

## **What happens when the Te Kāhui Kāhu assessor comes to my programme and what do they want to see?**

OSCAR accreditation is administered by [Te Kāhui Kāhu](#), under the authority of the Social Security (Child Care Assistance) regulations 2004.

In September 2022 Te Kāhui Kāhu launched its online accreditation system. For all new accreditations and reviews, documentation is now submitted and tracked through an online platform. Programmes will still be visited by an assessor but as the process is still relatively new we have not yet updated the guidance here to reflect ways that the process might proceed differently. Overall much of the information here should remain unchanged.

Applications for accreditation should be submitted to Te Kāhui Kāhu Online: [the process is outlined here](#).

The assessor will get in contact with you and may ask for more information, if there is anything significant missing or unclear. They will make a date to visit the programme site, to check that the venue meets the standards and is suitable for the proposed programme, to check on-site paperwork, and possibly to see the programme in operation.

Sometimes programme owners and managers can be a little nervous, but assessments are constructively carried out, with allowance made for remedial actions to be followed up. (Think of it as an opportunity to get an free external review of the programme.)

### **If you are applying for MSD Accreditation for the first time**

At the site visit the assessor will want to meet with the programme owner, manager or a relevant senior staff member. They will want to meet at a time when they can discuss the accreditation, look at the venue and assess on-site paperwork.

The assessor will usually send a message that confirms the visit date and outlines what they will want to see during their visit. The assessor will give you an idea of how long the assessment to take, but expect an initial assessment to take 4-6 hours. The assessor is looking for assurances and evidence that the organisation/owner can and will run a programme that is safe for children, and complies with legislation and the accreditation standards.

Assessors have usually been to many programmes and have seen different ways that programmes have implemented the standards. As programmes and venues vary dramatically, assessors may have to use some discretion and there may need to be some negotiation to find solutions that both parties are satisfied with. Assessors are not looking for fault or ways to fail applications.

There will be variations in how each Assessor approaches the process but usually at a site visit they will want to:

- **Discuss the paperwork submitted:** clarify anything that is unclear, and talk about how the programme will put policies into practice. They may ask about who will carry out key tasks like following up absences, employing new staff, responsibility for police checks, managing serious behaviour incidents etc.

- **View any onsite paperwork:** employment agreements, job descriptions, police vetting results, first aid certificates and referee checks. An assessor will also want to view any completed enrolment forms, sign an/out sheets and other information about children and attendance.

- **Assess the venue safety:** building warrant of fitness, evacuation plans on the walls, exit signs on fire evacuation doors, an agreement to use the venue, hazard management documents for the venue, fire extinguishers and evidence that they are maintained. There may be discussion about phone access.

- **Review the risk assessment for higher risk programme activities** e.g. swimming activities - identify the competence of staff and children around water; how supervision of children in and out of the water will be managed.

- **Check that the venue is suitable** for the programme and the number of children. The assessor will look at the indoor and outdoor space. There may be questions about how you will cater for wet weather, active play, availability of a quieter space and supervision of various parts of the venue.

- **View food preparation and eating areas** and discuss arrangements for ensuring that food is prepared, served and eaten hygienically. The assessor may want to discuss what cleaning equipment is available to the programme.

- **Check other facilities and access** e.g. toilets, (how many and how accessible they are to the public); how the programme plans to ensure children don't have access to roads and car parks; safe pick up and drop off points if children are collected and brought to the venue by programme staff.

- **View the programme in action:** do the programme and paperwork reflect each other? Are interactions between staff and children appropriate and positive? Are there activities and equipment that is suitable for the ages of children.

### **When will I know how I'm doing?**

Assessors will tell you at the time of the assessment anything that needs to be addressed. This may require changes to your systems or evidence that a policy is being carried out – e.g. the assessor will need to sight completed police vetting checks for staff before the accreditation process can be completed.

A letter/report will follow the assessment with any follow-up requirements identified and a timeframe given to address those requirements. It is quite common to have some things to follow up after an accreditation visit.

## **I am already accredited and MSD is coming for a re-accreditation visit**

Programmes are usually required to renew accreditation every three years. The process of re-accreditation is much the same, but the Te Kāhui Kāhu assessor will be looking for evidence that the programme is doing what is outlined in its policy document, operating safely and in line with the OSCAR Standards. They will want to see employment documents, evidence of safety checks and risk assessments, enrolment and attendance records, financial records, accident/ incident and any complaint records.

If there are things that are not complying with the standards or the evidence is not available at the time, the assessor will tell you and a report letter will outline what needs to be addressed and a timeframe will be set for providing this information.

If there are serious concerns about a programme's ability to continue to meet the standards this will be discussed with the programme and a plan of action developed to either remedy or to discontinue the accreditation.

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