



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education

Attendance Service Provider Newsletter

17 July 2026

In this issue:

- Introduction
- Q2 Performance Dashboard Update
- Changes to invoicing due date
- ASCMS Webinar Sessions
- Unmet Basic Needs Fund
- Guidance Updates
- Information shared with schools
- Sector Survey
- Coming in our next newsletter

Introduction

Kia ora koutou

As we move through another busy quarter, I want to thank you for your continued commitment to supporting ākonga, whānau and schools to improve attendance outcomes.

This edition includes important updates on revised Q2 reporting timelines, invoicing changes, the Unmet Basic Needs Fund, and ongoing ASCMS support sessions. It also shares feedback from a recent sector survey, which highlighted the strong relationships, responsiveness and local knowledge that providers bring to their work, while identifying opportunities to strengthen communication, visibility of outcomes, and engagement processes. These findings reinforce the important role you play in supporting students facing often complex barriers to attendance and provide valuable insights as we continue to strengthen the attendance service together.

Shortly, we'll start to share at a catchment level how we are tracking as a national attendance service. As we embed processes, establish relationships and continue to address the needs of ākonga by partnering with agencies and schools, it's pleasing to see an uplift in performance from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2 based on provisional data. Fa'afetai tele lava | thank-you for your mahi and I look forward to connecting with you on the ground as part of your Communities of Practice alongside my regional colleagues.

Ngā mihi maioha

Mel Harrington, Manager Attendance Service

For those who missed the email: Q2 Performance Dashboard Update

Further to our email on 7 July, the release of the Q2 Performance Dashboard has been delayed while additional testing and refinements are completed to ensure the data is accurate and reliable.

Updated timelines for noting

- Q2 Dashboard planned release date: **27 July**
- Provider reports due: **7 August**
- Provider review meetings: **11–21 August**
- Provider payments: Unchanged – scheduled for **27 August**, subject to satisfactory performance

What you should do now

There is work you can do now to prepare for the dashboard release:

- Continue using the provisional dashboard for operational purposes and to prepare variance commentary.
- Complete the non-performance sections of the Q2 report, including:
 - Progress on Q1 actions
 - Service Delivery Plan updates
 - Innovations and improvements
 - Risks, issues, and mitigation activities
- Wait for the final dashboard before completing Q2 performance reporting.
- Ensure relevant staff are available for review meetings in August.

Please tag 'favourite' the Quarterly Reporting webpage for templates and guidance:

[Quarterly reporting - Ministry of Education](#).

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Change to invoice due date (non-school providers)

Due to the revised Q2 reporting timeframes, the invoice for the 10% quarterly payment (period 3 April – 3 July) will now be due on **21 August**; payment will be made **27 August**.

Please submit your invoice to accountspayable.invoices@education.govt.nz.

Important: Remember to include your Purchase Order (PO) number on the invoice. Please also enter the scheduled payment date as the due date on your invoice. This helps prevent your accounting system (e.g. Xero) from automatically generating reminder notices before the payment is due.

ASCMS Sessions

We are continuing our weekly ASCMS session, facilitated by Kate Fiske. The session topic and Teams link are emailed out each Monday. You can block out the timeframe on Thursday at 11am in your diaries in the meantime until the Teams webinar link is distributed.

Previously, these communications were sent only to the designated key contact. If you would like to receive them directly, we can add you to the mailing list.

Please email attendance.service@education.govt.nz if you would like to be added.

Guidance Updates

Practice guidance for Closing Cases and the Transition phase is now available. This guidance can be found on the [AS-CMS Guidance page](#).

In the Closing Cases practice guide we've clarified the use of the 'Regular Attendance' and 'Engagement Stable' closure reasons. Regular Attendance should now be used only when attendance has reached 90% or higher.

In most other situations where attendance has improved, the student is engaging with school supports, and you and the school are confident progress will continue, 'Engagement Stable' is the appropriate closure reason.

Remember, there is no rush to close cases. If you are unsure whether the school may need support again soon, keep the case in Transition until the situation is more established.

Using the Unmet Basic Needs Fund (UBNF)

The Unmet Basic Needs Fund (UBNF) is available to help address immediate barriers to attendance where needs cannot be met through another source. This may include items such as uniforms, clothing, stationery, or transport that support an ākonga's engagement in education.

We've seen some fantastic use of the UBNF so far, with purchases such as umbrellas, warm winter jackets, laptops, alarm clocks and care packages for unwell ākonga. We encourage providers to think broadly and creatively about practical ways it can be used to support ākonga to engage in education and address barriers to attendance.

Please remember:

- UBNF spending must be linked to an attendance case.
- All expenditure must be recorded in ASCMS using the "Add UBNF" function. Our quick reference guide contains instructions on how to do this: [Attendance Service CMS Quick Reference Guides for Providers - May 2026 .pdf](#).
- Records should include the amount spent, category, items purchased, and a brief description.
- Supporting financial records and approvals must be retained in line with your organisation's UBNF processes.

For more information, including guidance on eligible spending, please refer to the UBNF guidance and checklist available: [Unmet Basic Needs Fund - Ministry of Education](#).

In the next newsletter we will be providing further guidance.

Sector Survey

In last month's school bulletin, schools were invited to share their experiences of working with Attendance Services through a short survey.

A total of 102 schools across 12 regions responded to the survey (4% response rate). Most respondents had experience using attendance services, with findings reflecting the views of participating schools rather than a provider-by-provider assessment.

Overall, feedback was generally positive about access and responsiveness, with:

- **58%** finding services easy or very easy to access and engage with
- **56%** rating provider responsiveness as good or excellent

Schools particularly valued providers' strong relationships, local knowledge, responsiveness, and collaborative approach with schools and whānau.

Feedback on effectiveness was more mixed, with 23% rating services as effective or very effective in supporting student re-engagement. Responses suggest this reflects

both differences in experiences across schools and the significant challenges associated with addressing chronic absence, including barriers that sit beyond providers' direct control.

To build on these strengths and further increase confidence in attendance services, the opportunities for providers should focus on:

- Strengthening communication and follow-up by maintaining regular, consistent contact with schools throughout the referral process.
- Providing clear updates on referral progress, actions taken, and next steps so schools have greater visibility of support being provided.
- Demonstrating outcomes and impact by sharing evidence of progress and re-engagement where possible.
- Continuing to improve referral and AS-CMS processes to make engagement more streamlined and efficient for schools.
- Maintaining strong partnerships with schools and whānau, leveraging the relationship-based approaches that schools identified as a key strength.

Overall, the survey suggests a strong foundation of engagement and responsiveness, with opportunities to further build confidence in sustained student re-engagement and improved attendance outcomes.

What's coming?

The team is currently developing guidance to support you when attendance cases move between catchments. This will outline process and practice expectations, roles and responsibilities, and the steps required to manage these transfers within AS-CMS.

We want these updates to be useful for you so please let us know if there is anything you'd like us to cover in future newsletters. Please email attendance.service@education.govt.nz.

You can find this newsletter [here](#)