



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Ngā ratonga ki te manawa o te whenua

Heartland Services Service Guidelines

July 2026



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1 About the Heartland Service Guidelines

Introduction

The Heartland Services (Heartlands) Service Guidelines (the Guidelines) are for Providers contracted by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to deliver the Heartland Services (Heartlands). Guidelines form part of the Outcome Agreement between MSD and the Provider and require Providers to deliver Heartlands in accordance with the Guidelines.

The Guidelines are a living document and may be updated at the discretion of MSD. If any changes are made, MSD will communicate these with Providers prior to a new version of the Guidelines being implemented.



Changes to the Guidelines

In 2019, a review of Heartlands was undertaken followed by additional investment in Heartlands through Budget 2020. This review became the catalyst for change and a process of service re-design. The re-design process involved engaging with the existing Providers about how the service was currently operating. MSD undertook workshops and surveys, and had regular contact with Providers to ensure the service concepts, which were developed as the foundations for the Guidelines, were fit for purpose. Additionally, the voice of the community, including clients of Heartlands were captured and considered through surveys and workshops.

Changes to the Guidelines better reflect the work Providers are already doing and provide updated supporting documentation. MSD wanted to make the Guidelines fit-for-purpose, while also allowing flexibility for Providers to deliver the service to suit the specific needs of their community.

The new Guidelines should not require substantial changes to how Providers deliver the service. Instead, the Guidelines now reflect how the service is being delivered, acknowledging that service delivery has evolved since Heartlands' inception in 2001. There is also more clarification given where required. The main changes which may be seen through the guidelines are:

- information about the updated funding model and the delivery of a full-time service, including clarity regarding opening hours
- information about offering an outreach service
- information regarding reporting
- guidance about the flexibility of kaimahi delivering Heartlands, including their ability to hold more than one role within an organisation.

Providers should see themselves and their work better reflected in these new Guidelines. Further information on the background of Heartlands is located in Appendix Two.

Purpose of the Guidelines

The Guidelines should support the delivery of Heartlands and ensure consistency, as well as flexibility, for a service which will meet the needs of rural and isolated communities.

The Guidelines seek to support providers by:

- providing guidance on how to deliver Heartlands
- providing a framework for service delivery and practice
- being a resource tool to help Providers deliver services consistently with desired outcomes
- supporting Providers to deliver Heartlands in accordance with the outcomes sought from the funding
- providing information on MSD's strategic direction to achieve better outcomes for all New Zealanders (see section 2 for further information)
- improving MSD's responsiveness to feedback about changes to the service delivery component of the Outcome Agreement.

Using the Guidelines

The Guidelines set the minimum standard for service delivery to assist Providers to deliver Heartlands according to the requirements as outlined in their Outcome Agreement. Each Provider can develop a service which reflects their organisation's values and incorporates local need and the culture within which the Provider works. The Guidelines should be used to support Providers to competently deliver the service, and to ensure a level of consistency across Aotearoa, whilst allowing and enabling a locally responsive service.

Relationship principles

The relationship between MSD and Providers will be guided by the following principles:

- create an environment of mana manaaki, to have a positive experience
- act honestly and in good faith
- communicate openly and in a timely manner
- work in a collaborative and constructive manner with genuine partnership
- recognise each other's responsibilities
- encourage quality and innovation to achieve positive outcomes, which supports MSD's strategic direction 'Kia takatū tātou' the long-term social and economic development of whānau and family. Further information on this can be found on page 8.

Cultural competency

MSD has an obligation to be a responsible Tiriti partner. We do this by upholding the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi to ensure Providers support the needs and aspirations of Māori communities.

When working with whānau Māori, aroha ki te tangata, showing respect to people, is an important factor, and engaging in ways that are informed and responsive to cultural frameworks, tikanga approach and values of the community are important to ensure the connection is authentic.

Additionally, it is important to recognise the needs of all people, including Pacific peoples, ethnic communities, and all other communities, to have services provided in a way that is consistent with their social, economic, cultural, and spiritual values.

Heartlands enables Providers to manaaki ki te tangata, share, host and be generous. The offering and exchanging of kōrero in a safe space can lift the esteem of the individual, whānau or family and the ability for Heartlands to listen and respond in a non-judgemental way can be mana enhancing.

Ensuring coordination and access to various agencies and community partners will strengthen responses to peoples' needs. E.g. establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with local hapū to better serve Māori or connecting with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities.

Feedback to MSD and Guideline reviews

Regular review of the Guidelines will ensure they reflect the most current decisions of the Government that affect the service and the activities being funded. This includes ensuring:

- reporting measures are up-to-date, relevant, and collecting the most useful information on service delivery and effectiveness
- evidence of good practice delivered to achieve outcomes can be incorporated
- guidelines reflect best practice to achieve outcomes.

Providers are encouraged to give feedback on evidence of good practice, including if these relate to the achievement of outcomes, on an ongoing basis via their reporting or through their Relationship Manager. Provider feedback may be incorporated for consideration into any substantive review or improved service design process in the future.

MSD is committed to seeing Heartlands delivered in accordance with the Guidelines. We would like to take a proactive approach to receiving feedback. To provide written or verbal feedback, Providers should email or speak with their relevant Relationship Manager or email us at heartland_services@msd.govt.nz

Where can Providers go for further information?

For further information on the Guidelines please contact the Relationship Manager identified in the Outcome Agreement.



2 What's important to MSD

As an organisation MSD wants to be proactive, connecting clients to all the support and services that are right for them and improving the social and economic wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

MSD's current direction is outlined in Te Pae Tawhiti with two supporting documents, Te Pae Tata, and Pacific Prosperity, which are designed to achieve better outcomes for Māori and Pacific peoples.

The Guidelines have been developed with consideration of this direction. With that in mind, we wanted to give Providers an overview to understand the direction of MSD, the content and language of the Guidelines, and our vision for all clients.

Te Pae Tawhiti

Te Pae Tawhiti describes three key shifts MSD is making in terms of the services it offers as well as those offered on its behalf.

These shifts are:

Mana Manaaki – a positive experience every time

Mana manaaki is about building the mana of others and uplifting them in a way that honours their dignity. An example of this for Heartlands would be an inviting space where people are listened to and treated with respect and compassion and leave better than when they entered.

Kotahitanga – partnering for greater impact

Kotahitanga is about unity, togetherness, solidarity, and collective action. We're stronger when we work together with whānau, families, hapū, iwi, other community organisations, communities, and government agencies.

For example, working closely with the other community organisations, and mana whenua to strengthen coordination and access. Additionally, working with MSD as well as other government agencies to develop solutions to issues, such as the lack of services available in rural communities.

Kia takatū tātou – supporting long term social and economic development

Kia takatū tātou means 'let's get ready' and underpins our intention to prepare ourselves and our communities for future realities. MSD and MSD funded services like Heartlands, have an important role to play in supporting and developing our communities, so they have a strong and sustainable future. This could be achieved by supporting whānau to access services which will enable them to build strong relationships and get access to employment and education which will enable them to take control of their futures in a sustainable way.

The full document can be found [here](#).

Te Pae Tata - Māori Strategy and Action Plan

Te Pae Tata articulates how the key shifts mentioned above can be applied to support better outcomes for Māori. Our vision is that whānau are strong, safe, and prosperous – active within their community, living with a clear sense of identity and cultural integrity and with control of their destiny – Te mana kaha o te whānau! Heartlands supports whānau Māori who live rurally by engaging in a way which is mana enhancing and enabling them to get equitable access to the services they need to facilitate their social and economic wellbeing.

The full document can be found [here](#).

Pacific Prosperity – Our People, Our Solutions, Our Future

Pacific Prosperity focuses on providing opportunities for MSD to respond to the changing context of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. The vision of the Pacific Prosperity is to see Pacific peoples, families and communities thrive and flourish within Aotearoa.

By 'thrive' we mean we want to support Pacific peoples, families, and communities to prosper, succeed and be independent. By 'flourish' we mean that once Pacific people, families, and communities are independent they are supported to have positive and healthy lives.

The full document can be found [here](#).



3 Goal and Outcomes

Goal of the service

All people living in rural and isolated communities receive equitable* access to the services and support they need from government and community services.

* **Equitable definition:** Living rurally should not disadvantage people from getting the services and support they need. Equitable also recognises that people have different levels of need and require different approaches and resources to achieve outcomes.

Outcomes of Heartlands

Levels	Short-term outcomes (less than 1 year)	Medium to long-term outcomes (1+ years)
Service level	- Services and partners have increased awareness of Heartlands and understand its purpose. - CoP and reporting/evaluation enhance feedback loops and effectiveness of Heartlands. - Through the CoP, providers connect with each other, and isolation is reduced. - Providers and MSD Team form connections and collaborate with services and partners to meet service needs.	- Providers and MSD team have the networks, resources and capability to proactively respond to and plan for service needs in Heartlands' communities. - More services are available through Heartlands (via increased local availability or clearer pathways to gain support). - Services and partners have trust and confidence in Heartlands.
Client level	- Clients receive services, information and support that is relevant and culturally appropriate for their needs. - Clients know what services and supports are available to help them, and how to access them. - Clients have increased awareness of Heartlands and understand its purpose. - Clients access services and support that they otherwise may not have. - Clients feel safe and comfortable to seek support.	- Being able to access services and support through Heartlands contributes to clients having more confidence in living in rural and isolated areas. - Through the support of Heartlands, clients are more confident accessing the services and support they need. - Clients have trust and confidence in Heartlands.

Each Heartland Service is responsive to its local community needs

Each community has its unique characteristics, opportunities, and challenges, and therefore the service is delivered in a way that is flexible to allow Providers to reflect what works for their community. Heartlands will recognise and provide support to the specific needs of the local community, including Māori, Pacific, gender diverse, disabled, ethnic, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities and all other communities.

Providers therefore need to be aware of the needs of their communities, and should seek to effectively partner with agencies, iwi, hapori, groups and services, which will enable them to provide and offer the support their community needs, including for Māori and Pacific communities and will ensure pathways to local services are clear and accessible for all.

It is important that Māori and Pacific peoples feel respected, trust Heartlands and that they are treated in a way which is non-judgemental and empowering. This can be achieved by ensuring staff are appropriately skilled and know how they can positively contribute to improving outcomes for Māori and Pacific peoples. This will enable Mana Manaaki, a positive experience every time.

Overall, Heartlands will provide support in a way that is consistent with the communities social, economic, cultural, and spiritual values that it serves.

4 Heartland Service Delivery

What is Heartlands?

Heartlands seeks to ensure whānau residing in rural and isolated areas have equitable access to services they need. This includes government and community organisations, as well as access to technology. Heartlands is designed to improve kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face) access to services and support to areas where such services might otherwise not be accessible. The sites operate as hubs for communities and provide a physical space for people to connect with government and community organisations, and with each other.

In line with MSD's strategic shift Kia Takatū Tātou, Heartlands contributes to the long-term social and economic development of people residing in rural communities, including Māori and Pacific peoples, by improving the accessibility of services that contribute to improved outcomes in areas such as employment, housing, and wellbeing. These improved outcomes may take the form of connecting people to services that provide specialised services such as finding stable housing, obtaining sustainable employment, financial stability, and the skills to develop and sustain these outcomes.

Heartlands aims to make it easier for whānau to access support without having to travel large distances, especially in areas with limited or no transport options and high fuel costs.

In line with MSD's strategic shift of Kotahitanga, Heartlands success depends on the development of credible, genuine relationships and partnerships with iwi, hāpori, whānau, other agencies, groups, and communities to ensure that services are available to meet the needs of Heartlands clients.



The service offered may include but is not limited to:

Services	Description
Support and advice	• supporting whānau to understand the processes of other agencies and services which can assist them (i.e., helping them to understand what forms might be required, or which government agency offers the support or service they require etc) • providing information and resources to whānau including what government and community organisations they might be entitled to as well as outlining activities happening in the community that may be of interest to them • creating community awareness of the availability of the support and services from government and non-government agencies including from agencies that don't have a physical presence in the community but may connect through other channels, e.g. videoconferencing • assisting whānau if they need help accessing services offered over the telephone, online or in person (i.e. helping them connect to 0800 services; using different websites; or referring them to in-person appointments).
Access for the community	• providing access to government services and information in the community, and providing opportunities for the community to meet kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (or virtually) with government agency representatives • understanding community need, including Māori, Pacific peoples, and other community groups, to ensure they have access to the services they need and that work for them • providing the community with access to: ◦ a welcoming, safe, secure, available, confidential, and accessible meeting spaces and facilities for all whānau to engage with government and non-government agencies ◦ technology, such as Wi-Fi, computers, photocopier, scanner, and phone lines ◦ information services.
Coordination, collaboration, and networking	• where possible, collaborate with government and non-government agencies to better support clients through a presence at Heartlands (these may be kanohi-ki-te-kanohi or via video conference) • ongoing monitoring of community needs, services, and service gaps • connecting with other Providers to share ideas, challenges, and successes • hosting and attending local community network groups and meetings.

Further to the physical presence which Heartlands has as a community hub, Providers are expected to be active contributors within their community. There are several ways this could be demonstrated such as:

- providing an outreach service
- attending and hosting community events
- regularly attending and being involved in local community network meetings
- developing relationships with local iwi, hapori, and marae, which may also include being able to meet whānau at maraes to provide support
- supporting local projects and initiatives
- supporting local NGOs
- partnering with another organisation or agency to respond to a need within the community.

Who is Heartlands for?

Heartlands is available to anyone in the community.

Heartlands needs to be accessible to everyone in the community and Providers should be aware of potential barriers which may prohibit someone from accessing their services and seek to address these. Given MSD's strategic commitment to improving outcomes and services for Māori and Pacific peoples, Heartlands will be implemented and delivered in a responsive and effective way for these communities.

Seeking support from Heartlands is free of charge to everyone, however, there may be costs for services whānau and family are referred to. Where possible, this should be communicated prior to a referral. For example, accessing counselling services, or attending a driving programme.

Who is responsible for delivering Heartlands?

Providers are responsible for delivering Heartlands in a way which meets the needs of their communities, whilst also adhering to the Guidelines and Outcome Agreement.

Providers will employ at least one coordinator to deliver the service to the community. Heartlands is required to be delivered 40 hours per week. However, individual coordinators are not only limited to the delivery of Heartlands and may also undertake other roles within the organisation.

MSD acknowledges that it is not the responsibility of Providers to ensure government and community services attend Heartlands sites to support individuals, whānau and families. This will be driven by agencies abilities (willingness, capacity, and funding) to respond to service gaps. However, Providers are responsible for actively encouraging and collaborating with government and community services to respond to service gaps in their communities.

Who else is involved?

Community needs differ across Aotearoa and therefore it is up to each Provider to decide the necessary government and non-government agencies to link in with. Providers need to have established relationships to enable the best support for the needs of the community.

As outlined in MSD's strategic shift of Kotahitanga, it is important Providers are well connected with the community partners and networks who want to create better outcomes for Māori and Pacific communities. This will ensure communities can access the services they need, which may differ from more mainstream services.

Government agencies

The following government agencies/services, including some of their key functions, may be useful to connect with and facilitate community access to:

Agency Name	Agency Information
Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) Te Kaporeihana Āwhina Hunga Whara	ACC levies, compensation for accidents, preventing injuries in the workplace
Careers New Zealand	Jobs, training, or career pathways
Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai	Hut passes, predator control, hunting, camping, volunteer for conversation
Department of Corrections Ara Poutama Aotearoa	Probation services, including sentence management and court prosecutions
Department of Internal Affairs Te Tari Taiwhenua	Lottery and community grants and funds, passports, births, deaths and marriage
Inland Revenue Te Tari Taake	Business and personal tax advice
Kāinga Ora	Housing, and services related to housing
Local council	Libraries, building permits, parks, rubbish and recycling, area development, emergency preparedness
Māori Land Court Te Kooti Whenua Māori	Appointing a trustee, Māori land titles and ownership, whānau trusts
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Hīkina Whakatutuki	Immigration: immigration and visa support Other: tenancy support, employment rights, support for business, language assistance services, consumer law
Ministry of Education Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga	Lead advisors on the New Zealand education system, shaping the direction for sector agencies and community organisations. Some examples of how Heartlands might connect with Ministry of Education to support clients are to access boarding allowances information or helping someone access a Record of Achievement through the NZQA portal.

Agency Name	Agency Information
Ministry of Justice Te Tāhū o te Ture	Criminal justice service, legal aid, youth justice, disputes and small claims, criminal record check, security guard licensing, jury service
Ministry for Pacific Peoples Te Manatū mō ngā Iwi ō Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa	Principal advisor on policies and interventions aimed at improving outcomes for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa. They use their networks, knowledge and understanding of Pacific peoples, culture, and values to influence public policy, programmes and service design affecting Pacific Aotearoa
Ministry for Primary Industries Manatū Ahu Matua	Policy and regulatory advice, market access and trade services, management of major regulatory systems of biosecurity, food safety, forestry, fisheries management, and animal welfare
Ministry of Social Development Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora	Work and Income: Health and Disability, other benefits and payments, and community services card Study Link: student allowance, student loans Youth services: living cost or parenting support payments, education and work, housing, supporting and mentoring Seniors: SuperGold Card, New Zealand Superannuation
New Zealand Police Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa	Advice for victims, case or report updates, pay a fine or infringement, firearms and safety, report a road incident, traffic alerts, vetting
New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi	Renew vehicle license, book a driving test, change address, buy road user charges, pay a toll
Oranga Tamariki	Caregiving, adoption, children in care, support for families
Stats NZ	Census data, NZ datasets including geographic boundaries, surveys, and other official statistics
Te Puni Kōkiri	Māori housing, Te Pū Harakeke Fund, Whenua Māori
Health NZ Te Whatu Ora	Leads the day-to-day running of the health system across New Zealand. Heartlands interact with Health NZ services in a variety of ways, including connecting clients with health information and services, and hosting health specialists and programmes on-site to improve local access to health services.

If Providers are struggling to get engagement from government agencies, MSD recommends advising the Relationship Manager as outlined in the Outcome Agreement.

Community groups and other services

Each community delivering Heartlands has its own unique challenges and opportunities and will likely have specific groups operating that Providers will hold relationships with. The following community organisations and groups may be useful to connect with and facilitate community access to:

- > community and charitable groups (including Community Law, Justice of the Peace)
- > district and regional council
- > health professionals
- > hospital transportation services
- > community information forums and governance/advisory teams
- > kaupapa Māori service providers
- > marae and rūnanga
- > Pacific peoples groups
- > addiction and mental health services
- > family violence services
- > disability services
- > LGBTQI+ groups
- > food banks and meals on wheels
- > banking, financial and budgeting services
- > employment services
- > transport and driving licence services (including AA)
- > food banks and other food support groups
- > youth, family, and community social services
- > local churches
- > faith based institutions and services
- > schools, early childhood centres
- > aged care and other support services for seniors
- > language lessons, translation services, or programmes
- > other connector services (e.g. Community Connectors or Citizens Advice Bureau).

5 The Heartlands space

Key factors of a Heartlands space

Heartlands needs to provide a space for its community which is available, secure, safe, accessible, confidential, inclusive, and inviting.

Available	The community is aware of how and when they can access Heartlands. Heartlands should be delivered 40 hours a week. Further details about this are noted in the Guidelines under Opening Hours (pg 20).
Secure	The space meets any Privacy Act 2020 requirements, for example the ability to store information about clients safely to protect their privacy.
Safe	It fits the health and safety requirements for Te Kāhui Kāhu Level four. Further information about this can be found in Section 11 of the Guidelines.
Accessible	All clients should be able to access Heartlands. In cases where the building is not directly accessible, e.g. due to needing to use stairs to access, Providers should have an alternative plan to accommodate those who may be unable to use stairs. E.g. this could be greeting the client outside the site and assisting them at an alternative venue which is accessible to their needs. To support accessibility, Providers should also ensure their Heartlands is visible, either by ensuring the space is located centrally and/or proactively advertising the service to the community.
Confidential	Clients should have access to a private space whereby they are able to discuss their needs away from others who may also be utilising the space. This can be particularly important for those who are whakamā about accessing Heartlands.
Inclusive	Heartlands is available to everyone within the community, and therefore it's important that the space is inclusive, so everyone feels comfortable when using Heartlands. Providers should consider how the Heartlands space is warm and welcoming for all including, but not limited to, Māori, Pacific peoples, youth, older people and LGBTQI+.
Inviting	The building is well maintained, kept clean and tidy, community appropriate, available seating for community, there is appropriate private spaces and meeting areas.

Further to the above, Heartlands needs to have access to a space for workshops, meetings, and programmes to take place, although this may also be the same as the confidential space referred to above.

Heartlands should also provide community access to technology. This can include:

- internet access
- phone access
- printing
- scanning
- computer access
- videoconferencing.

Heartlands as a mobile space

Furthermore, to having a physical presence within the community, there are other ways Heartlands can connect with clients who may not be willing or able to be present at the hub. This could include the following:

- attending and having a presence at community events
- promotion of Heartlands alongside other community activities
- arranging online meetings between remote clients and agencies/organisations
- being involved with networking groups to further promote and create awareness through alternative channels
- providing a mobile outreach service
- hosting drop-in sessions offsite, for example, at local maraes, or in neighbouring rural communities.

Opening hours

Heartlands is required to be delivered a total of 40 hours per week, excluding public holidays. To ensure that Heartlands is accessible to the community, it must be available for individuals and whānau to access the service at a minimum of 32 hours per week.

What is delivered during opening hours?

The most important factor of Heartlands is that it provides an available space to support the community who present at or contact Heartlands.

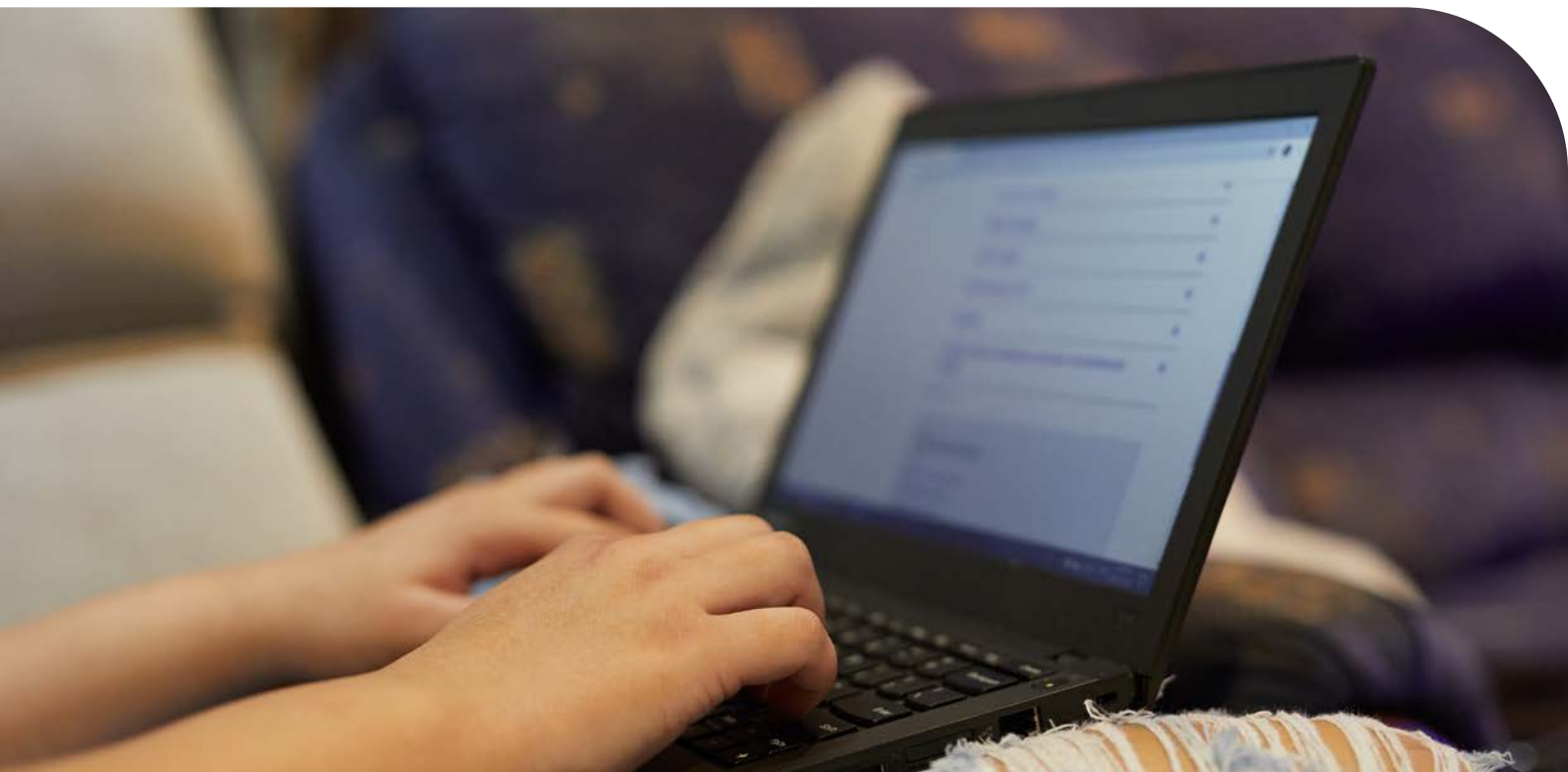
MSD acknowledges Outcome Agreements vary between either providing Heartlands to a specific town or to a region. If the Outcome Agreement is assigned to a region rather than a township, MSD understands that due to outreach services, there may not be one fixed location and delivery location may vary from week to week. If the Outcome Agreement is to deliver Heartlands in one specific area, this should be the primary focus of service delivery.

Open hours during public holidays

The Heartlands team encourages all Heartlands providers to take some time to rest, relax and catch up with whānau over the holiday period! In terms of MSD expectations for Heartlands, please refer to your organisation's policies on public holidays as we appreciate this may also be impacted by other services you deliver alongside Heartlands.

The Heartlands team want to ensure your community knows how and when they can access Heartlands over the holiday periods. To keep the Heartlands website provider details up to date. Please notify the Heartlands team at your earliest convenience on any changes to your opening hours and holiday dates.

If any amendments are required, please email heartland_services@msd.govt.nz



6 Promoting the Heartland Service

Who needs to know about Heartlands?

Heartlands is available to anyone within the community. Therefore, Providers must ensure that promotion allows everyone within the community to be aware of Heartlands, what it is and what it can do for them. In line with MSD's strategic objectives under Te Pae Tata and Pacific Prosperity, consideration should be given to how services are promoted and socialised to Māori, as well as Pacific peoples, in ways that are meaningful to them to ensure they are aware of what they are able to access through Heartlands.

Examples of how Providers might like to promote Heartlands, in ways which are both visible and related to engagement, include, but are not limited to:

General community awareness

- Heartlands signage outside of the hub
- community newsletters, pages, and distribution groups
- brochures, flyers, posters
- community notice boards

Online platforms

- social media
- Heartlands website and Provider websites

Through networking

- presentations at community events, marae, faith-based institutions, etc.
- meeting with community leaders or different groups to introduce the service

Through other sites within the community

- local businesses and services, e.g., supermarkets, libraries, etc.
- government agency buildings
- schools, including school newsletters
- local marae
- faith-based institutions
- local doctors
- sports clubs



It may also be useful to promote Heartlands in surrounding areas for possible outreach engagement, which will ensure those communities also have awareness of the service and know how to get in touch if they need help.

When promoting Heartlands, Providers should consider the benefits of promoting in different languages, noting the presence of Pacific peoples and other migrants who reside in rural areas to undertake seasonal work and may not be aware of the services available to them through Heartlands, particularly those they can access regardless of their immigration status.

As well as promoting directly to the community, it is also important that Heartlands is promoted to agencies, both government and other community organisations, so they understand what Heartlands is and how the service may be able to support and help their clients. This could be done by:

- attending networking meetings
- sharing news and other information with distribution groups
- ensuring agencies and organisations are kept up to date with any changes to the services
- maintaining formal relationships with agencies, mana whenua and other groups.

Promoting Heartlands

When promoting the services offered by Heartlands, it is important to utilise the Heartlands brand, alongside the wider organisations brand.

Brand identity is important for clients, particularly for those who relocate or travel elsewhere around the motu. Consistent use of the Heartlands branding helps communities to identify Heartlands, and increases awareness of the service, ensuring clients know where they can seek support.

As part of the service redesign in 2023, the Heartlands logo and branding was updated to ensure it was more accessible to anyone who may use the service. Ensuring the branding, logo and website are accessible means that all people can perceive, understand, and recognise Heartlands, allowing the service to be more equitable. This includes enabling them to use the website to locate their nearest Heartlands and find out what services are available. It is important information on the Heartlands website regarding the services offered are kept up to date. Any changes to the services delivered need to be communicated by Providers to MSD by emailing **heartland_services@msd.govt.nz**. Changes could include:

- opening hours
- contact details for Heartlands enquiries
- presence of government and community organisations
- any other events.

Providers are responsible for the initial purchase of signage, as well as for the maintenance and replacement of signage. Costs associated with purchasing, maintaining, and replacing signage are included in the funding model.

Branding Guidelines

MSD has created branding guidelines to support Providers correctly using the Heartlands logo to ensure brand consistency across different applications.

Heartlands branding can be used alongside Provider branding, and there is no expectation that the Heartlands brand is the dominant one. What is important is that the branding is used correctly. For more information about the branding guidelines and all related documents you can email **heartland_services@msd.govt.nz** to request a copy of these documents.

If there are any questions about how to correctly apply the brand, Providers can email **Design@msd.govt.nz**

The images provided in the branding guidelines are examples and Providers are responsible for obtaining their own photos for promotion, in accordance with the branding guidelines.

Media queries

If there are queries related to MSD's funding or contracting of Heartlands, they should be referred to **heartland_services@msd.govt.nz**

If a provider engages with the media i.e. for a news article or radio announcement about Heartlands or MSD, the Provider should notify their Relationship Manager as a 'no surprises' basis.

Key messaging when promoting Heartlands

When engaging in any promotional communication about Heartlands, it is recommended that the following key messages are used:

- Heartland Services (Heartlands) support people living in rural and isolated communities to access government and non-government services. The services are available to anyone in the community.
- Heartlands providers have an in-depth understanding of the unique needs, challenges and opportunities of their respective communities and have developed locally responsive ways of connecting whānau to the services they need. Heartlands also provides a physical space or hub for people to connect and safely access community and government services, kānohi ki te kānohi (face to face), in the rural regions.
- Heartlands is free to use, and available to all, however, there may be costs associated with some services that you are referred on to.

This is to ensure consistency about key messaging across Providers. If you have any questions about this, you can email the **heartland_services@msd.govt.nz**

Family Services Directory

Through the term of the Outcome Agreement with MSD, Providers must ensure their services are listed on the Family Services Directory (**<http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/>**), and that necessary information is updated when required.

7 The Heartlands Workforce

Employing and managing the Heartlands coordination staff

It is the responsibility of Providers to locate and employ suitable individual/s they believe will be able to successfully deliver Heartlands in accordance with both the Providers' expectations as well as MSD's expectations of service delivery.

Heartlands' coordination staff will administer and manage Heartlands to the community. It is important that your Heartlands is inclusive of everyone in the community and does not solely focus on only offering support for a specific group. Instead, Heartlands should offer various services and support based on the needs of the community e.g. youth, elderly and whānau etc. Heartlands sites should be aware the delivery premises is appropriate, and that delivery of one service does not deter other community members access to Heartlands.

To ensure that the delivery of Heartlands is within scope of the Guidelines, services delivered outside of Heartlands should be undertaken under a different service role. It is crucial to ensure that if your Heartlands Coordinator takes it upon themselves to fill a gap within the community that this does not affect their everyday responsibilities in the role of a Heartlands Coordinator.

MSD does not provide a job description for coordinators to allow Providers to tailor the description of a coordinator to suit the needs of the local community and Provider organisation. To support Providers developing a job description, the following section (Core skills) includes information on the core skills to consider for a coordinator.

Providing outreach services

Having a presence in the surrounding areas of the community provides a greater reach of awareness and services available through Heartlands. It also offers another form of support for clients who may be unable to be present at your local Heartlands site.

MSD supports the use of discretion to determine the neighbouring communities that can be reasonably supported, including nearby towns.

Whilst it is encouraged to offer outreach services, it is not compulsory, and Providers should be considerate of the delivery within the area specified in the Outcome Agreement.

Core skills

The core skills, attributes and knowledge required to deliver the Heartlands coordination role are provided below. The coordinator should demonstrate:

Skills	Description
Know-how	• effective communication skills • strong planning and organisation skill, for managing information, reporting, facilitating, and arranging for agencies to utilise the Heartlands hub • an ability to problem solve and be innovative, enabling them to identify possible solutions to challenges faced by their community • an ability to handle multiple priorities at once • willingness to support maintaining a welcoming and appropriate space for Heartlands clients to utilise • competent in computing skills, including videoconferencing and other digital technology platforms.
Relationships and networking	• excellent interpersonal skills, including being able to adapt to the needs of the audience • an ability to clearly communicate and maintain respectful, professional, and personal boundaries • well-developed relationship management skills, including an ability to build and maintain effective working relationships and to develop extensive networks • an ability to work effectively with different government agencies and community groups, including with iwi, hāpori, and hapū, and Pacific groups • knowledge of different government agencies, including who to contact, and understanding of the key processes.
Cultural responsiveness	• knowledge, understanding and commitment to the Principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi • an ability to work and communicate appropriately with Māori and Pacific peoples in a way which is warm, welcoming, culturally appropriate, and safe • desire to work with iwi, hāpori, hapū, and whānau.
Community knowledge	• knowledge of how to promote the Heartlands service, including ensuring this is meaningful and effective for the community • an ability to understand an individual or whānau needs and connect clients with services and information they need; this should include taking a holistic approach to wellbeing and ensuring whānau is at the centre of the response by listening and supporting them to meet their need • being well embedded within their community.

Professional development

Heartlands provides valuable support to those in the community, some who may present with a wide range of needs; subsequently those working in this area require on-going professional development to meet the existing and evolving needs of clients. The funding model includes funding for staff training, which can be utilised to further develop coordinator's capability.

As a matter of good practice, Providers need to ensure staff have access to:

- coordinator induction training, which should be relevant to the organisation, but include support for the coordinator to develop an understanding of the various government and non-government agencies to connect with
 - MSD will supply an onboarding document to support new coordinators, however an appropriate induction process must be arranged by Providers
- on-going professional development to build on existing knowledge or upskill coordinators. Due to the difference across communities, development may look different in each area. Some options to consider include:
 - technology and online capability
 - de-escalation training
 - mental health 101
 - conflict resolution
 - privacy
 - Microsoft software
- specific training, supervision or support for cultural responsiveness and competence (this could include on Te Tiriti o Waitangi training and/or Māori or Pacific cultural responsiveness training, development in the use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori).

The Heartlands coordination network

Virtual Heartlands hui

MSD fully supports the Heartlands network and has arranged a regular virtual hui held over MS Teams for Providers and coordinators to attend. The purpose of these is to connect and share challenges and successes with one another. Sharing challenges can be useful to understand if others have experienced similar challenges and found ways to overcome these. It is not compulsory to attend this hui, however it is strongly encouraged whenever possible.

Building a community of practice

MSD encourages and supports the establishment of a provider-led Heartlands networking group with other Providers. For example, this could look like coming together in person twice a year as North or South Island groups.

For support or advice with arranging a Heartlands networking group we recommend contacting the Relationship Manager listed in the Outcome Agreement.

Provider mentoring

Mentoring can take many forms, and it is at the discretion of Providers to determine how they wish to implement this to best support one another. For example, providers may want to adopt a buddy system or a Tuakana-teina* approach depending on which approach is appropriate for providers.

Providers can email heartland_services@msd.govt.nz and they will facilitate new coordinators being connected to an existing Provider. Participation is optional.

* **Tuakana-teina** is a concept from te ao Māori and refers to the relationship between an older person i.e., sibling (tuakana) and a younger person (teina) and is used to reflect the relationship between two people in a learning context. The more experienced tuakana passes down their knowledge and expertise to the teina – however, the teina in turn brings innovative ways of working that the tuakana can benefit from.



8 The Funding Model

What is the funding model for Heartlands?

MSD is working towards improved funding and contracting to enable organisational sustainability and better support for frontline staff. The Government's commitment to the ongoing development of strong partnerships includes funding services in a way that recognises the ability for communities to successfully design local solutions to local issues. To do this, flexible funding is used to allow Providers to meet the unique needs of communities.

The funding model allows for flexibility of different staffing models to accommodate the differing needs of communities delivering Heartlands. For example, employing one full-time coordinator, or two part-time coordinators, or multiple frontline staff trained to deliver Heartlands alongside other organisational functions.



The rate outlined in the current Outcome Agreement includes estimated costs associated with providing a full time Heartlands. The total service delivery funding takes into consideration:

- discretionary funding, could include:
 - initial set up costs, which may include staff onboarding, infrastructure and
 - funding additional costs related to delivering a Heartlands service that caters to the unique needs of their community
- direct costs: staffing salary and resources and other related expenditure that are incurred in the direct delivery of the service
- overhead costs: this includes all indirect service costs, or costs incurred as part of running the organisation that will contribute to the effective delivery of the service but not actually part of delivering the service.

It is at the discretion of Providers how this funding is allocated to meet the needs of their Heartlands.

Rent contributions and leasing to other agencies

Rent contributions

In addition to the service delivery funding, Providers receive a contribution towards rent or lease costs, as infrastructure is a key feature of the service. The physical space is a crucial element to the success of Heartlands as it enables communities to connect with support services that they need and receive support kanohi-ki-te-kanohi. This varies according to regional estimates, and is included (grouped) in the total of the overall contracted amount.

Other agencies or groups using the Heartlands space

The underpinning principle and ethos of Heartlands is that it provides an available and accessible space for agencies to meet with clients *kanohi-ki-te-kanohi* free of charge. This plays a key factor in rural communities having equitable access to services and agencies they need to get their needs met. Charging agencies a fee for the use of the Heartlands space may create a barrier to them using the space, meaning clients will be unable to access the support they need.

If, however, an agency requests a permanent desk or use of the Heartlands space, which subsequently cannot then be offered to another agency, it is at the discretion of the Provider as to whether the agency should be charged for this purpose.

In addition, if there is a community service who is charging clients to meet with them, or engage in a programme offered by them, it is at the discretion of the Provider as to whether the service should be charged to utilise the Heartlands space. An example of this may be a counsellor.

In both the above listed instances, Providers should consider the potential impact or unintended consequences to the community if they are unable to access a service they need due to there being nowhere available to host.



9 Reporting and feedback loops for Heartlands

MSD collects data about Heartlands from Providers via quarterly provider reporting (required) and a client survey (optional). Data collected through Provider reporting and the client survey is essential in helping MSD understand the effectiveness of Heartlands and how we can further support the service.

Provider reporting and client survey data is collated and analysed by MSD, and key insights are shared-back with Providers, MSD leadership and key government/NGO partners (“a feedback loop”) to inform continuous learning about ways to support and improve access to services in rural communities via Heartlands.

Provider Reporting

A quarterly report with narrative and statistical measures is required by all Providers. Provider reporting helps MSD understand how Heartlands is being used by rural and isolated communities to access services, the challenges and opportunities, and areas for enhancement.

A template for the quarterly reporting, which also includes guidance on how to complete each section, has been provided to each Provider Manager via the MSD National Contracts team and is also available on the MSD website [here](#).

For quarterly reporting dates, these can be found [here](#)

Please send completed quarterly reports in the Excel format to:

- MSD National Contracts Admin Hub at National_Contracts_Admin_Hub@msd.govt.nz
- CC in the MSD Relationship Manager listed in the Outcome Agreement and the Heartlands inbox (heartland_services@msd.govt.nz).

Client Survey

To complement Provider reporting, the Heartlands’ project team implemented a client survey in December 2022 to collect client feedback on an ongoing basis to help both MSD and Providers identify trends and opportunities to improve service delivery.

The link to the live survey has been given to each Provider via the MSD Heartlands team.

The survey is straightforward, and optional for clients to complete. Clients can choose to answer only select questions; only one question (location of service) is mandatory.

The survey should be made available on an ongoing basis for clients to complete at Heartlands sites. The survey is available to be completed online, via either an iPad or computer. There is a paper-based version of the survey and a QR code available. Both can be found on the MSD website. The QR code can be printed and displayed at your Heartlands sites for clients to scan on their phone and access the survey in their own time.

MSD is responsible for analysing survey results and sharing those back with Providers throughout the year. Each site can expect to see survey results at the national level, as well as site specific results for participating sites.

For more information about Heartlands client survey you can email heartland_services@msd.govt.nz

Collecting additional information as required

Occasionally, MSD may need to seek further information from Providers that is not available via the Provider reporting or client survey data. For example, we may need additional details around a theme that's emerged through reporting, or more granular details around a particular service needed by clients. When this is the case, MSD will reach out to Providers with opportunities to feedback, for example via an online survey or a focus group. These opportunities are optional, and we appreciate your participation where possible.

Improving our reporting

If you have any questions about the data we collect, or suggestions on how we can improve our reporting and feedback loops. You can email us at heartland_services@msd.govt.nz



10 Expectations around Heartlands being delivered in Partnership

Expectations around partnerships delivering Heartlands

To best meet the needs of unique communities, some Providers have been contracted to deliver Heartlands in partnership arrangements.

One Provider will be the contract holder in the MSD Outcome Agreement as the Lead. The Lead organisation would be the Outcome Agreement signatory and responsible for the Contract, including the Framework Terms and Conditions and delivering Heartlands in accordance with the Guidelines. The delivery of Heartlands is led by the fundholder and in collaboration with, and support from the supporting organisations.

The fundholder remains responsible for ensuring that the services are delivered according to the contract specifications. Therefore, a formal agreement should be in place between the parties that describes how the parties will work together. To support MSD's understanding of the provider partnership, MSD requests a partnership agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding for each partnership arrangement delivering Heartlands. A partnership agreement would likely describe how the parties will work together outlining, but not limited to:

1. partners involved in the arrangement
2. roles and responsibilities
3. the service/project to be delivered including volumes and results
4. distribution of the funds including how much each party will receive
5. how reporting is collated and provided to funding agency
6. how they will work through conflict/disputes.

11

Te Kāhui Kāhu Accreditation – Social Sector Accreditation Standards

To provide assurance that social service providers can deliver safe, quality services to New Zealanders, the Te Kāhui Kāhu Social Sector Accreditation Standards are operating principles that providers are required to follow.

Providers delivering Heartlands are required to meet a minimum of Level 4, Te Kāhui Kāhu Social Sector Accreditation standards. Providers who hold a higher level (level 1 – 3) will automatically be covered by Level 4. Providers shall maintain a minimum Level 4 Accreditation Status for the provision of the Heartlands for the term of their Outcome Agreement.

Information on the Accreditation Standards can be found at: <https://tekāhuikāhu.govt.nz/accreditation/index.html>

Appendix One – Glossary of Terms

Term Definition

Accreditation	Te Kāhui Kāhu Accreditation – Social Sector Accreditation team ensures that providers have the capability and capacity to deliver quality social services to communities. This is achieved by ensuring providers meet a consistent set of standards that meet legislative and policy requirements.
Clients	Defined as individuals, families and/or whānau accessing the services. Family and whānau are recognised as including diverse and far-reaching relationships, as defined by the family and whānau.
Coordinators	Individuals who are responsible for delivering the Heartland Services. This person may fulfil more than one role within the provider organisation. However, when referenced in this document, it is referring to their responsibilities when delivering the Heartland Services.
Hapori	The te reo word for community, this word encompasses groups of people.
Heartland Services / Heartlands	The service being delivered by providers on behalf of MSD to provide a physical hub for communities to access services and support.
Kia Takatū Tātou	This is the third key strategic shift within Te Pae Tawhiti and means ‘let’s get ready’ and underpins the commitment to supporting New Zealanders to have long term social and economic development.
Kotahitanga	This is the second key strategic shift within Te Pae Tawhiti and means to partner for greater impact.
Mana Manaaki	This is the first key strategic shift within Te Pae Tawhiti and means a positive experience every time.
Outcome Agreement	The contract entered into by the Provider and MSD for these Services.
Pacific Prosperity	MSD’s strategy focusing on opportunities to respond to Pacific peoples and support them to thrive and flourish.
Providers	The organisation MSD has contacted to deliver Heartland Services.
Te Pae Tata	MSD’s Māori Action Plan which identifies how the three shifts outlined in Te Pae Tawhiti can be applied to better support outcomes for Māori.
Te Pae Tawhiti	MSD’s underpinning strategy which describes the three shifts MSD is making as an organisation.

Appendix Two – Background of Heartland Services

Background to Heartlands

Heartlands was established in 2001 to improve the delivery and accessibility of government and non-government services in rural communities. Initially, there were 28 Heartlands sites across Aotearoa.

In 2019 a review of Heartlands found the following, (find the review documents [here](#)):

- the Service Guidelines supporting the delivery of Heartlands were no longer reflective of the way the Providers were operating as the service had naturally evolved over the years to meet the increasing complexities of the communities they serviced
- the funding was not sustainable and did not cover the provision of a full-time service, and it also left some components unfunded
- the presence of government agencies had significantly decreased, with this issue further exacerbated because of Covid-19
- the location of some sites was impacting accessibility, namely those delivered from Work and Income sites whereby it was found the presence of security guards, coupled with pre-existing concerns or relationships with Work and Income could limit interaction with clients and trust in Heartlands
- the branding and website were outdated, which Providers reported led to an additional burden when trying to promote their services.

Through Budget 2020 Heartlands received funding to address cost pressures for Providers and support service re-design, which has led to:

- new Service Guidelines (this document) to ensure they fit the current service delivery
- re-established sites previously delivered by Work and Income to be delivered by community service providers
- expanded reach of Heartlands by implementing an additional 15 sites across the motu, bringing the new total to 42 Heartlands sites
- implementation of a full-time equivalent (FTE) funding model.

Appendix Three – Outcome definitions

Term Definition

Clients	See Glossary (Appendix One).
Community of Practice (CoP)	People who share a common concern or interest, interacting regularly and focused on sharing best practice and creating new knowledge. In the ToC, the CoP refers to the community of practice amongst providers.
Goal	The intended impact of this service in the long run – what we are trying to achieve.
Government and Community Services (services)	Services and support which clients are connected with/access via Heartland Services.
Heartland Services (Heartlands)	See Glossary (Appendix One).
MSD Team	The dedicated team at MSD supporting Heartlands, including Relationship Managers (RMs).
Outcomes	The intended benefits or changes resulting from the service.
Partners	Government and community partners who support the effective delivery of Heartlands. For example, community partners like iwi and local marae, local councils, faith-based groups, as well as regional partners like MSD Regional Commissioners.
Providers	See Glossary (Appendix One)
Trust and confidence	We define this as the belief that Heartlands is reliable, honest, and will do what is possible to help.

