



Briefing for the Incoming Minister – Summary:

Ministry of Social Development

The following is a summary prepared by the NZCCSS Secretariat of the Briefing for the Incoming Minister of Social Development. The document itself is available at www.msd.govt.nz/publications/briefing-papers.html

NZCCSS has provided this as a summary of the document – in this case as an issue based set of tables. It is not intended to critique or comment upon the policies or initiatives contained in the agency's Briefing the Incoming Minister, but simply to give an overview of some of the major issues covered in the agency's briefing.

The following is a summary of the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) agenda for the broader social sector in the coming years, as noted in the Briefings to the Incoming Minister in 2005.¹

Key issues identified by MSD:

- International Research shows that 'between 2% and 5% of older people face abuse of a physical, psychological, sexual, financial or material nature, or experience neglect'²
- Older people aged 80 and over often experience accidents or live with chronic health conditions, also a problem for this group is housing and social connectedness³
- New Zealand has the second-highest level of sole parent families in the OECD⁴
- New Zealand sole parents have one of the highest unemployment rates in the OECD.⁵
- Despite low levels of unemployment some New Zealanders continue to face barriers to employment, young people, people aged 60-65 years of age, women, Pacific people's, recent migrants and Maori have lower than average employment rates.⁶

Compared to OECD countries New Zealand rates particularly poorly in rates of child death by intentional injury⁷

MSD has set out Five Priority Areas for the whole social sector,⁸

1. "Improve educational achievement among low socio-economic groups." This is seen as a top priority for spending in the wider education sector
2. "Increase opportunities for people to participate in sustainable employment." This is particularly important for the groups which have higher unemployment rates; these are people with disabilities, sole parents, young people and Maori and Pacific peoples.

¹ *Leading Social Development in New Zealand*, Ministry of Social Development and *Achieving Better Social Outcomes for all New Zealanders, our Families and our Communities*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005.

² *Ibid*, p.83

³ *Ibid*, p.66

⁴ *Ibid*, p.18

⁵ *Achieving Better Social Outcomes for all New Zealanders, our Families and our Communities*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.72

⁶ *Ibid*, p.39

⁷ *Leading Social Development in New Zealand*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.21

⁸ *Ibid*, p.70

3. "Promote healthy eating and healthy activity" to reduce obesity a focus on children in schools, the food industry and encouragement for more physical activity is needed across all age groups.
4. "Reduce tobacco use, and alcohol and other drug abuse."
5. "Prevent family violence, and abuse and neglect of children and older people"⁹

The focus areas identified by MSD as key are

- Employment and education as two key areas; they see these as mechanisms for improving people's well-being.¹⁰
- Changing attitudes and behaviours is an area that MSD notes in regards to a number of different social issues, such as violence within families and attitudes towards older people.
- The need for a stronger focus on social investment, which is to address causes before they become an issue, an example of a social investment by MSD has been their heavy emphasis on early childhood education.¹¹
- MSD sees that there is a need for the government to take new approaches to providing services by improving linkages with communities, non-government organisations and government agencies in order to address social issues.¹²

Issue	Initiatives
<p>High rates of violence within families and high rates of child deaths by intentional injury.</p>	<p>MSD has planned a public education and awareness campaign to try and change attitudes and behaviours in order to give families the skills they need in order to resolve conflicts.¹³</p> <p>Violence within Families Task Force was established in 2005 that involves government and non-government organisations.¹⁴</p> <p>An amendment to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families (CYP&F) Act is currently being considered by parliament. The proposed amendments are part of the 'Differential Response Model' which is currently being trialed in various test sites. The model would mean that community providers are able to be involved in protection services for lower-risk cases referred to Child, Youth and Family (CYF). The 'Differential Response Model' would enable CYF to focus on higher risk cases.¹⁵</p>

⁹ Ibid, p.78

¹⁰ *Leading Social Development in New Zealand*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.52

¹¹ Ibid, p.3

¹² Ibid, p.12

¹³ *Achieving Better Social Outcomes for all New Zealanders, our Families and our Communities*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.27

¹⁴ Ibid, p.29

¹⁵ For further information on the Differential Response Model go to www.cyf.govt.nz

Issue	Initiatives
Lack of access to early childhood education.	<p data-bbox="719 472 1259 577">Increasing the access to the Childcare and Out-of-School Care and Recreation Subsidy</p> <p data-bbox="719 607 1166 674">Increased funding for formal early childhood education services</p> <p data-bbox="719 703 1238 806">Making the Childcare Subsidy available for home-based services that are registered by MSD.¹⁶</p>

MSD also plan to

- Develop a medium-term plan of action to increase availability and accessibility of affordable child care and education.¹⁷
- Make disadvantaged families a priority group for participation in early childhood education and care services.
- Promote school-sited and community-based early childhood education and care centres for working families.
- Develop quality home-based care for families who work outside standard hours.¹⁸

Issue	Initiatives
High numbers of unemployed sole parent families.	<p data-bbox="719 1189 1259 1294">Increasing the access to the Childcare and Out-of-School Care and Recreation Subsidy</p> <p data-bbox="719 1323 1166 1391">Increased funding for formal early childhood education services</p> <p data-bbox="719 1420 1238 1525">Making the Childcare Subsidy available for home-based services that are registered by MSD.¹⁹</p>

Issue	Initiatives
High unemployment rates for young people, people aged 60-65 years of age, women, Pacific people's, recent migrants and Maori. ²⁰	The case management model has been running over several years, it has meant that case managers have become specialists in different areas, such as

¹⁶ *Achieving Better Social Outcomes for all New Zealanders, our Families and our Communities*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.60

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.31

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.60

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.39

	<p>finding work for mature unemployed.²¹</p> <p>The enhanced work-focused services began in June 2005 and focuses on individuals needs and aspirations in regards to their employment.²²</p> <p>The Youth Transitions Service works with schools and encourages at risk teenagers to remain in education.²³</p>
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Issue	Initiatives
<p>The proportion of households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing has increased²⁴.</p>	<p>The Accommodation Supplement is available for low-income homeowners and renters, this is additional help for rent or mortgage²⁵</p> <p>MSD plan to review the Accommodation Supplement needs in order to determine whether it is an effective way of providing housing assistance.</p> <p>Examine the 'state housing income-related rent rules for working-age tenants and benefit employment assistance, to ensure the systems are complimentary and encourage tenants to improve their circumstances.</p> <p>Work with the Department of Building and Housing and others to ensure the rental sector will meet future demand</p> <p>Determine whether more support is needed to help lower-income families into their own home.²⁶</p> <p>The Working for Families package aims to improve conditions for low and middle-income families with children. Families with children who come under the \$25,000 to \$45,000 band receive an average increase of \$100 a week in income assistance by 2007.²⁷</p>

²¹ Ibid, p.48

²² *Achieving Better Social Outcomes for all New Zealanders, our Families and our Communities*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.48

²³ Ibid, p.33

²⁴ Ibid, p.62

²⁵ Ibid, p.63

²⁶ Ibid, p.64

²⁷ Ibid, 58

Issue	Initiatives
Older people facing abuse and neglect.	There are currently twenty two Elder Abuse and Neglect Prevention services. These are partly funded by MSD. They are responsible for investigating complaints of abuse, co-ordinating intervention services, providing education and raising awareness in communities.

MSD also plan to:

- Promote positive attitudes towards older people.
- Review funding for Neglect and Prevention services.
- Involve government, communities and non-government organisations in the development a 'comprehensive strategy' for addressing elder abuse and neglect'.
- Strengthening existing legislation to ensure 'adequate protection of older people's rights and interests'²⁸.

Issue	Initiatives
Older people's housing, health and social connectedness	MSD has begun a review of its service delivery arrangements to older people which will help the design of future delivery arrangements for older people.

MSD also plan to

- Review the range of services to older people.
- Long term funding to community and voluntary organisations which are major providers to the services of older people.
- Provide a 'one-stop shop' whereby older people can locate and access services.
- Develop a national information programme to provide older people with information on 'lifestyle, nutrition and other low-level preventative services'²⁹.

Issue	Initiatives
Lack of saving for future retirement	<p>Additional financial support is available for older people with health needs</p> <p>The Accommodation Supplement is also available for those who need it</p> <p>From April 2007 a work-based savings scheme for retirement that comes with government incentives</p> <p>The Retirement Commission promotes information and heightens awareness about the need to save for retirement³⁰</p>

²⁸ *Achieving Better Social Outcomes for all New Zealanders, our Families and our Communities*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.84

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.82

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.74

Issue	Initiatives
Lack of adequate funding and support from government for community-based social services	The Family and Community Services national directory and the Family Helpline have been set up to share information at the service level. ³¹

MSD also plan to

- Share information between government and community-based social services and work to build organisational capability and capacity of community-based social services.³²

Issue	MSD plan to
Lack of trained staff and issues with staff retention in the social services sector	Develop a strategy to better co-ordinate social services and identify what the significant issues are. They are taking a leadership role to address workforce issues, targeting issues that include recruitment, retention, training and development, organisational development and information on non-government workforce ³³

The issues that MSD will focus on are broad ranging. There have been some positive developments by MSD in regard to addressing areas of interest for NZCCSS; however it is clear that there are still social issues in New Zealand that need serious attention.

³¹ *Achieving Better Social Outcomes for all New Zealanders, our Families and our Communities*, Ministry of Social Development, September 2005, p.94

³² *Ibid*, p.90

³³ *Ibid*, p.93