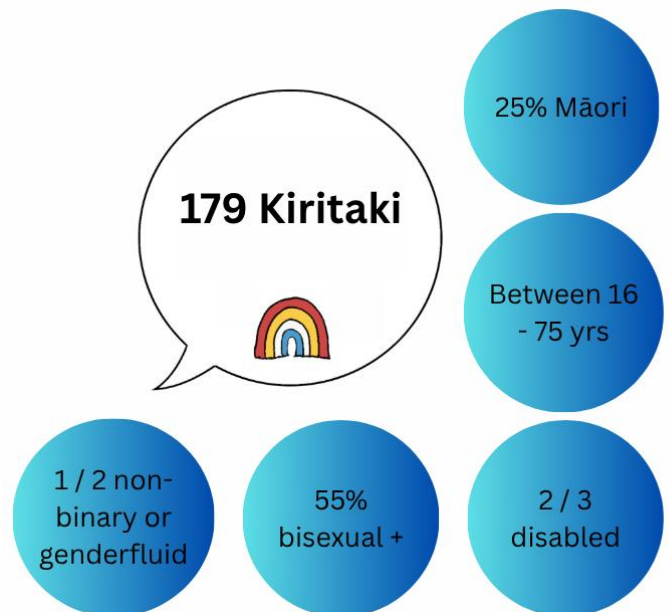
2) Therapist development: develop and maintain a therapist body with expertise working with Takatāpui and Rainbow kiritaki via training, supervision and ongoing communities of practice.



Rapid growth

Our service has seen rapid growth, reflecting both the high levels of unmet need, and our connections within Takatāpui and Rainbow communities with both practitioners and survivors. During 2025:

- **We contracted 64 practitioners**, including psychologists, therapists, social workers and those offering cultural support.
- **We supported 179 Takatāpui and Rainbow kiritaki** after sexual harm.
- **We provided over 3900 hours** of therapeutic support, including counselling, psychology, social work, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.
- We supported kiritaki in **Northland, Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Taranaki, Hawkes Bay, Manawatū-Whanganui, Wellington, Canterbury, Otago and Southland.**



A caring and consistent pathway

Our intake processes prioritise kiritaki wellbeing, seeking and providing information to support a caring and consistent pathway to recovery after sexual harm.

“It was the first time I felt actually heard during my sensitive claim.” – Kiritaki evaluation response Dec 2025.

Our first service evaluation heard from 12% of our kiritaki. Responses were consistently positive. Through this evaluation and other forms of direct feedback, kiritaki have expressed:

1) The importance of Rainbow competency

Getting names, titles and pronouns correct and feeling comfortable talking at intake about sexuality, gender and relationship types ensures Takatāpui and Rainbow kiritaki have access to what they want in a therapist and from the service.

2) Addressing barriers

Matching kiritaki with a therapist in terms of identity, cultural background or modality is critical to therapeutic success. Kiritaki who need support with transport or preferred telehealth options appreciate these needs being taken seriously.

3) Holistic supports

Intake processes make it clear that holistic services are available, many of which make an enormous difference to kiritaki wellbeing. Kiritaki appreciate this information, with many noting this enables them to direct their relationships with therapists in more mana-enhancing ways.

“Everything has been real smooth and I really appreciate how thorough y’all have been. This has been my best experience in accessing mental health care ever.” – Kiritaki email, 2025.

An expert body of therapists and other practitioners

We consistently receive requests from practitioners seeking to join our service. To onboard both Takatāpui and Rainbow therapists and those who are allies, we assess therapist capabilities and competencies to work with diverse survivor groups within Takatāpui and Rainbow communities.

“Thanks for all the support, the heavy lifting you’re doing for the kiritaki is not unnoticed. I really appreciate all that you do.” – therapist email, 2025.

We provide free training for all therapists at induction and hold regular monthly Te Kete Koha | Communities of practice to increase their knowledge in specific areas related to our populations. For example, the first three Te Kete Koha sessions in 2026 covered:

- **ReWired: Working with people who PnP** with Shaun Hill, Te Puna Whakaiti Pāmamae Kai Whakapiri | NZ Drug Foundation
- **Responsive therapeutic practice for Takatāpui and Rainbow children who have experienced child sexual abuse** with MJ Robertson, Griffith University, Australia
- **The psychodynamics of developmental trauma in trans and neuro-diverse clients** with Abby Driver, Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura sensitive claims therapist

Our practitioners also access, when needed, ACC funded cultural support and advice hours. This helps develop their understanding of the specific cultural needs of specific kiritaki, reducing common and unhelpful dynamics of Takatāpui and Rainbow people being forced to educate health professionals while seeking help.

The inaugural national therapist hui 2025

Another key aspect of therapist development is offering the opportunity to build whakawhanaungatanga via a national hui. Our inaugural professional development and support hui opened with mihi whakatau and tikanga setting from Takatāpui and Tauivi co-facilitators, as part of our commitment to Te Tiriti practice. Meeting these commitments during the hui also included:

- Acknowledging mana whenua and the whakapapa of the land on which we held the hui, including through information packs
- Separate caucusing for Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, with exploration into belonging and relationship to Aotearoa
- Promoting Tangata Whenua participation, including hosting Takatāpui student practitioners so that relationships could be built with existing professionals
- Ensuring the delivery of professional development including matauranga Māori
- Ensuring kawa were set and followed



Our practitioners come from diverse cultural backgrounds, belongings and identities, a key strength for our service. There is strong commitment to sharing their own lived experiences and learning about others, with a focus on providing the best support possible for diverse Takatāpui and Rainbow kiritaki.

“I appreciated the human contacts very deeply, especially the honest vulnerability of participants and the strong presence of indigenous culture which rips us out of colonial strictures into a much broader world.” – therapist feedback to inaugural annual hui.



The hui included workshops and presentations, and opportunities to establish connections with others around the country to break through the isolation many therapists experience within local communities. Intentional whakawhanaungatanga allows space for practitioners to focus on self-awareness and how they interact with their therapeutic work in safe, holistic and mana-enhancing ways.

Opportunities and challenges

This service is the first and only national therapeutic sexual harm support for Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors, highlighting a number of gaps, and presenting opportunities for better mental health supports more broadly. The following systemic issues need focus, moving forward.

Services gaps for those with complex trauma

It is very common for people from marginalised communities to have pre-existing trauma prior to experiencing sexual harm – in fact, pre-existing trauma increases the risk of being targeted for sexual harm. Diagnoses such as CPTSD are particularly common for disabled Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors, and those who have experienced family violence or childhood neglect.

However ACC cannot always provide cover under sensitive claims when trauma injuries pre-date sexual harm, even if symptoms worsen after sexual harm events. This means survivors with these very common experiences may not be eligible for cover if an assessment does not clearly establish a causal link between injury and sexual harm. This is a limitation in legislation and not something ACC itself can change.

Services gaps for those harmed outside Aotearoa New Zealand

Similarly, those who have experienced sexual harm that does not fall under Schedule 3 of the Crimes Act also, at this stage, cannot be supported via sensitive claims. Cover is only available if harm occurred while ordinarily resident in Aotearoa New Zealand. This

means someone who experienced sexual harm in another country, including child sexual abuse, is not eligible for cover for trauma caused by that event if they are not ordinarily resident. If they experience a later event while in New Zealand, this may also complicate getting cover for the later event if it exacerbates the existing trauma. This is because ACC does not cover pre-existing injuries.

Intersections with acute mental health needs

Many Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors who are engaged with Adult Mental Health Services around the country are actively encouraged to seek sensitive claims therapy because they have experienced sexual harm. Our service has received requests for help from survivors with acute mental health needs who have been rejected or prematurely discharged from mental health crisis services, and pushed to seek sensitive claims support even when they have indicated they do not wish to engage, and/or that it would be actively harmful.

When mental health needs are acute and unmanaged, long term therapeutic work is not appropriate or safe. We would like to ensure acute mental health needs are safely managed in these situations, to avoid the risks of kiritaki falling through gaps in services.

Gaps in specialist Takatāpui and Rainbow crisis support

The ACC sensitive claims process is, rightly, not designed to offer crisis support after sexual harm. However, we are receiving requests from Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors seeking our service in immediate crisis situations. This highlights significant gaps in Rainbow competency and specialist support around the country, reflected in lack of trust within Takatāpui and Rainbow communities that existing crisis services will offer mana-enhancing and safe support.

Summary

Therapeutic support to recover for Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors is essential as highlighted in *Te Aorerekura*, given the higher rates of sexual harm and mental health distress our communities experience, and the lack of specialist Takatāpui and Rainbow services. We would like to see government funding meet these gaps, including:

- Support for those with complex trauma histories
- Support for those targeted for sexual assault prior to residence in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Support through our networks for acute mental health needs
- Support to develop national crisis services specifically tailored for Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors of sexual harm.

About Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura

Hohou Te Rongo Kahukura is a charitable trust focused on building Takatāpui and Rainbow communities free of violence. We operate with a Te Tiriti structure, are survivor-led, and take a community development and research-based approach to prevent violence and improve responses after violence. We offer training, advice and support for violence response agencies and policy makers; regional family violence intervention in the Waikato; and a national sexual violence service supporting Takatāpui and Rainbow survivors all over Aotearoa. More information about our research, resources, online training and help-seeking pathways is available at www.kahukura.co.nz

