ORANGA TAMARIKI
Ministry for Children

New Zealand Government

STRATEGY, INSIGHTS, AND PERFORMANCE

Understanding Reports of Concern

Insight into the increase in reports of concern in 2024 and exploring future demand

Acknowledgements

Oranga Tamariki Insights Team Purpose Statement

The Oranga Tamariki Insights team exists to lead the delivery of actionable, targeted insights across the system. These insights inform strategic direction, support operational decisions, and practice, and highlight opportunities and risks.

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Disclaimer

This analysis is explorative. As such, it uses predominantly operational data and numbers will differ slightly from official reporting. The interpretations and conclusions drawn in this report are made on the balance of probability on information available at the time of preparation.

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Oranga Tamariki: Tamariki and Whānau Services leadership, Enabling Communities leadership, Office of the Chief Social Worker, National Contact Centre leadership and analysts, Whakatāne site leadership, Strategy Insights and Performance team, Manager Children's System, Senior Advisors Health and Education, Internal Monitoring and Reviews team, Risk team, QPI Methodology and Insights team, International Child Protection unit.

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Introduction

When information about a child or young person is reported to Oranga Tamariki and meets the definition under Section 15 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989[1], a report of concern is generated.

In the 2024 calendar year, Oranga Tamariki received a notable increase in reports of concern. Oranga Tamariki received 95,422 reports of concern for 59,391 distinct tamariki. This was a 34.5% increase compared to 2023 (an additional 24,494 reports of concern).

This insights product explores the reasons for this increase and provides foresight into what we might expect to see in the future. It consists of three distinct, but closely related, reports:

- Part One – Reference document of key events against report of concern trends
- Part Two – Insight into the increase in reports of concern during 2024
- Part Three – Exploring future demand

Key Findings

Part One – Reference document of key events against report of concern trends

The context in which harm or well-being concerns exist is complex, and there are many factors which are likely to influence actual harm and well-being concerns, reporting behaviours, and system responsiveness (skip to section).

Part Two – Insight into the increase in reports of concern during 2024

There were three overarching reasons identified for the increase in reports of concern in 2024 (skip to section).

a. **Practice change:** We changed the way we record information at the end of July 2024 by ensuring all concerns are entered as reports of concern. Previously, where additional concerns were reported they were recorded in contact records or case notes under “additional information”.

   This change means that volumes of reports of concern have become more sensitive to external factors. This could result in greater volatility in future volumes, depending on key changes to external factors. This practice change accounts for at least 24% of the increase.

[1] “Any person who believes that a child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed, ill-treated, abused, (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), neglected, or deprived, or who has concerns about the well-being of a child or young person, may report the matter to the chief executive or a constable.” (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989)

b. **Public awareness and reporting behaviours**: Alongside general changes to public awareness and reporting behaviours, two specific events (the establishment of the Te Pūkāea call centre in Whakatāne and a mass allegation investigation) were identified as contributing a small portion to the overall increase. These two events made up 5% of the total increase.

c. **External factors**: The remainder of the increase, which accounts for the vast majority, was distributed relatively evenly across demographic groups, locations, notifier types, reasons for concern and levels of urgency. It cannot be attributed to any single event or change and is still observable if the above two points are removed from consideration. This indicates the presence of general social and economic external factors which suggest potential increases in actual harm and well-being concerns, and the rate at which it is reported to Oranga Tamariki.

Part Three – Exploring future demand

Three risks have been identified when assessing possible future demand. Over the course of this analysis, information about possible future events and trends was collected and assessed in order to gain an understanding of possible future demand (skip to section):

Topic	Likelihood Assessment	Impact Assessment
Actual harm or well-being concerns for tamariki and rangatahi	**LIKELY** to increase in the next 1-2 years	**Moderate to major**
Reports of concern made to Oranga Tamariki	**LIKELY** to increase in the next 1-2 years	**Moderate**
Oranga Tamariki system responsiveness to reports of concern received	**ALMOST CERTAIN** to be negatively impacted in the next 1-2 years	**Major**

Interpretation Considerations

Reports of concern reflect the suspected harm or well-being concerns for children that is reported to Oranga Tamariki and recorded as a report of concern. Given there is a largely unquantifiable portion of child harm/well-being concern that is unreported in New Zealand, there is no existing reliable measure to show with full certainty how much this volume will change in future. In turn, it makes the number of reports of concern challenging to predict, with a large margin for variability.

A portion of reports of concern will result in no further action, or no findings of harm. Although the children's system wants to see actual levels of harm and well-being concern decrease, an initial increase in report volumes may indicate progress in areas of desired improvement. This includes improvement in recording quality, increased understanding and visibility of child harm and faster response to external factors due to increased interagency collaboration and system responsiveness.

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Part One

Reference document of key events against report of concern trends

Overview

Part One of this insights product aims to contextualise fluctuations in report of concern volumes by overlaying them with significant events and trends. This approach is intended to explore whether external factors may have influenced both the actual incidence of harm and well-being concerns for tamariki within the community, as well as the behaviours associated with reporting these concerns.

This is a multifaceted issue. In addition to examining the potential impact of societal events and trends, it is also important to consider the internal system response—specifically, how decision-making processes and organisational capacity within Oranga Tamariki may affect reporting volumes, both currently and in the future.

While a more detailed analysis could yield deeper insights into correlation, such an investigation was beyond the scope of this product. The primary objective of the visual tool developed for Part One is to provide contextual clarity around the peaks and troughs in report of concern volumes since the establishment of Oranga Tamariki in 2017.

The tool is an interactive document which can be viewed on the Oranga Tamariki website at the same link as this document *(note: open in app, not in browser. This will ensure proper functionality of filters)*.

Each filter view from the interactive document is available in Appendix 2 (skip to section).

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Part Two

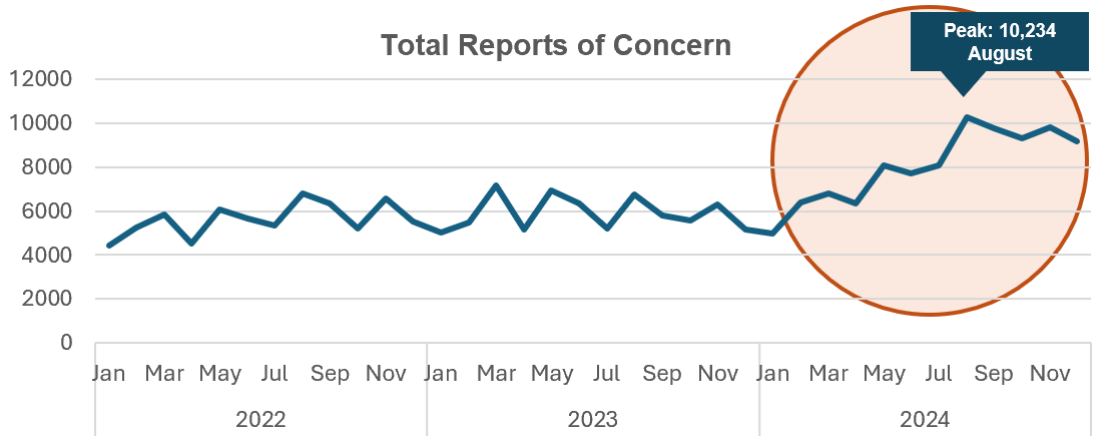
Insight into the increase in reports of concern during 2024

Overview

Across the 2024 calendar year, Oranga Tamariki received 95,422 reports of concern for 59,391 distinct tamariki. This was a 34.5% increase from 2023 – an additional 24,494 reports of concern.

This follows findings of a previous decrease in report of concern numbers by 28% between F2018 and F2022 and a 5% increase from 2022 to 2023 (Takada, 2024).

This analysis investigates the factors contributing to the 2024 increase.



Key drivers of the increase

There were three overarching reasons identified for the increase on reports of concern in 2024:

a) **Practice change:** An internal recording practice change in July 2024 accounts for *at least* 24% of the increase. This is observable through the increase in report of concern findings of "additional information". The exact size of this increase is unable to be quantified due to data structure. This change ultimately led to an increase in reports of concern recorded by Oranga Tamariki.

b) **Changes to public awareness and reporting behaviours**: This includes general changes, as well as two specific events which have been identified**:** the establishment of the Te Pūkāea call centre in Whakatāne in March 2024 (3%of increase) and a mass allegation investigation (MAI) in Lower South/Canterbury region in October 2024 (2% of increase).

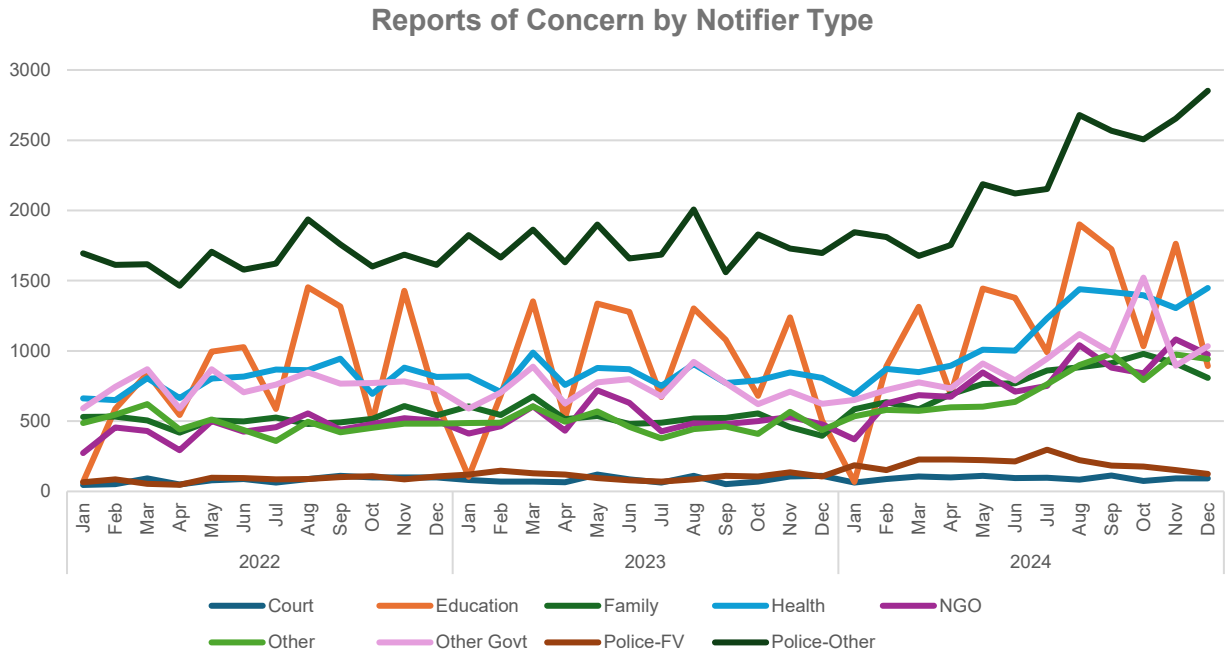
c) **External factors**: The remainder of the increase, which accounts for the vast majority, was distributed relatively evenly across demographic groups, locations, notifier types, reasons for concern and levels of urgency. It cannot be attributed to any single event or change and is still observable if the above two points are removed from consideration. This indicates the presence of general social and economic external factors which suggest potential increases in actual harm and well-being concerns, and the rate at which it is reported to Oranga Tamariki.

Investigating changes in trends

All notifier types saw a general increase

Notifier type refers to the various categories Oranga Tamariki uses to classify who a report of concern is from, such as government agencies, family or whānau, and other groups.

- All notifier types saw a general increase in the number of reports of concern between 2022 and 2024.
- The proportion of total annual reports of concern from each notifier group stayed fairly stable, within 2% difference across all groups.
- Police, Education and Health are the largest notifier groups, collectively making up around 60% of total reports, and this proportion has remained largely unchanged.
- Courts are the smallest notifier group, making up less than 1.5% of reports.
- Education has a consistent seasonal trend in report of concern notifications, dropping during the three school holiday periods within each year and the summer holidays at the start and end of each year. During the holidays, teachers are not usually in regular contact with tamariki meaning concerns are not observed or reported (see orange line).
- The spike in October 2024 in the 'other govt' category is due to the same event seen in the geographical spike (detailed on page 15) in Canterbury/Lower South.



Reports of concern from Police

The two categories of police notifier type encompass a broad range of concerns including family harm, wellbeing issues, parental issues, neglect, abuse and behavioural concerns. The ‘Police-FV’ category includes reports that are entered by the police representative at a local interagency family harm table. ‘Police-other’ can also include family harm incidents, and covers any other concerns reported by Police. There are no further sub-categories available to allow a more granular view of reports from different police groups.

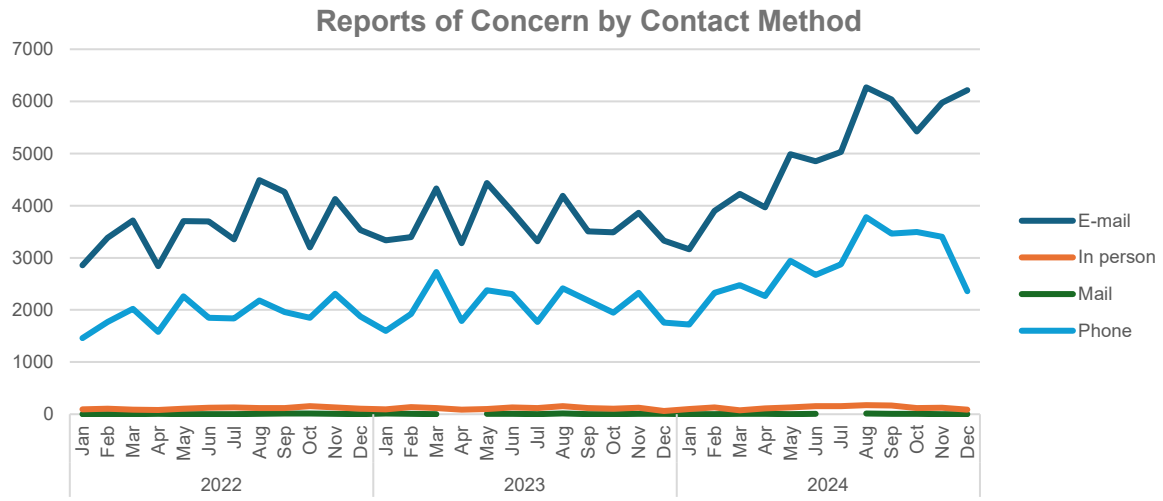
Total reports of concern from the two police categories make up around 30-32% of total annual reports. Although there is minimal proportional change, ‘police-other’ sees the largest numeric increase in reports of concern from 2022-2024.

Notifiers primarily contact us via email and over the phone

Email is the primary way people make reports of concern (63%). This increased slightly in 2024 compared to other contact methods.

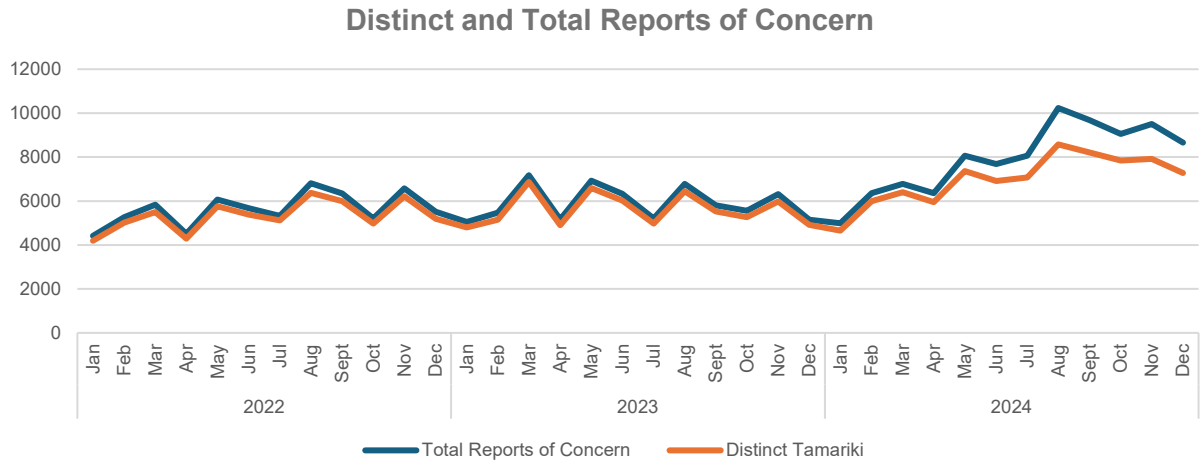
Phone calls make up the other significant type of contact method (35%). This also grew in 2024 overall, but not as much as email.

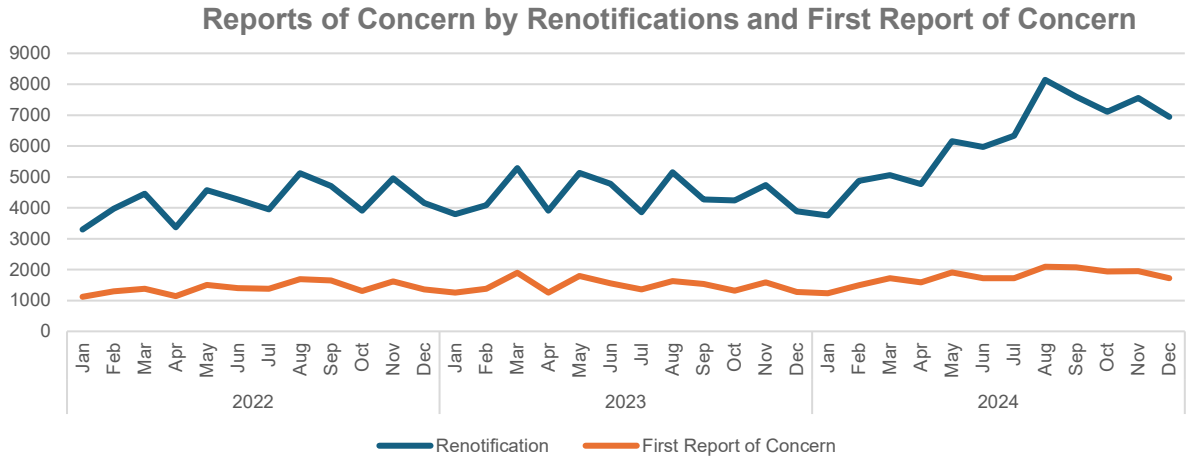
A small portion of reports of concern are made in person, and an even smaller portion by postal mail (2%). These types of contact decreased in 2024.



Renotifications have increased

- In 2024, there was an increase in multiple reports of concern about the same tamariki. Reports of concern that were the first notification received about te tamaiti stayed relatively stagnant.
- The number of ‘distinct tamariki’ and ‘total reports of concern’ deviates marginally over time on a month-by-month basis until mid-2024, indicating that initially, multiple reports of concern about the same child were infrequent within a given month (however, we know across a year this frequency is higher). This changes during 2024 where the number of ‘total reports of concern’ is higher than the number of ‘distinct tamariki, showing the increase in multiple reports of concern about the same tamariki within each month.





These observations align with a recording practice change

From the end of July 2024*, information that outlines additional concerns (that would have formerly been entered as additional information or a case note) were entered as a new report of concern.

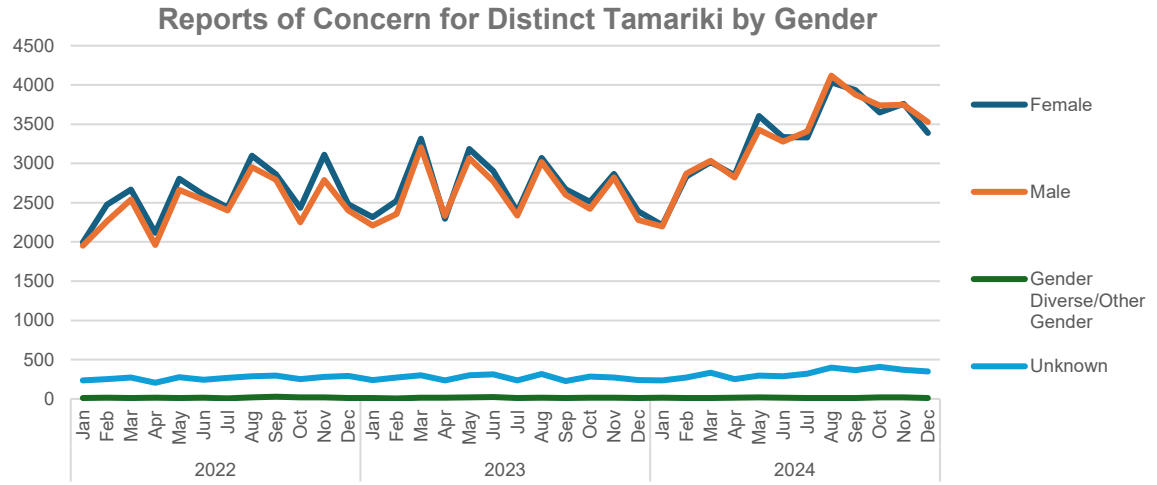
Reports of concern made to Oranga Tamariki all require an initial assessment and trigger a formal report of concern being lodged. Before this practice change, if a report of concern was deemed as not requiring any further action, it would be entered as a contact record.

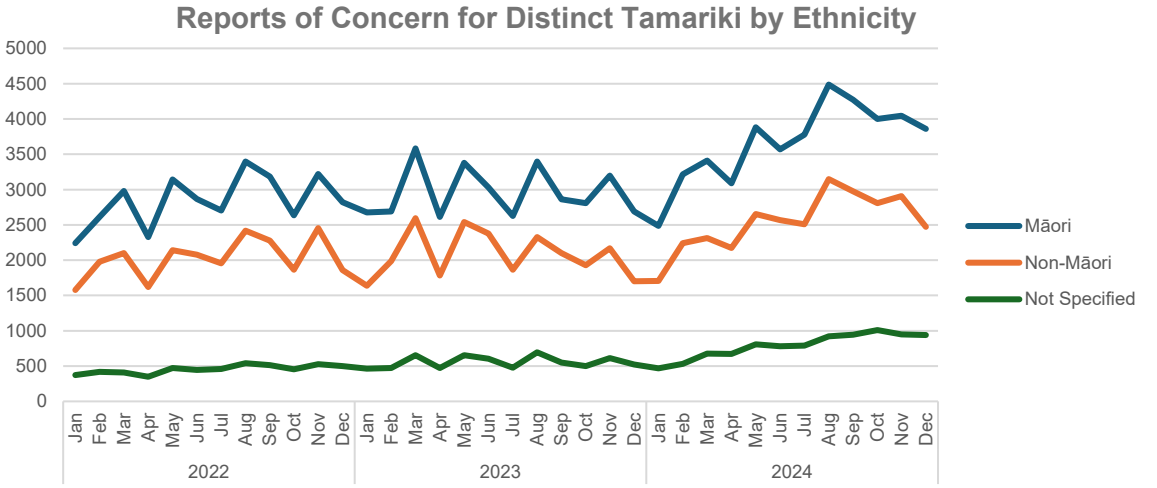
If additional concerns are raised about a child or young person that Oranga Tamariki is already working with, these will be logged as a separate report of concern. Previously, this information would be added to the existing open file.

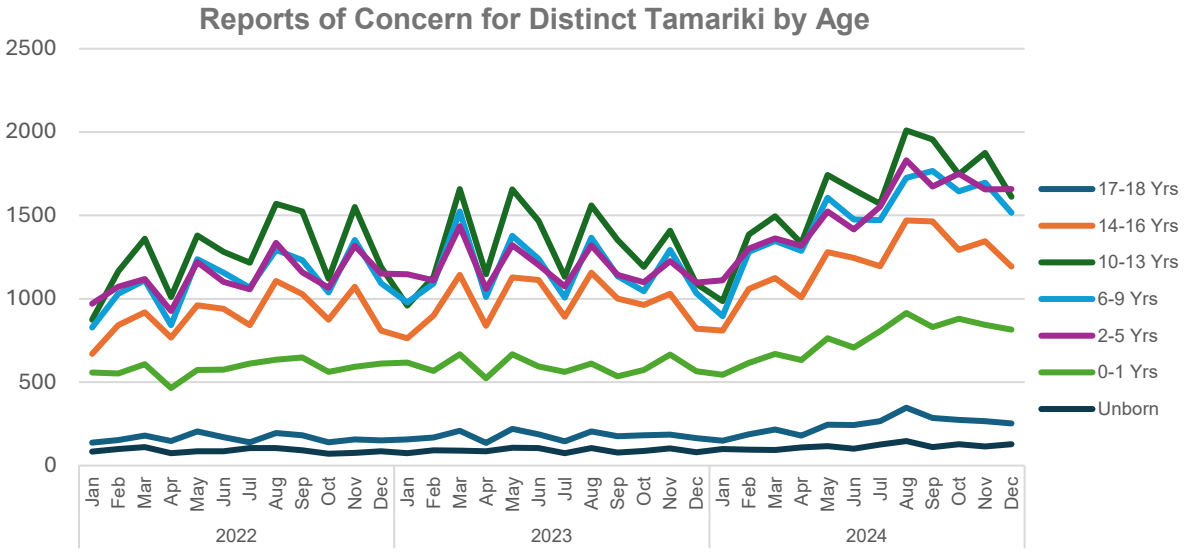
**The practice change officially commenced in July, but some staff adopted this approach from as early as May/June 2024.*

Reports of concern increased across all age, gender, and ethnicity groups, but the overall proportions stayed about the same

- All gender, age and ethnicity groups saw a general increase in the number of reports of concern between 2022 and 2024.
- Proportionately, there was no significant variation to the age range, gender or ethnicity of distinct tamariki that Oranga Tamariki received reports of concern between 2022 and 2024.
- Tamariki Māori are the largest ethnicity group which Oranga Tamariki receives reports of concern about, making up nearly 53% of distinct tamariki.
- This demographic information reflects the information provided when the report of concern was made. If information is not known at the time, this will usually be collected as part of the assessment process.

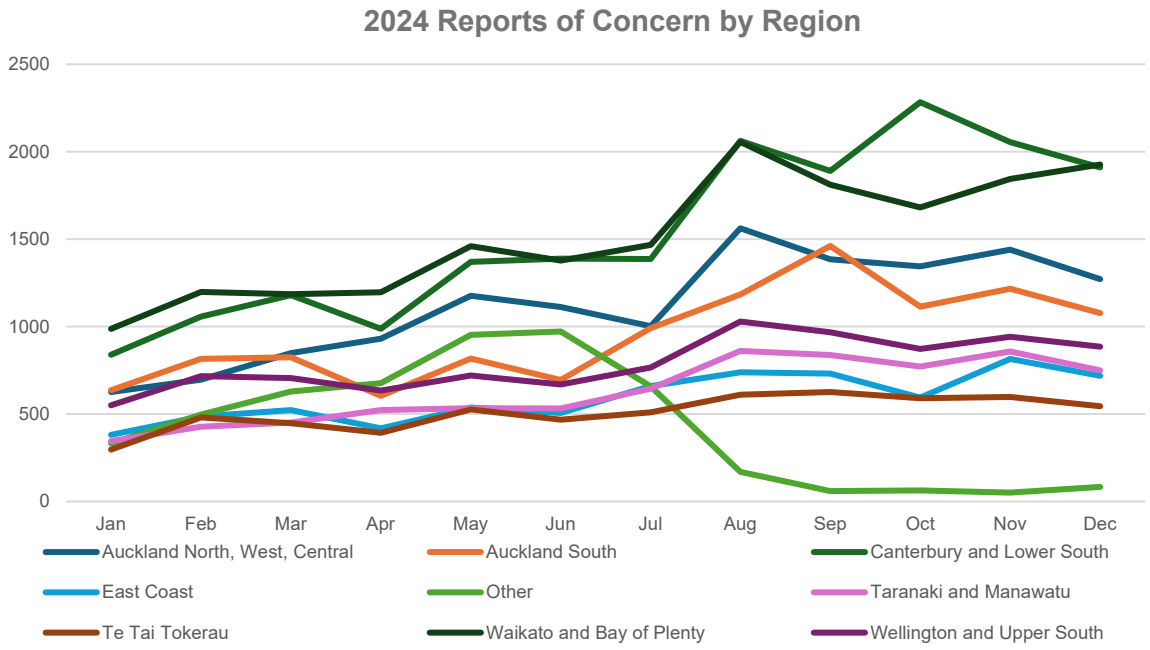





Reports of Concern for Distinct Tamariki by Age
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2022
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2023
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2024
17-18 Yrs
14-16 Yrs
10-13 Yrs
6-9 Yrs
2-5 Yrs
0-1 Yrs
Unborn

Every region saw a general increase, with the two highest peaks observed in Canterbury and Lower South and Waikato and Bay of Plenty

- Every region saw a general increase across 2024, with the most common peak being in August. This follows changes in recording practice in July.
- The highest peak was in October for Canterbury and Lower South. This peak occurred when all other regions experienced a drop in numbers that month. This peak is due to a mass allegation investigation linked to the West Coast site.
- The drop in 'other' in June/July is due to the change in recording practices by the NCC. In July, all NFA and additional information intakes were referred to site queues, allocating them to that site instead of the NCC within the 'other' category.



Te Pūkāea community-led contact centre was launched in Whakatāne in March 2024

Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa and the Eastern Bay of Plenty (EBOP) Iwi Provider Alliance launched Te Pūkāea o te Waiora (Te Pūkāea) in March 2024. Te Pūkāea is a tikanga-focused and community-led call centre in Whakatāne, set up with the intention of shifting care and protection decision making and resources closer to communities. Te Pūkāea builds on existing foundations of a collaborative approach to intake and assessment of reports of concern with the local Whakatāne site, and is the first phase of the EBOP Iwi Provider Alliance's Enabling Communities prototype.

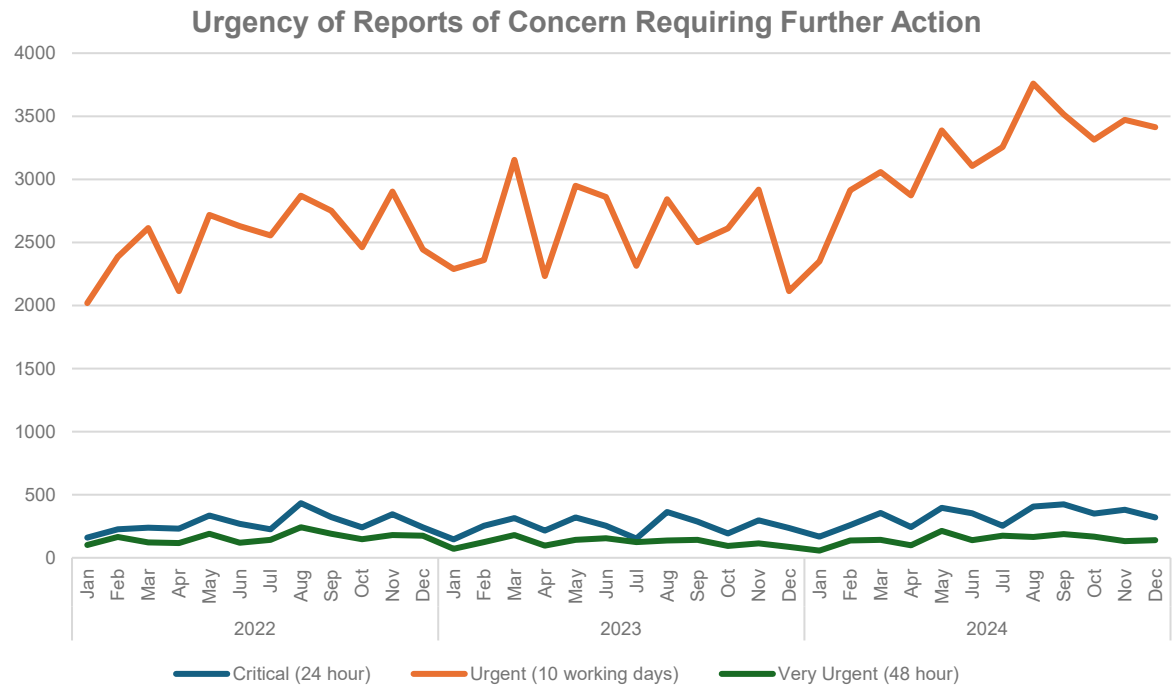
Te Pūkāea receives all calls and emails about children and young people in the Eastern Bay of Plenty region, many of which are re-routed from the Oranga Tamariki National Contact Centre. Te Pūkāea also receives direct calls from other local agencies such as Police and Te Whatu Ora, community and whānau. Te Pūkāea work with notifiers to gather information, assess risk to children and young people, and determine whether a statutory or community response is required. Currently, Te Pūkāea are supported by Oranga Tamariki social workers who hold delegations for receiving a report of concern (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 section 15) and determining whether a statutory investigation is necessary or desirable (section 17(1)(a)). The next phase of the prototype enables the delegations of these statutory functions to Te Tohu o Te Ora o Ngāti Awa kaimahi at Te Pūkāea.

Information about reports of concern is currently recorded in Oranga Tamariki systems under the Whakatāne site. Whakatāne accounts for 3% of the overall increase in 2024, but 10% of the increase outside of contact centre intakes. Te Pūkāea records any instance of contact made as a report of concern, and they have a high level of trust and connection in the community. This means numbers of reports of concern have increased due to more rigorous data recording and more information being received. In turn, this has created more opportunities for tamariki and whānau to access the supports they need in order to experience better outcomes. The Whakatāne site have reported they are seeing positive progress, indicating things are on the right track. Looking ahead, it will be valuable to explore ways to distinguish information collected by Te Pūkāea from that of the Whakatāne site. This would help clarify the unique contributions of each entity and better highlight emerging trends.

The largest change in urgency was for ‘urgent’ reports of concern

To ensure timely and appropriate responses, Oranga Tamariki assigns each report of concern an urgency level. These are: critical (response required within 24 hours), very urgent (within 48 hours), and urgent (within 10 working days).

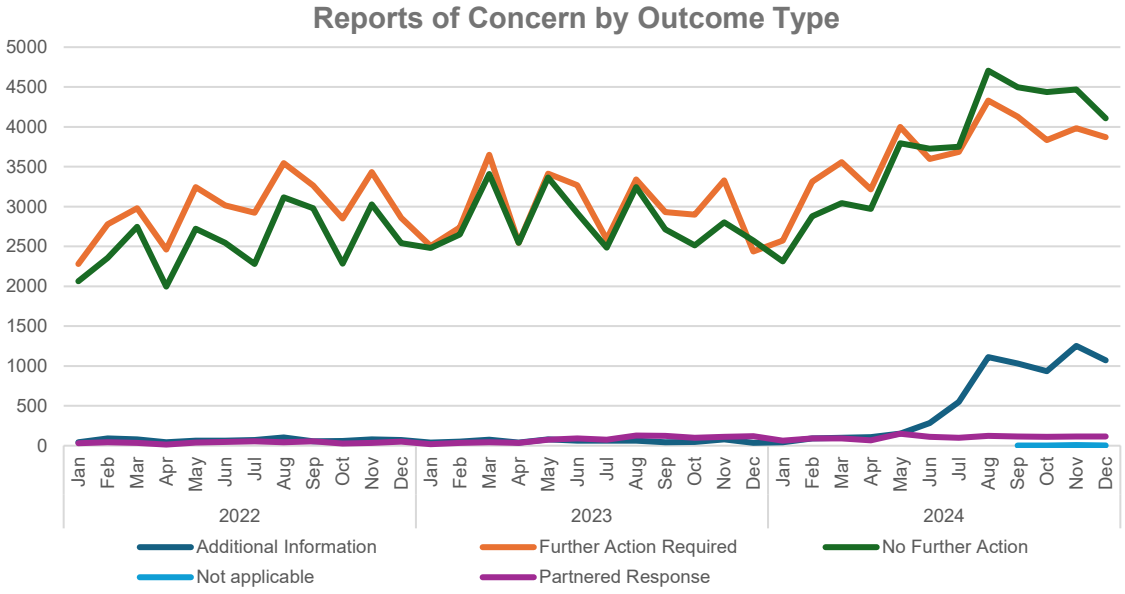
- The number of urgent (10 working days) reports of concern that required further action increased from 31,147 in 2023 to 38,418 in 2024. This was the largest numeric change in urgency response category.
- Although there was a numeric increase, proportionally, there is almost no change between the three categories of urgency.
- Although there is no proportional increase, the numeric increase shows the growth in volume of work.
- The latest quarterly report shows that we have not met the performance measure of critical or very urgent reports of concern, addressed within operational timeframes, despite the focus on improving social work practice and accuracy of reporting. The target of 95% has not been reached and we have seen a decrease from 89% in Q1 2024/25 to 86% in Q2 2024/25.



Reports of concern with an outcome of ‘additional information’ have increased

An outcome of ‘additional information’ means that the information received in the report of concern is something Oranga Tamariki is aware of, but has come from a different notifier. The report of concern 'outcome' is therefore ‘additional information’ to be considered as part of the existing assessment.

- The number of reports of concern with an outcome of ‘additional information’ has risen in line with the overall increase in reports of concern. This shows the approximate number of reports of concern that would have previously been entered under ‘additional information’ before changes in reporting practice at the National Contact Centre occurred at the end of July 2024.
- This validates that at least 24% of the increase is likely due to this reporting practice change.
- There is an additional portion of the increase that cannot be measured which is also likely due to the reporting practice change. This portion being notifications that would have previously been entered as contact records but are now being entered as reports of concern.
- Considering the practice change accounts for only a portion of the increase, reports of concern with outcomes of ‘further action required’ and ‘no further action’ have also generally increased.

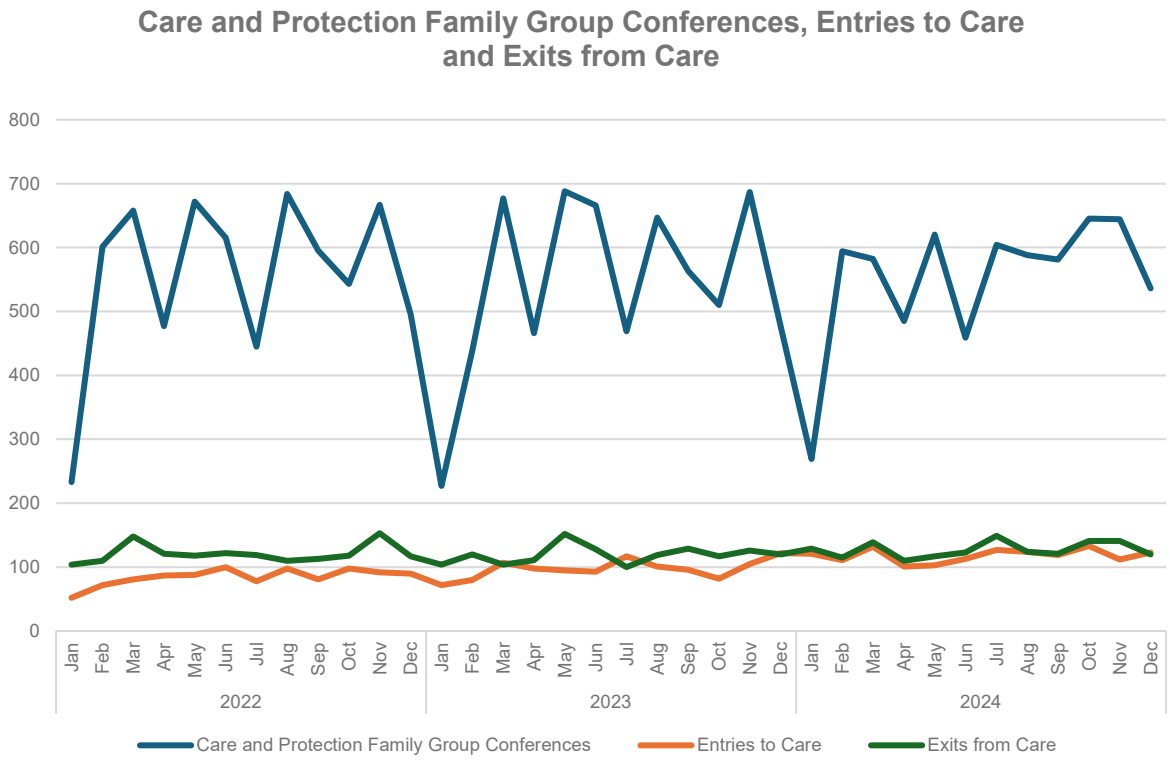


The increase in reports of concern has had a varying impact on subsequent Oranga Tamariki interventions

Care and protection family group conference volumes have stayed relatively stable between 2022-2024. This indicates that the increase in reports of concern has not

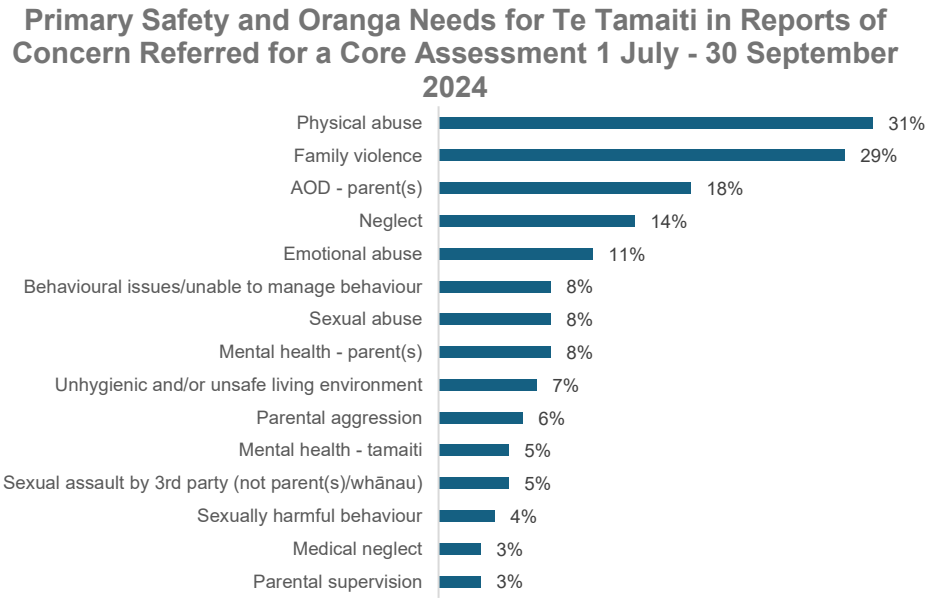
resulted in a greater number of care and protection family group conferences being held.

Entries to care increased by 20% from 2023 to 2024 following a 15% increase from 2022 to 2023. Exits from care saw a minor decrease of 1.5% between 2022-2023 and saw an increase of 7% between 2023 and 2024.



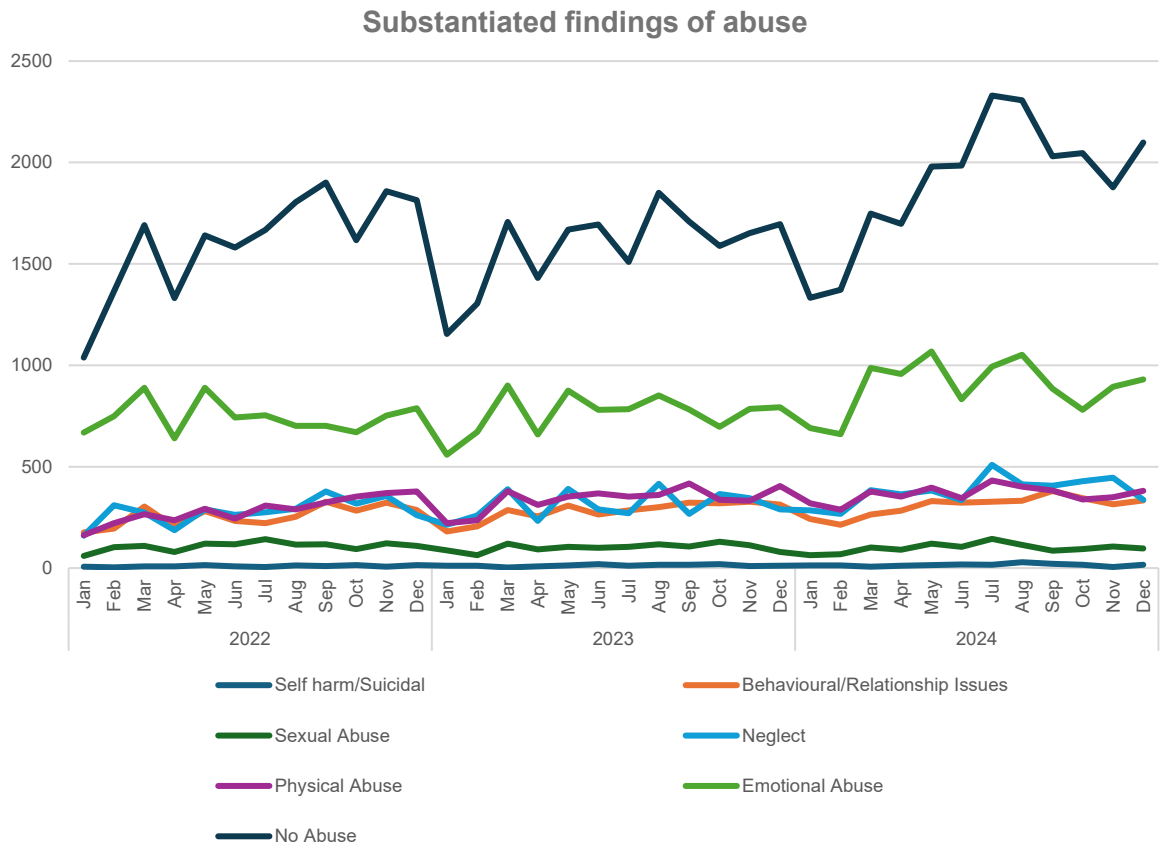
The most commonly reported safety needs are physical abuse, family violence, and alcohol and other drugs (parents)

- A quality assurance sample of initial and core assessments for tamariki were reviewed to identify the primary safety and oranga need/s (can be multiple).
- The most commonly reported primary safety and oranga needs stayed the same between the period of 1 October to 31 December 2023, and 1 July to 30 September 2024. The top three were physical abuse, family violence and Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD) – parents. The other most common types were neglect, emotional abuse, parental mental health and sexual abuse.
- There were minor changes between the two periods in the proportion sizes of some of the primary safety and oranga needs identified, but there is insufficient evidence to conclude that these changes are significant.



Proportionally, there was no significant change to the types of substantiated findings of abuse

All finding types (bar one) increased in number, with ‘no abuse’ and ‘emotional abuse’ seeing the largest growth in number. However, proportionally, there was no significant change to each type of substantiated abuse. ‘Sexual abuse’ findings deceased slightly in number.


Substantiated findings of abuse
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2022
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2023
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2024
Self harm/Suicidal
Behavioural/Relationship Issues
Sexual Abuse
Neglect
Physical Abuse
Emotional Abuse
No Abuse

There are likely a number of underlying reasons influencing the increase in reports of concern

Social and economic factors as a driver of harm

Changes have occurred across several social and economic factors that may contribute to, or indicate increased risk of, child harm or wellbeing concern, and/or a reduction in protective factors that are known to minimise harm or wellbeing concern.

The volume of actual harm and wellbeing concern experienced by tamariki is likely to be underreported to Oranga Tamariki. This includes incidents where a crime has been committed against a child. The New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey has found that each year, about one quarter of crime (relating to those aged 15 and above) is reported to Police. Although this does not specifically consider offences against children, it indicates the prevalence of underreporting of crime in general. The presence of harm or wellbeing concern for a child, or a child being the victim of a crime, does not automatically mean there is a need for a statutory care and protection response. There's currently no legal requirement to report child abuse concerns to Oranga Tamariki. Dame Karen Poutasi recommended mandatory reporting be introduced in her review of the child protection system. Oranga Tamariki are currently shaping their final advice for Ministers on this, including alternative options to improve child safety.

The factors listed below may influence rates of actual harm and wellbeing concern but not necessarily impact reporting volumes. These factors do not automatically imply a need for statutory care and protection intervention but provide context on a number of external indicators associated with possible harm or wellbeing concern.

Social factors

- Increased online harm to children and young people: This includes online child exploitation such as sextortion and self-generated explicit content, and exposure to and engagement with violent extremist content and rhetoric.
- Population growth: Although not every quarter sees a rise in the number of children, it has generally trended up over time.
- 27% increase in the number of children aged 0-14 who were victims of a crime reported to Police between 2017 and 2025 (year ending January).
- School attendance: The proportion of children and young people attending school regularly has seen a recent increase between 2023 and 2024, but overall has deceased since 2011. Stand-downs have increased, particularly between 2020 and 2023.

Risk factors highlighted in the New Zealand Health Survey for 2023/24 include:

- Increase in illicit drug use in adults
- Increase in prevalence of mental health indicators in adults
- Increase in unmet need for mental health care and addiction services for adults
- Parenting indicators show possible reduction in coping

- Increase in household food insecurity.

Economic Factors

Over the past two years, New Zealand recorded slow economic growth, rising unemployment, and an increase in most child poverty and household cost of living measures. These may have disproportionately affected groups who are already at risk of over-representation within the Oranga Tamariki system (including for Māori, low-income households, and beneficiaries). For example:

- Increase in cost of living: The cost of living for the average household increased 3% in the 12 months to the December 2024 quarter, with faster growth (3.1-3.9%) for Māori, beneficiaries, and lower-expenditure households groups.
- Increase in the number of children living in material hardship: In 2023/24,13.4% of all children (156,600) were in material hardship (up from 12.5% in 2022/23 and 10.5% in 2021/22).
- Funding cuts across some areas (e.g. social service NGOs, disability sector) could increase general stress on the system and potentially create vulnerabilities in the provision of support services

Increased awareness and previous experience as a driver and barrier to reporting

Oranga Tamariki has received sustained public and political attention due to incidents, reviews and reports. This includes the release of the final report from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State Care. There have also been several highly publicised child deaths that have occurred in recent years, with some related media commenting on the presence or absence of statutory intervention. This is likely to have caused growth in the general awareness of child harm, including harm to those known to Oranga Tamariki or in care, and in turn potentially increasing the likelihood of reports of concern being made by professionals and the general population.

Reputational issues from previous experiences of professionals and whānau and sometimes media commentary on this has been an ongoing feature for Oranga Tamariki. This could act as both a barrier and driver to reporting, depending on the experience of the individual.

Recent research has explored the reasons that Police, Education and community NGO kaimahi choose to make a report of concern (Keddell et al., 2024a; Keddell et al., 2024b; Keddell et al., 2025). This highlights the complexity of professional judgement leading to a decision to report or not, and emphasises that there are many influencing factors at play.

A key factor that can be both a driver and a barrier to making a report of concern is previous experience with Oranga Tamariki. Perceived lack of responsiveness or thresholds seeming too high was found to cause Police to report more (Keddell et al., 2025), and Education to report less (Keddell et at., 2024a). The coexistence of opposing reactions to certain situations complicates efforts to determine clear causal relationships between specific events and experiences and the volume of reports of concern.

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New Zealand Government

Part Three

Exploring future demand

Overview

Part Three explores what changes we might see to future volumes of reports of concern and has been informed by findings from Part One and Part Two.

Given the complexity of this type of analysis, it is impossible to know exactly what will happen to report of concern volumes in future. Statistical demand modelling has been explored but given the broadness of the confidence intervals produced, this has limited practical use. Over the course of this analysis, information about various future events and possible changes has been collected and analysed to form an assessment of possible future risk, based off what we know.

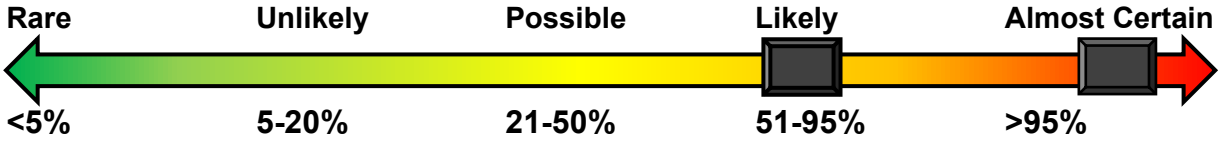
Three areas are explored in order to understand the complexity of possible future volumes of reports of concern, each area dependent on its own variables which drive or restrain increases, and each area reliant on the previous area/s with its own variables that drive or restrain increases. The three areas are:

- Harm that occurs and well-being concerns that exist regardless of whether it is report to Oranga Tamariki or not.
- The reports of concern made to Oranga Tamariki by the public and professionals, regardless of how these are recorded or responded to.
- Oranga Tamariki system responsiveness to reports of concern received. This includes how we record the information we receive, and how we respond to the information received with the resources we have.

These three topics have been assessed to provide an indication of future demand:

Topic	Likelihood Assessment	Impact Assessment
Actual harm or well-being concerns for tamariki	**LIKELY** to increase in the next 1-2 years	**Moderate to major**
Reports of concern made to Oranga Tamariki	**LIKELY** to increase in the next 1-2 years	**Moderate**
Oranga Tamariki system responsiveness to reports of concern received	**ALMOST CERTAIN** to be negatively impacted in the next 1-2 years	**Major**

Likelihood assessments mapped against probability yardstick:[2]



[2] Note: See Appendix 1: Oranga Tamariki Risk Matrix Framework for definitions of likelihood and impact rating scales.

Assessment Summary

Actual harm or well-being concerns for tamariki and rangatahi are assessed as being **LIKELY** to increase in the next 1-2 years.

Several social and economic factors have been identified throughout the course of this assessment which are known to impact actual levels of harm or show the presence of real well-being concern for tamariki and rangatahi. These factors are generally trending in a way which shows potential weakening of system protection. Although there are some factors which see positive change, this does not outweigh core areas of deficit such as the continued increase in the cost of living and the increase in victimisations of children in crime reported to police. Given there are both driving and mitigating factors, this topic has been assessed as having a **moderate to major impact.**

Reports of concern made to Oranga Tamariki are assessed as **LIKELY** to increase in the next 1-2 years, although possibly at a lesser rate than levels of actual harm or well-being concerns, due to underreporting.

Reporting behaviours are influenced by a multitude of factors. The information collected on upcoming changes to factors that influence reporting behaviour indicates that some barriers may be resolved, and some drivers may be increased. This includes development in technology enabling easier submission of reports of concern, training and relational development for professionals, and the Enabling Communities prototypes which are aiming to strengthen the response to local need and enabling provision of support. If reports of concern do increase in line with an actual increase in harm, this is reassuring as it means information is being recorded more accurately. This topic has therefore been assessed as having a **moderate impact.**

Oranga Tamariki system responsiveness to reports of concern received is assessed as **ALMOST CERTAIN** to be negatively impacted in the next 1-2 years.

The latest quarterly report shows that system responsiveness has already been impacted by the increase, as ***we have not met the performance measure of critical or very urgent reports of concern, addressed within operational timeframes,*** despite the focus on improving social work practice and accuracy of reporting. The target of 95% has not been reached and we have seen a decrease from 89% in Q1 2024/25 to 86% in Q2 2024/25. Effectively managing the increasing volume of reports of concern in a timely way depends heavily on adequate staffing levels. Sufficient workforce capacity is essential to support accurate information recording and thorough assessments. If the number of reports submitted continues to rise, and the system has the capacity to process them correctly, then the volume of formally recorded reports will also increase. This would place further pressure on the system, and without deliberate planning, existing service gaps may widen. Additionally, anecdotal feedback from staff suggests that some are already experiencing heightened pressure. This topic has therefore been assessed as having a **major impact.**

Opportunities

Key Opportunity: The key opportunity identified by this analysis is to better understand, prioritise and further coordinate relevant existing actions which aim to see a better system response to addressing actual harm and well-being concerns, the removal of barriers to reporting, and an increased responsiveness and improved assessment when child harm and well-being concerns are reported to Oranga Tamariki.

Context: Given the volume of existing actions underway which aim to improve the system response, adding further actions would not be beneficial. Instead, increased coordination of existing actions would enable greater clarity across service lines about what we are doing and how this will impact volumes of reports of concern and our ability to respond.

Increased understanding, priority and coordination of these actions could see a strengthened system-wide response to child harm and well-being, the removal of barriers to reporting and an improved organisational resilience to potential increases in reports of concern.

Drivers and Restraining Factors

Three overarching factors that influence report of concern volumes were identified in previous analysis undertaken on an earlier decrease in reports of concern and are corroborated by analysis undertaken for this product. These factors remain applicable when considering the increases in reports of concern observed across 2024, and what we might expect to see in future. Depending on the type of event or change, these factors can either act as a driver of harm and increased reporting, or a restraining factor of increased harm and reporting.

Circumstances and events within each of the three overarching factors were found, overall, to be drivers of an increase in actual harm or concerns being reported to Oranga Tamariki:

- Practice changes
- Barriers to reporting and previous experience
- External factors

An additional restraining factor is that the current volume of reports of concern received may be nearing capacity. If there is not adequate capacity to record and assess an increased number of reports of concern, this may show a false stabilisation in numbers if saturation point is reached. Alternatively, if there is capacity to record an increase in initial reports of concern correctly but not undertake an assessment, then findings of “no further action” may increase.

Upcoming Events and Changes

Various future events and circumstances have been identified within the three overarching factors which are likely to impact report of concern volumes in future. By exploring future events and possible circumstantial changes in the above three areas, insight can be gained into potential changes to volumes of reports of concern.

The table in Appendix Three (skip to section) provides a detailed view of possible future events and factors, their likelihood, and impact rating. Although it is not an exhaustive list of all possible events that could impact report of concern volumes, this key information has been identified throughout the course of consultation and analysis.

Likelihood, timeframe and impact rating information has been assessed through collection and analysis processes. As noted in the disclaimer for this product, the interpretations and conclusions drawn in this report are made on the balance of probability on information available at the time of preparation.

Overview of key drivers and restraining factors

Driving factors

- Failure to meet operational measures (Oranga Tamariki)

- Economic and material hardship increase
- Decline in health outcomes for tamariki and whānau
- Decentralisation of intake process through Enabling Communities prototypes
- Internal technology development of report of concern template and portal

Mixed/unknown factors:

- Threshold for what constitutes a report of concern changed
- Internal technology change of key case management system
- General technology developments
- Youth Justice policy changes

Restraining Factors

- Improved social cohesion
- Improved resilience within communities
- Improved intervention resulting in fewer renotifications.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Oranga Tamariki Risk Management Framework

Likelihood Ratings				
Rare	**Unlikely**	**Possible**	**Likely**	**Almost Certain**
<5% chance in the next 1-2 years	5-20% chance in the next 1-2 years	21-50% chance in the next 1-2 years	51-95% chance in the next 1-2 years	>95% chance in the next 1-2 years
Events or conditions like this have not occurred and are not expected to occur.	Event or condition like this could occur but may not have occurred before.	Event or condition could occur and may have occurred before.	Events or conditions of this type have occurred several times before and are likely to occur again.	Event or condition is expected to occur in the future.

Impact Ratings				
Minor	**Moderate**	**Major**	**Severe**	**Extreme**
• Nil or minor injury or illness that does not require medical attention and no recovery time is needed. • Minimal or no impact on key processes or service quality or outputs. • Minor legislative or legal interpretation issues and clarification of processes. • Routine operational management can respond. Minimal or no media coverage.	• Injury or illness with non-severe or temporary disabling effects requiring first aid and/or referral to medical professional. • Impacts to quality, timeliness or efficiency of a key process or part of a service line. Limited or capped exposure. • Misinterpretation of legislation clauses with associated legal costs and retrospective correction or confirmation. • Some stakeholders may require additional communications. Limited national or local media interest or coverage.	• Injury or illness with temporary significant or severe disabling effects. • Impacts capability to deliver one or more key processes required for one or more service lines. • Breach or misinterpretation of legislation clauses with associated legal costs. • Key stakeholders require additional and regular updates. Focused national or regional media coverage.	• Injury or illness with severe disabling effects, and irreversible health damage attributable to Ministry action or inaction. • Substantial disruption for key service line, or for a regional area or for a client base. • Breach of significant legislation or clauses with associated penalties and legal costs. • Significant public interest or stakeholder concern, focused national or regional media coverage.	• Fatality or fatalities are attributable to Ministry action or inaction. • Significant long-term impact or disruption for multiple service lines, sites or regions. • Significant or longstanding breach of primary legislation and associated liabilities or penalties. • Significant widespread public commentary or stakeholder concern. Sustained and high focus national media coverage.

Risk Matrix						
Impact	**Extreme**	19	20	21	23	25
	Severe	14	15	16	22	24
	Major	6	10	13	17	18
	Moderate	4	5	9	11	12
	Minor	1	2	3	7	8
		Rare	**Unlikely**	**Possible**	**Likely**	**Almost Certain**
		Likelihood				

Appendix 2: Reference document of key events against report of concern trends

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Reports of concern to Oranga Tamariki

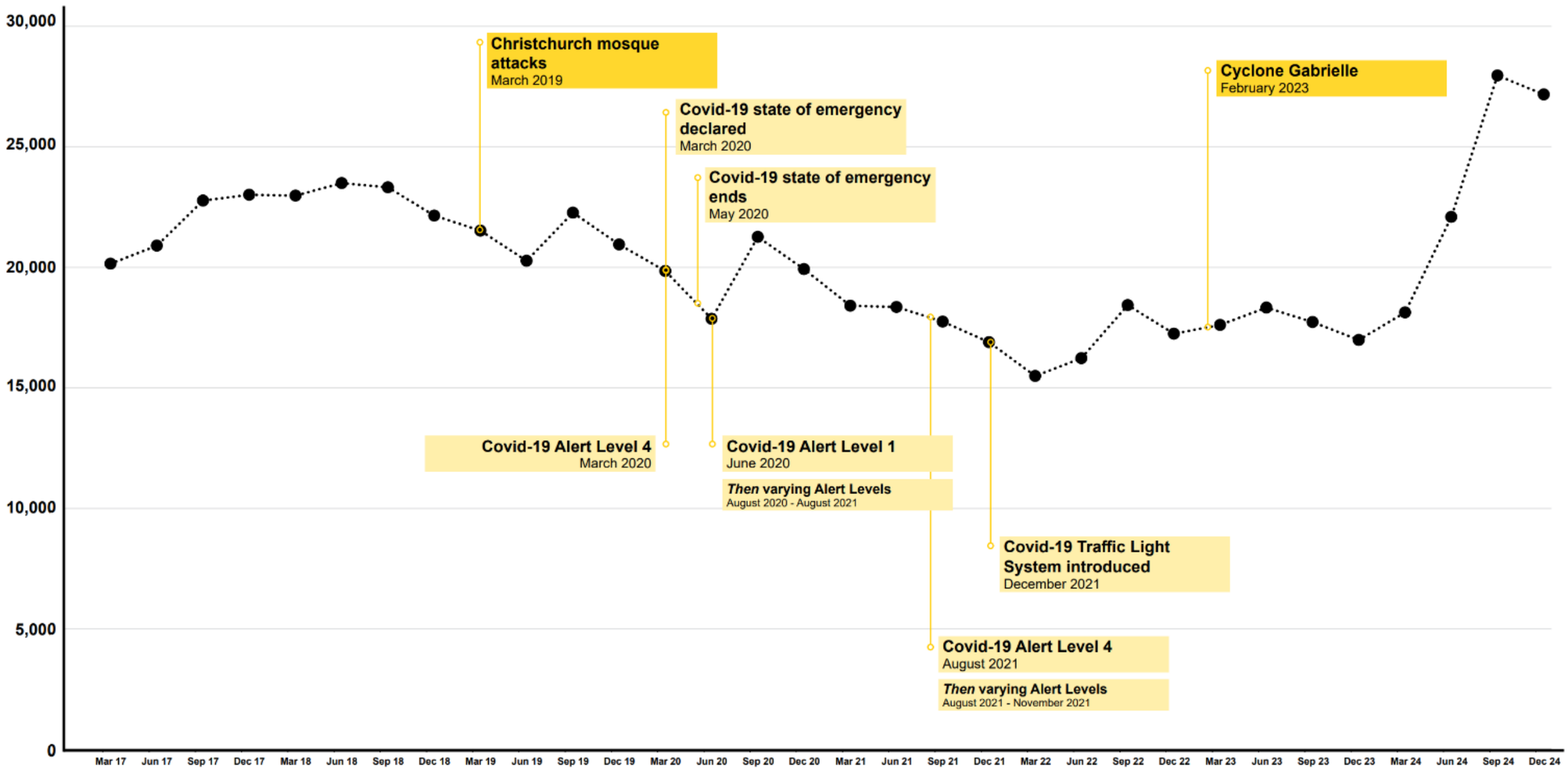
Reference document of key events against reports of concern trends

The below diagram shows the number of reports of concern received per quarter, since the start of 2017. It also provides a view of the landscape of New Zealand over this time - while it doesn't comment on correlation or causation, it includes both contextual factors and other factors that *may* have impacted on the number of reports of concern.

Select a category to view

Important note: This functionality works best in the Adobe app (not via a web browser)

Significant national events | Economic and social factors | Government and legislative changes | Public awareness and high-profile cases | Reviews and reports | Key changes at Oranga Tamariki



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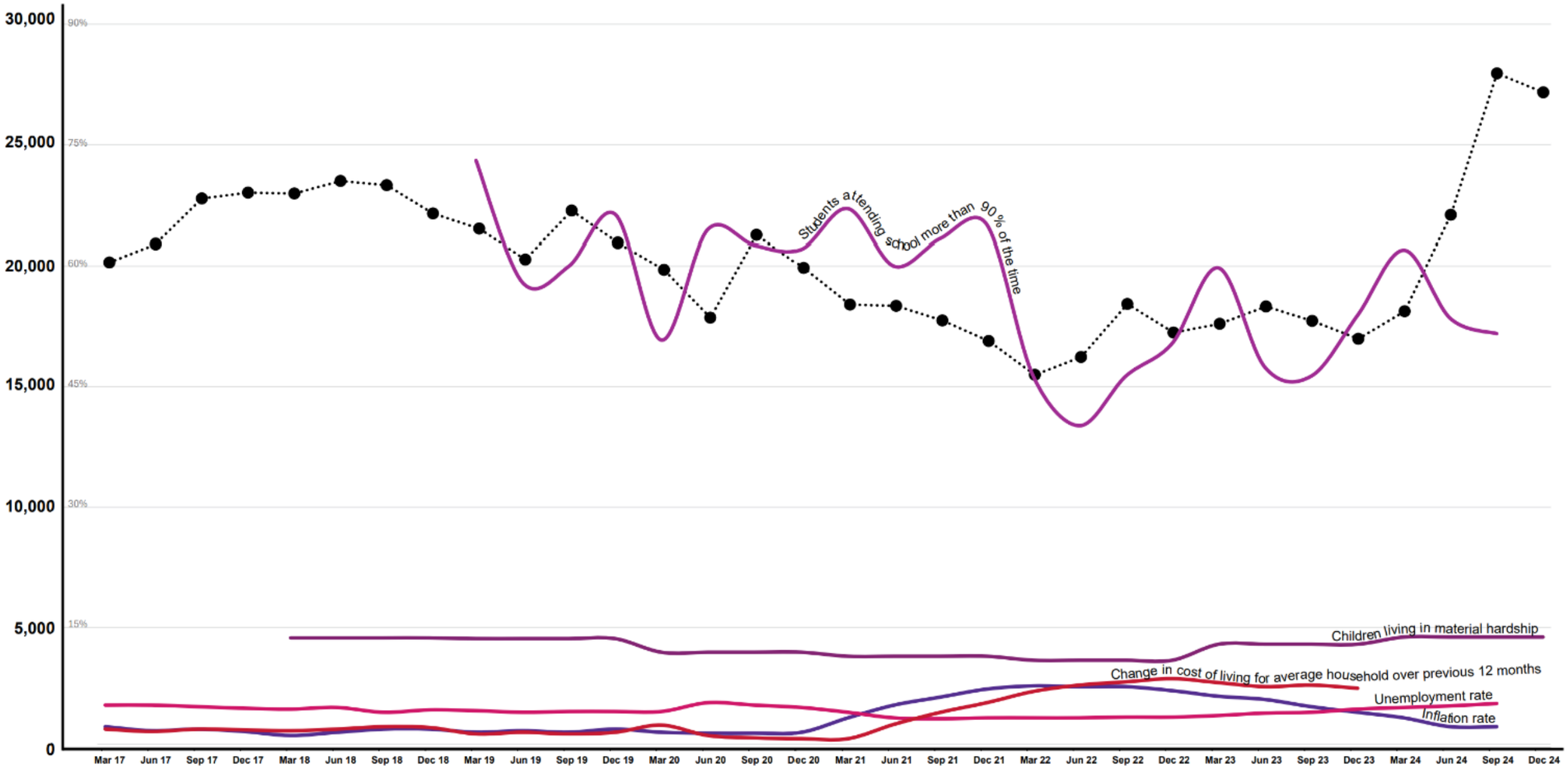

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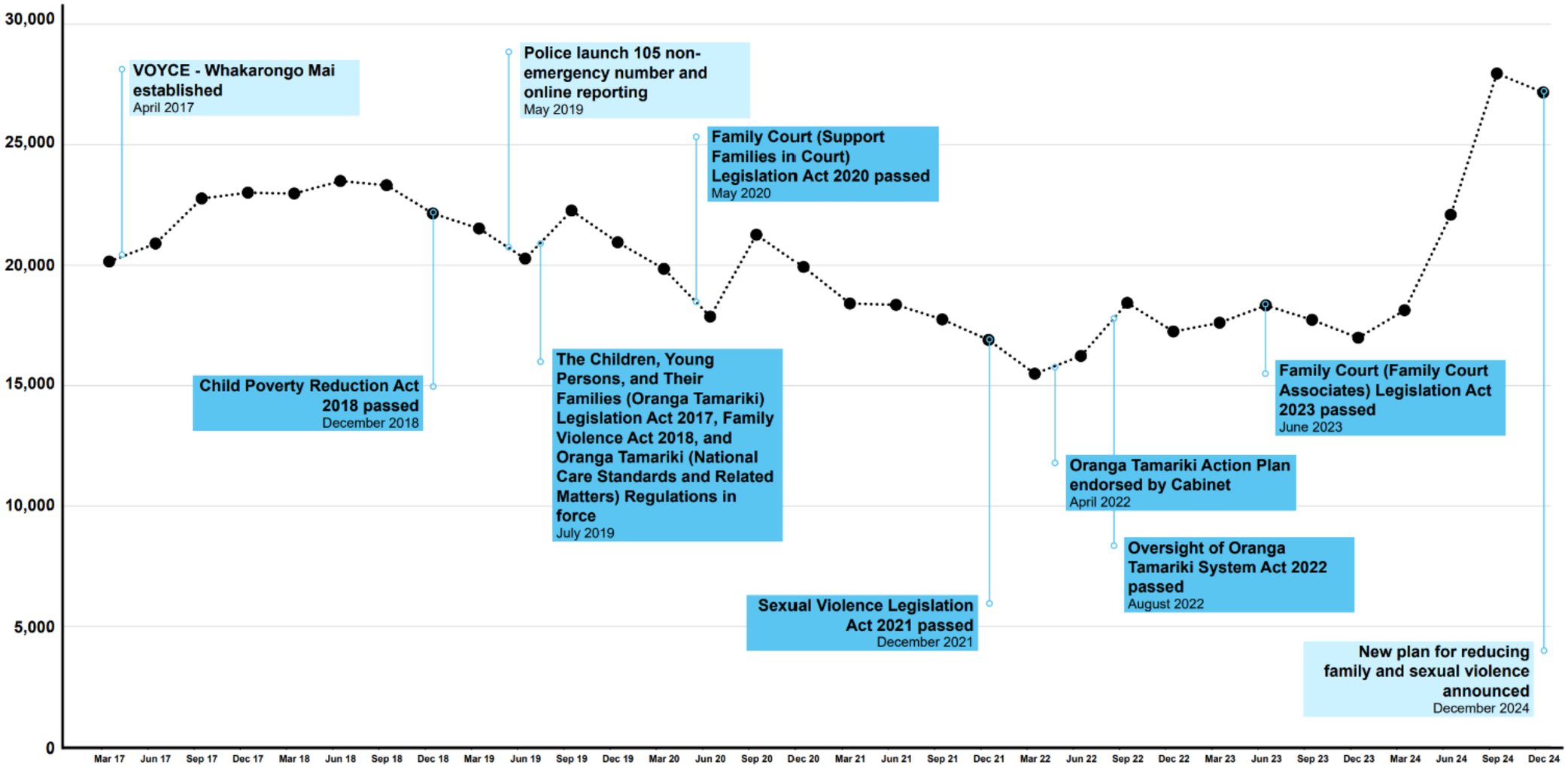

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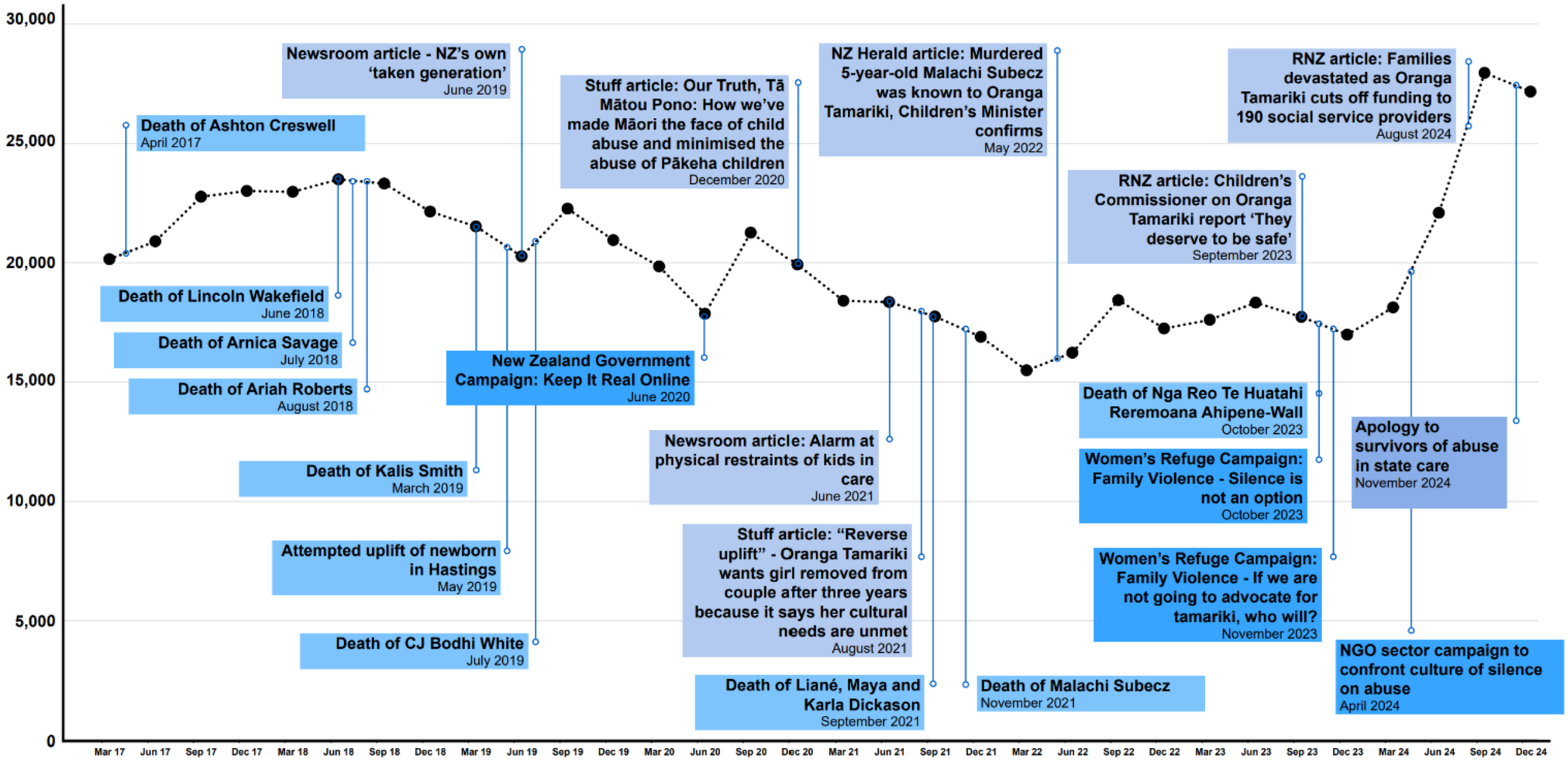

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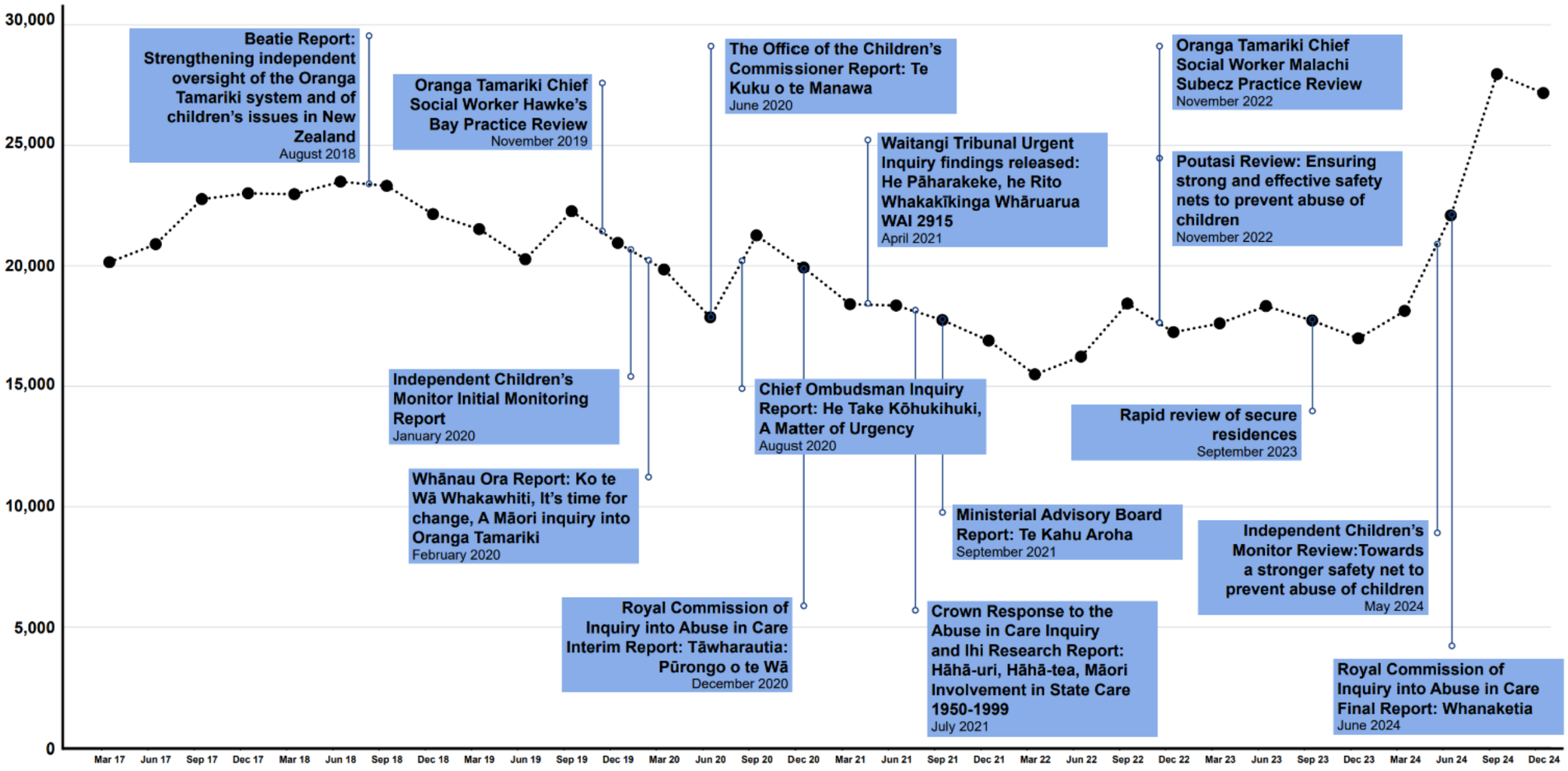

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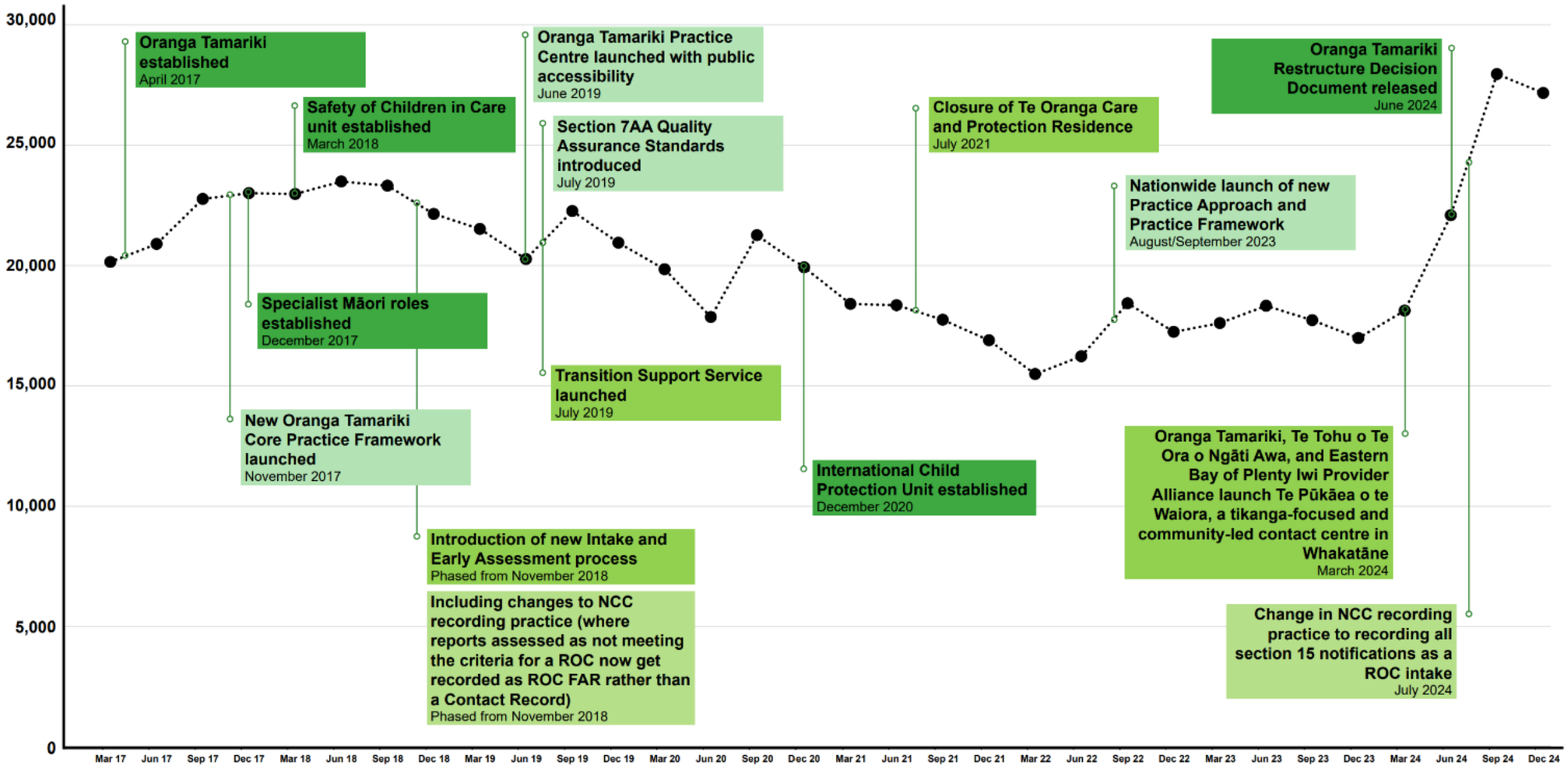


Appendix 3: Overview of key upcoming events and possible changes – drivers and restraining factors

How to interpret this table
This table outlines key upcoming events and potential changes across the three categories of influencing factors:

1. Practice changes
2. Barriers to reporting and previous experience
3. External factors

Within each category, events and changes are classified as either drivers, restraining factors, or having a mixed/unknown impact. Each item is assigned a numerical rating based on its risk matrix score.

Although this is not an exhaustive list of all possible events that could impact report of concern volumes, this key information has been identified throughout the course of consultation and analysis.

Likelihood, timeframe and impact rating information has been assessed through collection and analysis processes. As noted in the disclaimer for this product, the interpretations and conclusions drawn in this report are made on the balance of probability on information available at the time of preparation.

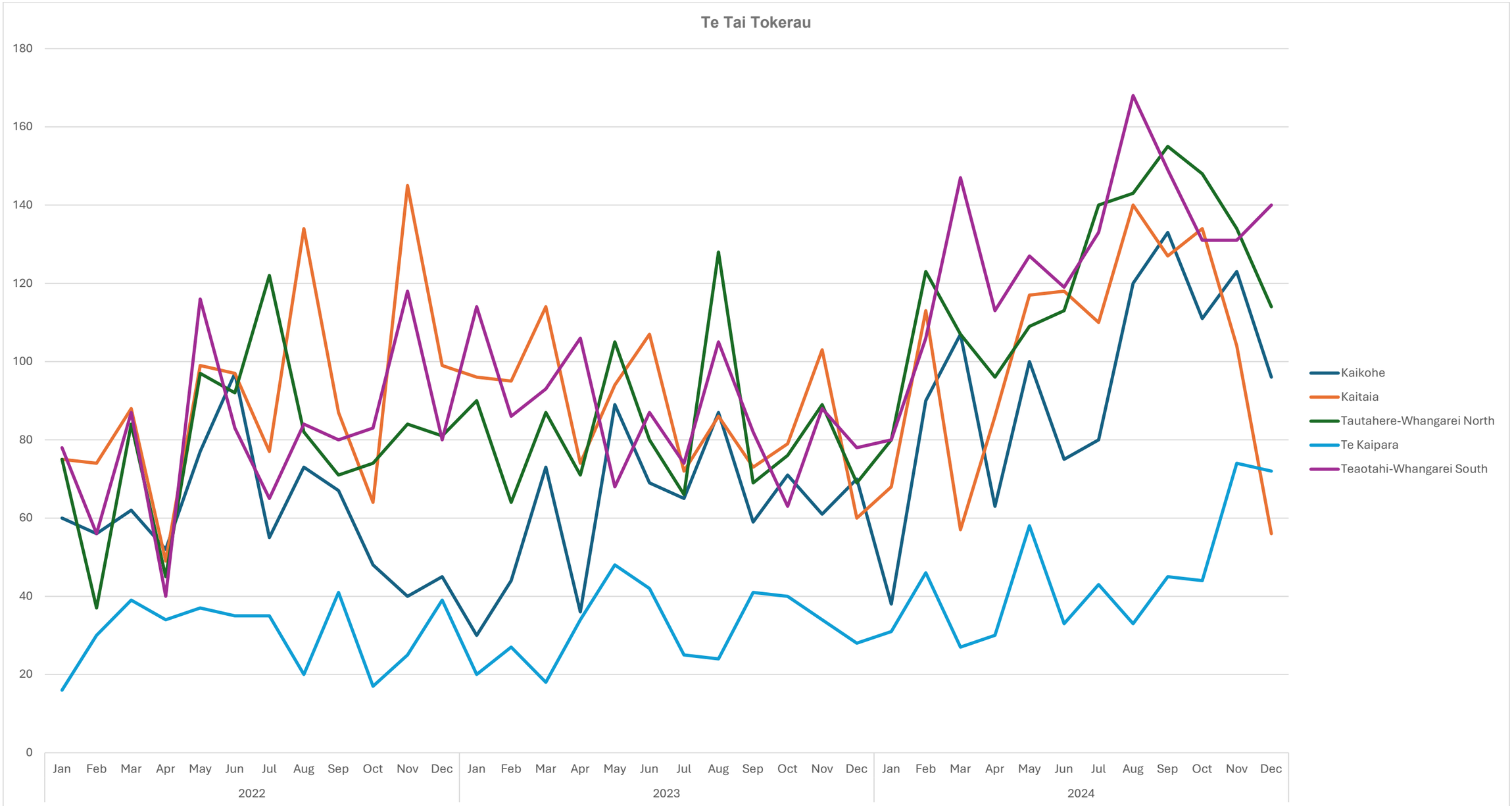
Factor	Planned or Possible Changes	Likelihood / timeframe	Impact Rating	Description	Rating
Practice changes					
Drivers					
De-centralisation of intake process in some locations through the Enabling Communities prototypes	There are four Enabling Communities prototypes under development working on de-centralisation of intake functions. Note: Intakes still recorded in CYRAS.	Likely	Major	Driver. Recording increase.	17
Introduction of structured decision-making aids/tools	Project to explore the use of structured decision-making aids/tools to support social work practice.	Likely	Major/Severe	Driver. Recording increase.	17
Assessment processes continuous improvement	Continued focus internally on improving our core basics and strengthening our assessment process.	Likely	Moderate	Driver. Recording increase initially, but possible future decrease in renotifications if assessment improvements result in better provision of preventative supports.	11
Improvement to the percentage of critical (within 24hrs) or very urgent (within 48hrs) reports of concern, addressed within existing operational timeframes	Oranga Tamariki is currently not meeting the target of 95% and has seen a decrease from Q1 2024/25 to Q2 2024/25 from 89% to 86%. Work is underway to address this but has had limited success so far in improving compliance with the measure.	Unknown/ Unlikely	Major	Driver. If decrease continues, then actual harm may increase, and also trigger subsequent reports of concern if reports are not addressed adequately within timeframes.	9-10
Centralisation of the intake process in some areas who have not yet transitioned to NCC-lead intake.	The NCC are currently leading the intake process for several sites. It is expected that this will expand to further sites in future.	Likely	Minor	Driver. Recording increase.	7
Restraining Factors					
Improved intervention (Oranga Tamariki) resulting in fewer renotifications	Continuous improvement in practice.	Likely	Minor	Restraining factor. Harm decrease and notification decrease.	7
Mixed/Unknown					
Internal technology/systems improvements	Planned technology improvements including FTSU (frontline technology systems upgrade).	Likely	Major/Severe	Mixed/Unknown.	17

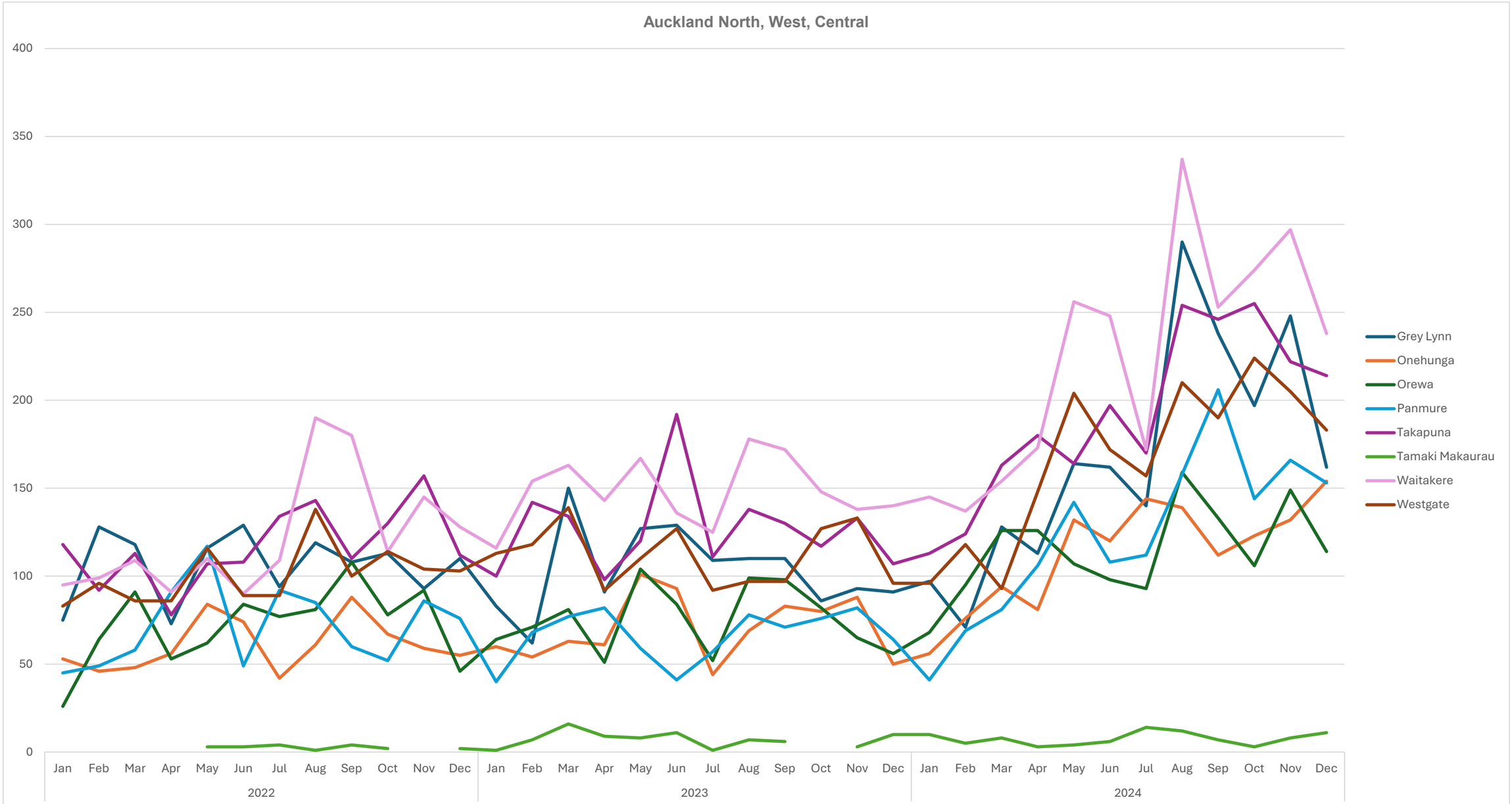
Factor	Planned or Possible Changes	Likelihood / timeframe	Impact Rating	Description	Rating
The threshold for what constitutes intervention is further clarified or changed.	Unknown however Enabling Communities work may influence this in the long run	Unknown/ Unlikely	Major	Mixed/Unknown impact depending on what changes are made.	10
Embedding of the recently established Child Protection Investigation Unit	On 22 November 2024, the establishment of the new independent Child Protection Investigation Unit in Oranga Tamariki was confirmed and the unit was established in December 2024. Its objectives are to: • conduct rigorous and transparent investigations into cases where the care provided to a child by the state has caused harm • identify systemic failures to reform the systems and practices of Oranga Tamariki • promote accountability at all levels of the care system.	Certain	Minor	Mixed. Recording improvement and possible initial recording increase for the cohort known to Oranga Tamariki (including those in care), particularly at sites where practice improvement work is undertaken in relation to cases investigated by the Unit. Future implications may include wider system improvement of Oranga Tamariki's statutory response.	8
Barriers to reporting and previous experience					
Drivers					
Developments to technology	NCC development of a digital solution for submitting reports of concern, including potential dedicated portals for key partner agencies. This is foreseen to potentially have a significant increase in reports of concern. Although it could prevent some duplications in reports, overall, the ease of reporting and improved accessibility could cause significant increases.	Likely	Severe	Driver. Reporting increase.	22
Relationships with partner agencies improve	Development of information sharing agreements underway. Proactive relationship building underway in some areas.	Likely	Minor	Driver. Reporting increase. Possible future decrease in harm due to coordinated support.	7
Kainga Ora policy changes	Changes to Kainga Ora policy may mean an increase in termination of tenancy agreements, a continued reduction in the availability and use of emergency housing.	Likely	Minor but increasing over time.	Driver. Reporting increase and harm increase.	7
Mixed/Unknown					
Youth Justice changes	Changes to youth justice policy such as the "YSO" (young serious offender) declaration	Likely	Moderate	Unknown.	11
Negative experiences with Oranga Tamariki (including publicised incidents)	Improvements to complaints management, recent work of Royal Commission of Abuse in State Care.	Likely	Minor	Mixed.	7
Relationships with partner agencies decline	Lack of trust between professionals	Possible	Minor	Mixed.	3
External factors					
Drivers					

Factor	Planned or Possible Changes	Likelihood / timeframe	Impact Rating	Description	Rating
Health outcomes for tamariki and whānau declines	Risk factors highlighted in the New Zealand Health Survey for 2023/24 include: • Increase in illicit drug use in adults • Increase in prevalence of mental health indicators in adults • Increase in unmet need for mental health care and addiction services for adults • Parenting indicators show possible reduction in coping Increase in household food insecurity.	Likely	Major	Driver. Harm increase.	17
Increase in online harm	This includes online child exploitation such as sextortion and self-generated explicit content, and exposure to and engagement with violent extremist content and rhetoric	Likely	Moderate	Driver. Harm increase.	11
Increase in child victimisations	27% increase in the number of children aged 0-14 who were victims of a crime reported to Police between 2017 and 2025 (year ending January).	Likely	Moderate	Driver. Harm increase.	11
Increase in cost of living	The cost of living for the average household increased 3% in the 12 months to the December 2024 quarter. This followed a 3.8% increase in the 12 months to the September 2024 quarter.	Likely	Moderate	Driver. Harm increase.	11
Funding cuts across some areas (e.g. social service NGOs, disability sector)	This could increase general stress on the system and potentially create vulnerabilities in the provision of support services.	Likely	Moderate	Driver. Harm increase, reporting increase.	11
Increase in cross-border harm to children in New Zealand (or entering New Zealand)	Trafficking in persons involving children, adoption of children from overseas for exploitative reasons	Possible	Moderate	Driver. Harm Increase.	9
When a significant event will occur (eg pandemic, natural disaster, terror-attack)	It is unknown when a significant event will next occur, and what that will entail. Given the variation in types of significant events, this factor has been rated as possible, with a moderate impact. Note: if a specific event were to occur that caused disproportionate harm children, these ratings would not apply and need to be adjusted.	Possible	Moderate	Driver. Harm increase	9
Demographic changes (migration, population growth)	Population growth: Although not every quarter sees a rise in the number of children, it has generally trended up over time. Trends are showing that there is an ageing population, but the impact of this is unknown.	Likely	Minor	Driver. Possible harm increase due to larger population of children.	7
Education outcomes for children in NZ decline	School attendance: The proportion of children and young people attending school regularly has seen a recent increase between 2023 and 2024, but overall has deceased since 2011. Stand-downs have increased, particularly between 2020 and 2023.	Possible	Minor	Driver. Harm increase.	3
Restraining Factors					

Factor	Planned or Possible Changes	Likelihood / timeframe	Impact Rating	Description	Rating
Improved resilience within communities	An improvement in community resilience may be observed generally, across nationwide numbers. It is more likely that if there is improved resilience within communities, this would be location or demographic specific. This has been assessed as unlikely given the social and economic factors highlighted in this report, but having a moderate impact. If this factor did see an improvement, the impact rating would increase over time.	Unlikely	Moderate (increasing over time)	Restraining Factor. Harm decrease.	5
Improved social cohesion	An improvement in social cohesion may be observed generally, across nationwide numbers. It is more likely that if there is improved social cohesion, this would be location or demographic specific. This has been assessed as unlikely given the social and economic factors highlighted in this report, but having a moderate impact. If this factor did see an improvement, the impact rating would increase over time.	Unlikely	Moderate (increasing over time)	Restraining Factor. Harm decrease.	5
Mixed/Unknown					
Technology developments	It is unknown what the extent of technology developments will look like and the exact impact it could have, both positive, negative and mixed. This gets harder to predict the further ahead you consider. Given the impact that technology developments have had so far and considering more recent developments such as AI, this has been rated as being likely, and having a severe impact.	Likely	Severe	Mixed.	22

Appendix 4: Reports of concern by care and protection site

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Orewa
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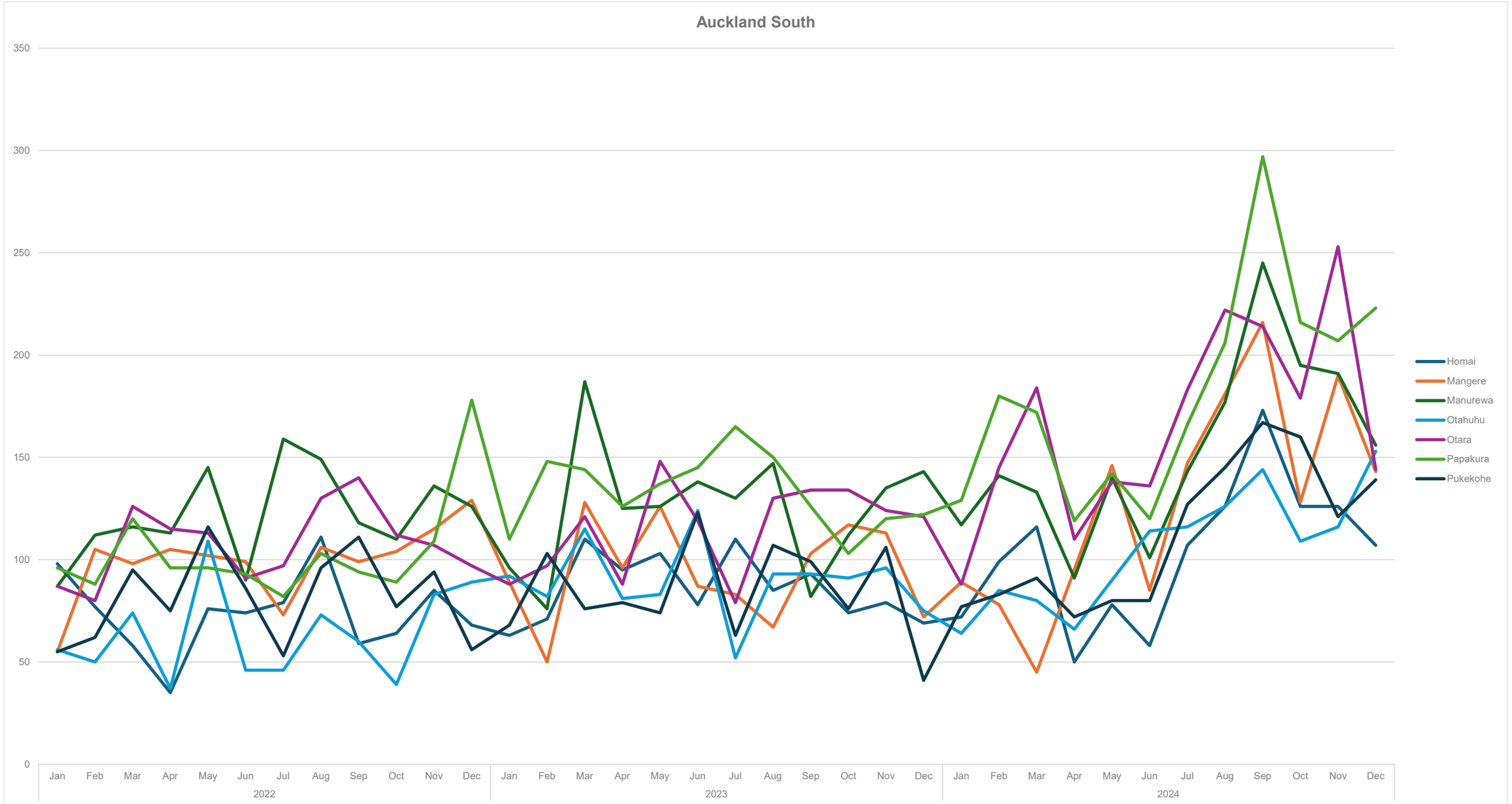
Takapuna
Tamaki Makaurau
Waitakere
Westgate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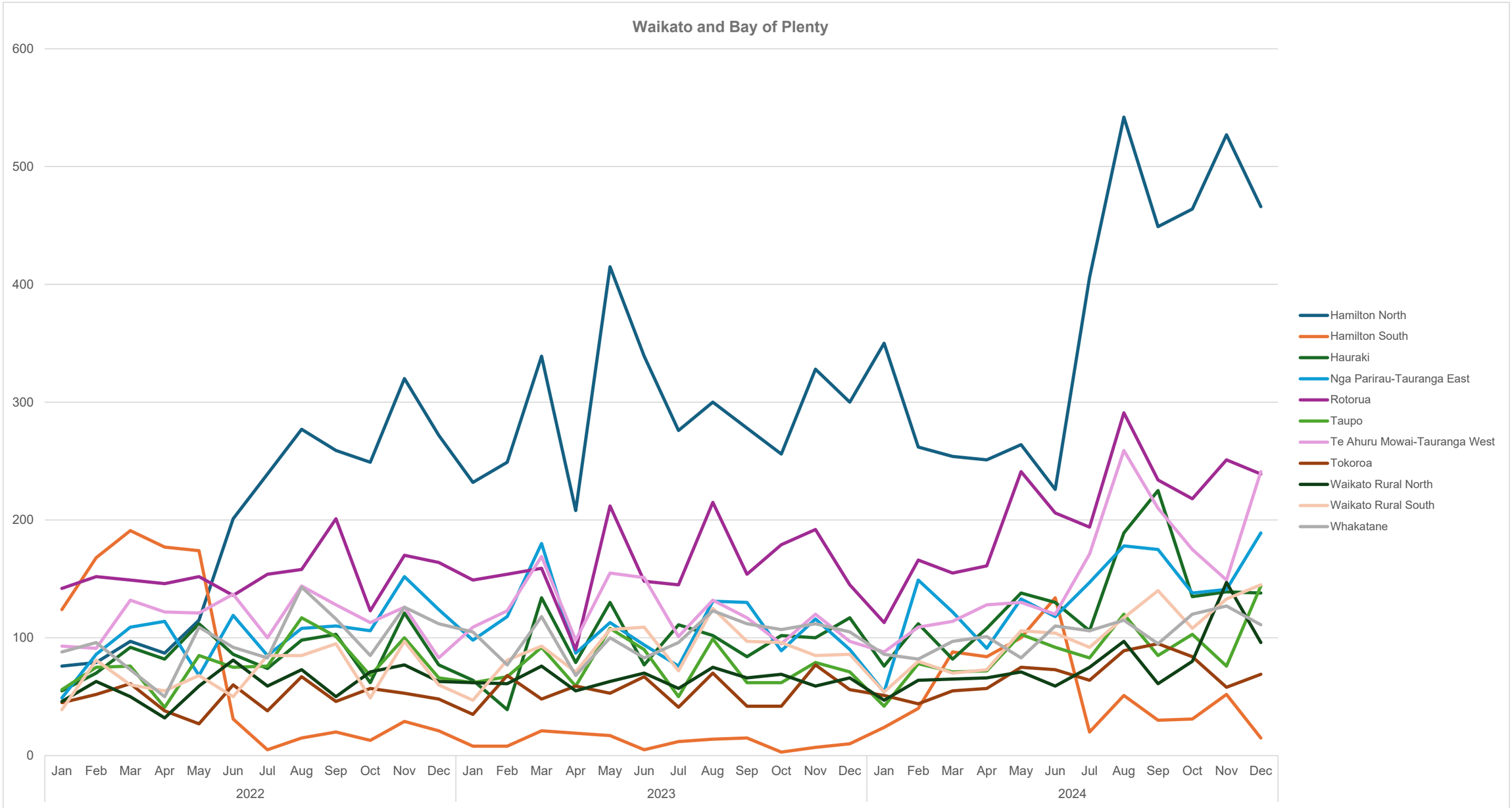
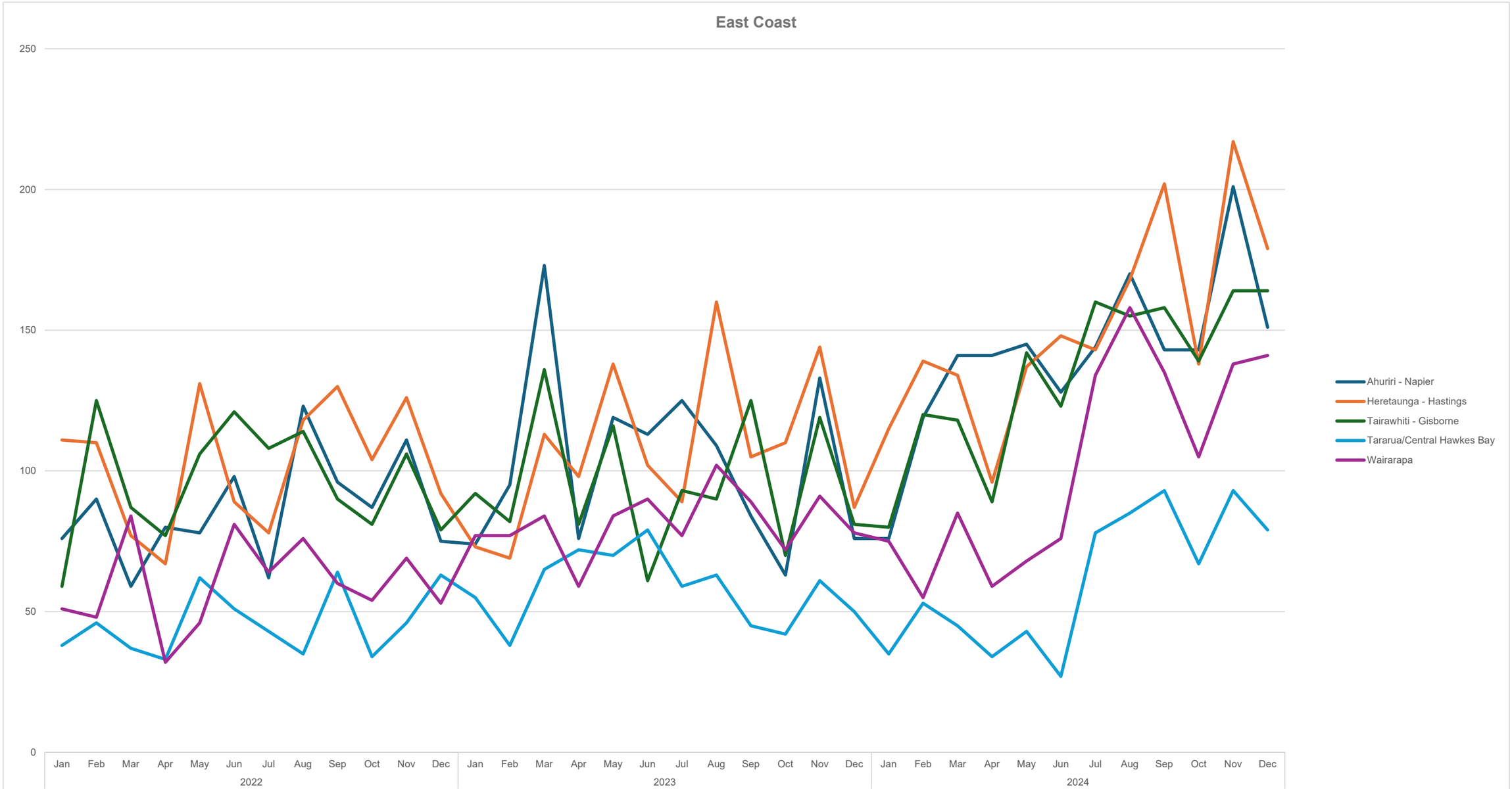
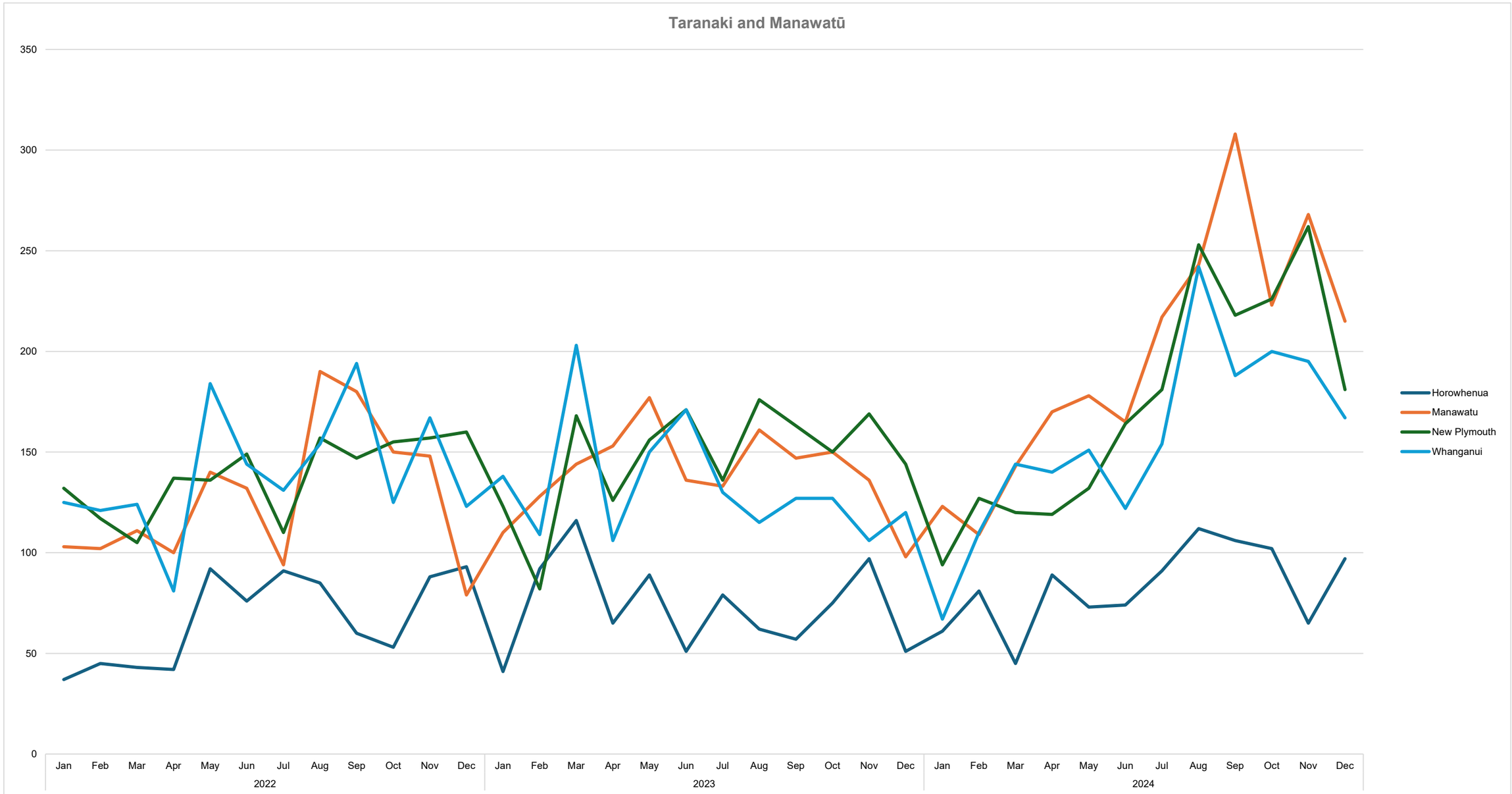
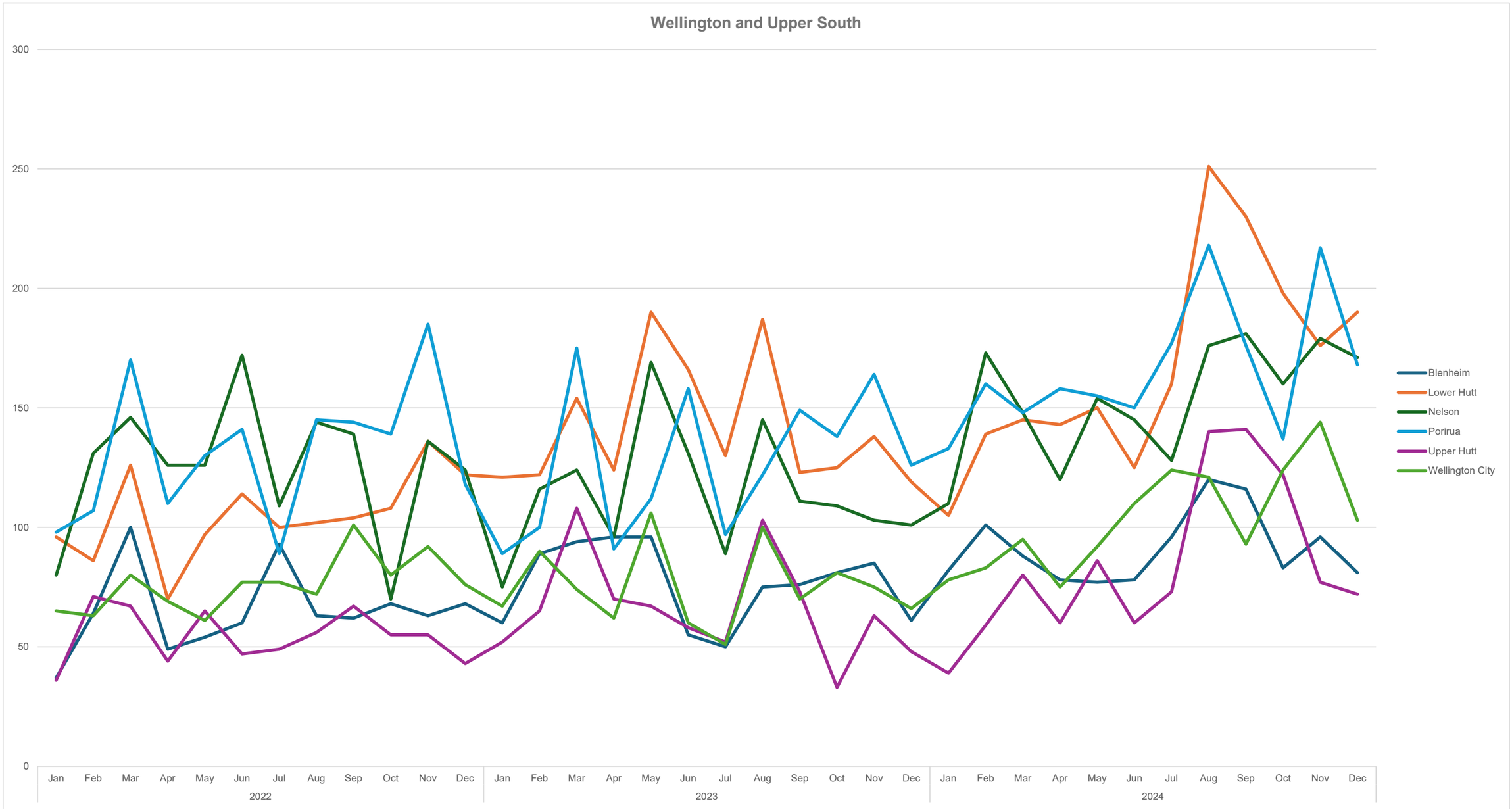
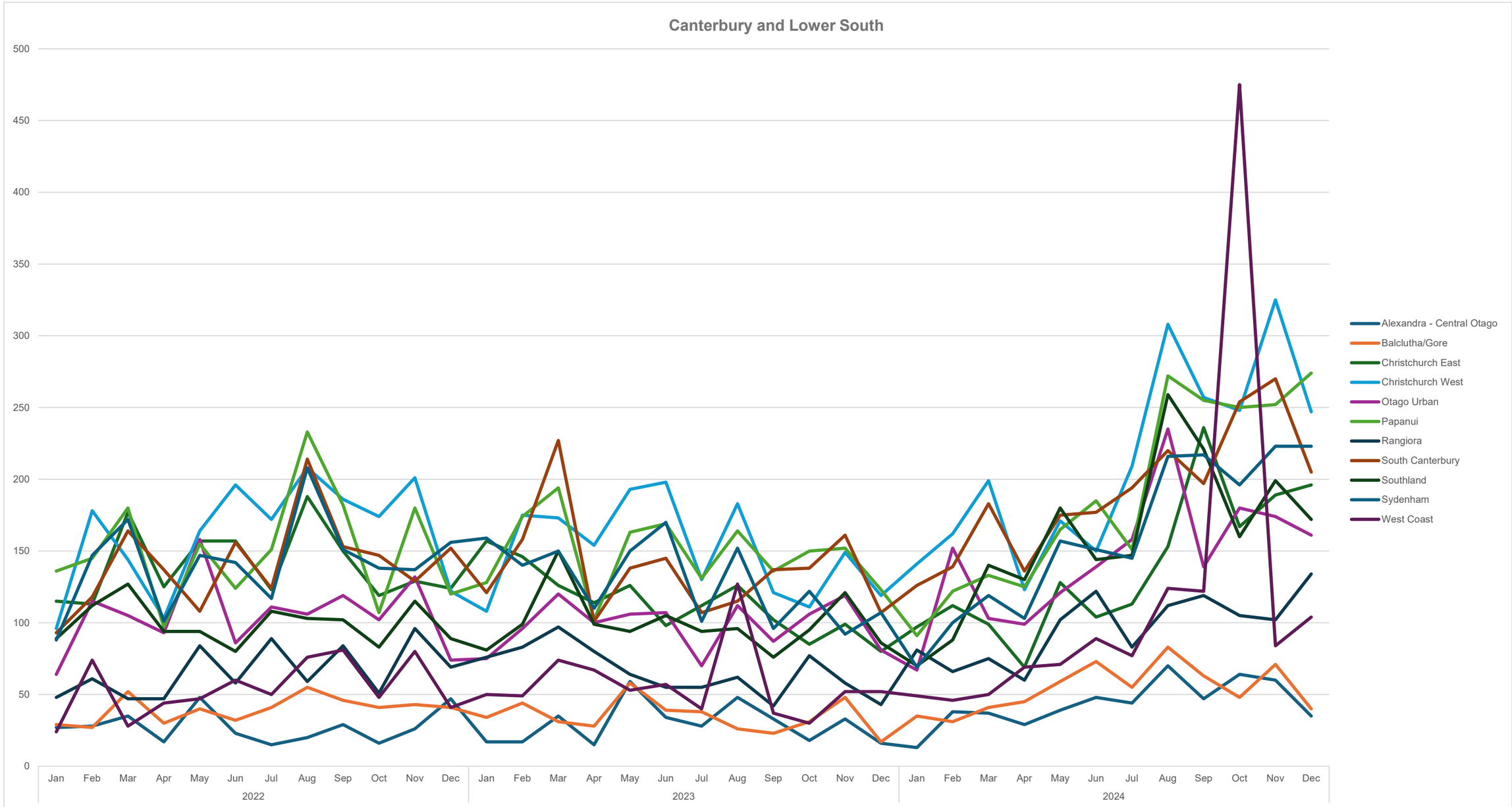
Otara
Papakura
Pukekohe


Waikato and Bay of Plenty
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2022
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2023
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2024
Hamilton North
Hamilton South
Hauraki
Nga Parirau-Tauranga East
Rotorua
Taupo
Te Ahuru Mowai-Tauranga West
Tokoroa
Waikato Rural North
Waikato Rural South
Whakatane


East Coast
250
200
150
100
50
0
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2022
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2023
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2024
Ahuriri - Napier
Heretaunga - Hastings
Tairawhiti - Gisborne
Tararua/Central Hawkes Bay
Wairarapa


Taranaki and Manawatū
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2022
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2023
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2024
Horowhenua
Manawatu
New Plymouth
Whanganui


Wellington and Upper South
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2022
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2023
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2024
Blenheim
Lower Hutt
Nelson
Porirua
Upper Hutt
Wellington City


Canterbury and Lower South
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2022
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2023
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
2024
Alexandra - Central Otago
Balclutha/Gore
Christchurch East
Christchurch West
Otago Urban
Papanui
Rangiora
South Canterbury
Southland
Sydenham
West Coast

Appendix 5: Methodology

This insights product applied data collection and analysis, extensive internal and external (govt. agencies) consultation, structured analytic techniques, review and analysis of literature and utilisation of the risk management framework to assess likelihood and impact. The risk management framework has been used as a guide to ensure probabilistic and impact language is consistent with existing internal guidelines.

Out of Scope

Statistical demand modelling was excluded from the scope of this product but previous analysis undertaken was considered. This analysis sought to signal what volumes we might expect to see in future. A key challenge with this method is the large confidence interval produced, meaning the estimation shows there could be a large range of projected numbers – either increasing or decreasing within a large bracket. The increase in reports of concern last year increased outside of the confidence interval, deviating from expected volume numbers.

Wider consultation with the public and community partners was excluded from the scope of this product due to limited timeframes and the need for timely insights. Future work on this topic could consider broader research including consultation with other community partners and the public.

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